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**Mahamoud Ali  
Youssouf's** AU  
Challenge

**Ameenah Gurib-Fakim**  
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# Mahamoud Ali Yousseuf's African Union Challenge

By Ajong Mbatndah L

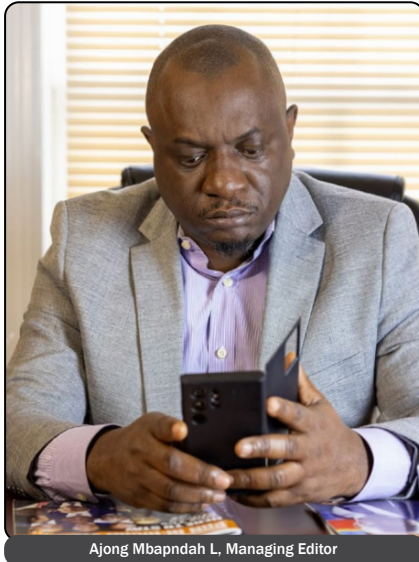
It has barely been a month since his triumph in the race to succeed Moussa Faki as Chairman of the African Union Commission and former Djibouti Foreign Minister Mahamoud Ali Yousseuf is already drowning in the suffocating weight of a crisis ridden continent begging for solutions.

In a race that many had called for Kenya's Raila Odinga considering his high-profile campaign with red carpet receptions and ringing endorsements, Yousseuf's victory was a stunning upset that many did not see coming. Without anything off Yousseuf's immense qualifications, experience, and leadership qualities, Raila was the front runner bristling with confidence and acting as if the elections were a done deal for him.

The victory of Yousseuf came with no honeymoon. From Somalia to crisis in the DR Congo that have drawn in multiple actors across East and Southern Africa, to the peace accords in South Sudan now on life support following renewed tensions and sporadic violence between forces loyal to President Kiir and those loyal to his Vice President Riek Machar, the ride, at least the start has been a bumpy one for the new AUC Chair.

For Africans already throwing tantrums and faulting the new AUC Chairman for not providing adequate responses to some of these crisis, remember its barely been over a month since he took office. The formidable diplomat that he is maybe the first to admit that he did not expect the task to be any easier. Somalia and South Sudan happen to be in the East African bloc he hails from.

As was the case with most of his predecessors, conflict resolution may remain among the most serious challenges that Mahamoud Ali Yousseuf will have to grapple with throughout his leadership of the continental body. Beyond the glamour that may be perceived from the outside, the Institution seems to be mired in intricacies that make efficient and productive leadership challenging. It could be the reason why lofty promises rarely come to fruition, why there is always more talk and less action, and



Ajong Mbatndah L, Managing Editor

why the feeling of stagnation remains palpable as the years continue to roll by.

At a time when the continent should be looking forward to the promise of game changing initiatives like the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, AfCFTA, it is sad to see how much energy and resources are consumed by the conflicts. The crisis between the DR Congo and Rwanda for instance has drawn in other actors within East and Southern Africa. How do you focus on trade when countries are at odds with each other?

Talk about noble initiatives begging for attention, and many will wonder aloud on what happened to the African Union passport. When even highly prominent Africans like Aliko Dangote have challenges traveling across the continent, then you know there is a serious problem. Launched during the opening ceremony of the 27th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Kigali, Rwanda, on July 17, 2016, with the aim of facilitating free movement of people across the continent, little or nothing has been heard of the initiative since then.

Of the 54 countries in Africa only Rwanda, Seychelles, The Gambia, Benin and Ghana have visa free policies for Africans. For the rest it is complex visa procedures, expensive fees from others.

Having a vision is one thing and implementing it is another. While not trying to relitigate the recent

AUC elections, some of those who rooted for Raila Odinga thought he had the political pedigree and gravitas to push African leaders on the needed reforms to move the continent forward. Yousseuf's victory at the end of the day was no accident.

"Yousseuf's stealthy approach proved that quiet diplomacy often trumps loud campaigns. His low-key style allowed him to forge alliances behind closed doors, away from the media glare. Meanwhile, Odinga's high-profile bid may have backfired, exposing him to scrutiny and fueling perceptions of external influence. This outcome shows that in African geopolitics, power is increasingly built through discreet negotiations, not

headline-grabbing endorsements. The AU's shifting landscape favors leaders who move silently but decisively — a playbook Yousseuf executed to perfection," says Lugete Mussa Lugete.

If Mahamoud Ali Yousseuf could replicate the David v Goliath result in his AUC Chairmanship bid, then there should be more that he can offer Africa. One of his first official visits was to Somalia where he held talks with President Mohamud and visited the African Union Stabilization Support Mission in Somali (AUSSOM) Base.

"Your service exemplifies African solidarity in action," the AUC Chairman said, in lauding the peacekeepers for their bravery and sacrifices in restoring peace to Somalia and recognizing their pivotal role in advancing Africa's stability agenda.

"Somalia has proven to be a very successful experience and experiment for the African Union's quest for African solutions to African problems. This has been proven to be a fact and doable. Africa can solve its own problems of course, with the support of the international community," said President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud.

The new AUC Chairman was also in Namibia for the inauguration of the country's first female President who has hit the ground running with a reform agenda of her own. In a continent where a considerable segment of its population views military rulers in West Africa as role models, Mahamoud Ali Yousseuf

measured the pulse of what the triumph of free and fair elections looks like.

As daunting as the task maybe, the new AUC Chairman can count on the support of a generation of dynamic Africans who are in a hurry to see Africa change. Epitomizing this generation is NJ Ayuk the Executive Chairman of the African Energy Chamber who has doggedly led the fight for an energy revolution in Africa to great effect. Thanks to the work from him and his team at the AEC, Africa is finding its voice on the international energy debate and going bold in seeking and articulating solutions that work for the continent. In this issue of PAV Magazine, NJ Ayuk sheds light on the state of the African energy landscape.

AUC Chairman Yousseuf will find willing partners in former leaders like Ameenah Gurib-Fakim and others in the African Leaders Debt Relief Initiative- (ALDRI), who are out on a fresh offensive to address the debt burden in Africa. From the ALDRI meeting in Cape Town where a strong call was made for the G20 to take on the debts, President Ameenah Gurib Fakim tells PAV in this issue that a more productive Africa with its ample resources of renewable energies, minerals and land could become a critical part of global sustainable development.

On the management of resources AUC Chair Yousseuf can check on the expertise of people like Dr M'zée Fula Ngege, Chairman of the African Diamond Council who says strengthening local capacity, enhancing governance, and renegotiating investment terms are imperative for African nations to assert greater sovereignty over their resource wealth.

In a rapidly evolving world, there is a new generation of Africans who want to be actors and not just passengers, a generation that thinks there must be a better marriage between the undisputed potential that the continent has and its realities. There may still be missing pieces to the puzzle, but Africa literally has everything it needs and hopefully the leadership of AUC Chair Yousseuf can see better results for the continent on all counts.





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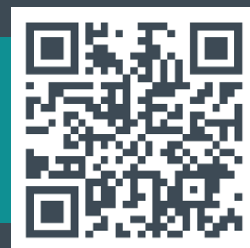


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# Namibia: New Dawn As Nandi-Ndaitwah Ushers In Bold Era Of Reforms

By Samuel Ouma

In a historic moment that promises to redefine Namibia's future, President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah was inaugurated as the nation's first female president on March 21, 2025. Her ascension to the highest office in a country that has long been symbolized by the struggle for independence marks not only a milestone in gender representation but also a turning point in governance and economic strategy. The inauguration ceremony was attended by a host of African dignitaries and former leaders—including trailblazers like Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Joyce Banda—emphasizing the symbolic and practical significance of her presidency for both Namibia and the broader African continent.

## A Ceremony Steeped in History and Hope

Held in the rain-soaked heart of Windhoek, the inauguration of President Nandi-Ndaitwah was an event marked by both tradition and transformation. Originally slated to take place at a sprawling soccer stadium, the ceremony was moved indoors to the presidential office due to inclement weather, yet this did little to dampen the sense of occasion. Delegates from across the continent—representing South Africa, Zambia, Congo, Botswana, Angola, and Kenya—gathered to witness the historic oath, underlining a unified call for peace, stability, and progress in a region frequently marred by political turbulence.

In her address, President Nandi-Ndaitwah spoke with clarity and resolve: "The task facing me as the fifth president of the Republic of Namibia is to preserve the gains of our independence and to ensure that the unfinished agenda of economic and social advancement is carried forward with vigour and determination to bring about shared, balanced prosperity for all." This



President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah has vowed to prioritize the independence gains of Namibia, and to fulfill the unfinished agenda of economic and social advancement

declaration resonated deeply with many, setting the tone for what promises to be a transformative era in Namibian politics and governance.

## A Vision for an Inclusive and Diversified Namibia

President Nandi-Ndaitwah's vision for Namibia is built on the twin pillars of economic diversification and social equity. In a country where natural resources—diamonds, oil, gas, and uranium—have historically driven economic growth but also exacerbated inequality, her strategy is both pragmatic and ambitious. Speaking shortly after her inauguration, she pledged to increase investments in the agricultural sector to boost domestic food production while also catalyzing the development of value-added industries around natural resources.

"We are going to increase investments in the agriculture sector to increase output and meet domestic food requirements," she declared in her inaugural address, emphasizing that economic diversification would be essential to creating jobs and alleviating unemployment, particularly among the youth. This commitment is set against the backdrop of Namibia's status as an

upper-middle-income country that nevertheless suffers from one of the most unequal income distributions globally.

Her plan also entails a strategic redirection in the management of emerging industries, especially in the oil and gas sector. By placing these industries under the direct management of the presidential office, she aims to ensure that the benefits from natural resource extraction are maximized for the nation as a whole, rather than being siphoned off through bureaucratic inefficiencies.

## Cabinet Picks: A Leaner, More Agile Government

In a move that has already begun to capture international attention, President Nandi-Ndaitwah announced a significant reshuffle of the Cabinet. The new administration has reduced the number of ministries from 21 to 14 and cut the number of deputy ministerial positions from 21 to 7. This bold decision is designed to eradicate duplications, reduce public expenditure, and streamline decision-making processes within the government.

Among the notable appointments are Ericah Shafudah as Minister

of Finance and Social Grants Management, whose 21 years of experience in the finance ministry and recent role with the World Food Programme position her well to manage Namibia's fiscal challenges.

- Lucia Witbooi as Vice President, whose appointment not only bolsters the representation of women in high office but also underscores a commitment to inclusivity.
- Natangwe Ithete, as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Mines and Energy, is charged with overseeing Namibia's burgeoning oil, gas, and mineral sectors.
- Selma Ashipala-Musavyi as Minister of International Relations and Trade, who will spearhead efforts to foster economic diplomacy and regional integration.
- These appointments reflect a broader strategy to foster a government that is not only leaner but also more directly accountable for its performance. The Cabinet reorganization is expected to lead to improved coordination and efficiency, ensuring that the government's development programs are executed swiftly and effectively.

## The Rationale Behind Reducing Ministerial Posts

One of the most striking features of President Nandi-Ndaitwah's new administration is the drastic reduction in the number of ministerial posts. Critics and analysts alike have noted that the previous cabinet structure, with its 21 ministers and an equal number of deputies, often led to redundancies, overlapping responsibilities, and excessive expenditure. By trimming the Cabinet to 14 ministries with only 7 deputy ministers, the president aims to eliminate waste and foster a culture of efficiency.

A source from Confidante, a reliable



insider publication, explained:

“A bloated Cabinet can be counterproductive, as decision-making becomes sluggish, and resource wastage increases. By reducing the number of positions, we ensure that only the most essential roles are filled by the most capable individuals.”

This sentiment is echoed by public policy analysts who argue that a leaner Cabinet is better suited to address the challenges of modern governance, especially in a country where fiscal discipline is paramount.

Moreover, the restructuring is seen as a direct response to longstanding frustrations with bureaucratic inefficiency. By merging certain ministries and transferring mandates to more relevant departments, the president intends to create a government that is more agile and responsive to the needs of its citizens. This approach, inspired by successful models from other nations, signals a commitment to not just doing things differently, but doing them better.

### A Government for the People: Addressing Socioeconomic Challenges

At the heart of President Nandi-Ndaitwah's agenda is a deep-seated commitment to addressing Namibia's socioeconomic challenges. Despite the nation's considerable natural wealth, a significant portion of its population continues to live in multidimensional poverty. With a history marked by inequalities dating back to colonial times and decades of mismanagement, the need for radical change has never been more urgent.

In her inaugural address, the president underscored her determination to tackle unemployment and poverty head-on. “I am not just inheriting a state; I am inheriting a promise—a promise to every Namibian that no one will be left behind,” she asserted. Her administration's focus on key sectors such as agriculture, mining, and tourism is designed to stimulate job creation and ensure that economic benefits are widely distributed among the populace.



President Nandi-Ndaitwah has signaled a willingness to diverge from traditional SWAPO policies when necessary, especially regarding issues of land reform and wealth distribution

Furthermore, President Nandi-Ndaitwah has signaled a willingness to diverge from traditional SWAPO policies when necessary, especially regarding issues of land reform and wealth distribution. This willingness to adopt a more progressive stance on economic issues is particularly significant given the nation's struggle with inequality, where the wealth generated from natural resources has often been concentrated in the hands of a politically connected elite.

### Future Outlook

Political analysts and experts have largely welcomed the new administration's structural changes, noting that the decision to streamline the Cabinet and reduce ministerial

posts is a bold move towards achieving greater governmental efficiency. Dr. Marius Kudumo, a respected public policy analyst, remarked:

“Downsizing ministries is a necessary step. A leaner public service can lead to faster decision-making, reduced waste, and ultimately, a more effective implementation of policies that benefit the common citizen.”

This perspective is shared by many in the region, who see Namibia's new approach as a model for other nations grappling with similar challenges of bureaucratic bloat and fiscal mismanagement

In the coming months, all eyes will be on the new Cabinet as it begins to implement the sweeping reforms promised by President

Nandi-Ndaitwah. With strategic appointments in key sectors and a clear mandate to prioritize efficiency and inclusivity, the administration is poised to make significant strides in revitalizing Namibia's economy. The focus on emerging industries, especially the management of the oil and gas sector directly from the presidential office, underscores a long-term vision where Namibia's natural resources serve as a catalyst for sustainable growth.

President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah's inauguration marks the beginning of a transformative chapter for Namibia—a nation at a crossroads between a storied past and a future brimming with potential. By embracing a vision of economic diversification, reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies, and appointing a Cabinet that reflects both expertise and commitment, she has set the stage for a government that promises to be agile, transparent, and accountable.

Her message is clear: Namibia will no longer be defined solely by its natural resources or its colonial legacy; it will be defined by the collective aspirations of its people and the bold reforms that ensure prosperity for all. As the nation embarks on this journey, the international community watches with keen interest, hopeful that Namibia's new dawn will herald not just a change in policy but a genuine transformation in the lives of its citizens.

In the words of President Nandi-Ndaitwah, “My presidency will be for all Namibians,” a promise that encapsulates the spirit of her reformist agenda and her unwavering commitment to building a more inclusive, dynamic, and prosperous nation.

As Namibia turns the page on a challenging chapter in its history, the road ahead may be fraught with obstacles, but the promise of radical reform, economic revitalization, and renewed national unity offers hope—a hope that the first female president has vowed to nurture, every step of the way.



By trimming the Cabinet to 14 ministries with only 7 deputy ministers, President Nandi-Ndaitwah aims to eliminate waste and foster a culture of efficiency.

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# African Union-New Leadership Same Problems

By Ajong Mbapndah L

A new chapter in African continental leadership has begun with the election of a new head of the African Union Commission. As Africa stands at a critical crossroads—facing perennial issues of conflict, economic stagnation, and democratic deficits, this fresh mandate is being welcomed by some as a chance for transformative change while others remain skeptical. The pressing question now is whether the new leader can overcome the deep-rooted challenges that have long dogged the AU and deliver on the lofty promises of African unity and development.

## A Legacy of Unfulfilled Promises

For decades, the African Union Commission has been tasked with a monumental mandate: to promote peace, security, and sustainable development across a continent as diverse as it is vast. Yet the Commission's track record is mixed. While its predecessor(s) have spearheaded significant initiatives in conflict resolution and economic integration, chronic shortcomings—ranging from weak policy implementation to pervasive corruption and bureaucratic inertia—have frequently undermined progress.

Historically, the AU has struggled to bridge the gap between high-level political rhetoric and tangible outcomes on the ground. Persistent crises—be it the insurgencies in the Sahel, electoral malpractices in member states, or the unrelenting impacts of climate change—underscore a common refrain: structural challenges remain unresolved despite repeated pledges for reform. Analysts have observed that “old challenges in governance, security, and economic management continue to haunt the AU's agenda, even as member states demand swift and effective responses.”

## Introducing the New Leader



Africa is at a crossroads, and our leadership must not only promise change but deliver it on the ground, says Mahmoud Ali Youssouf the new AUC Chairman.

Enter the newly elected head of the African Union Commission, Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, who emerged victorious in the recent AU Commission chairperson elections. A veteran diplomat with over three decades of experience in multilateral negotiations and conflict resolution, Mahmoud Ali Youssouf's victory was hailed as a potential turning point by many. Known for his pragmatic approach and his commitment to regional integration, he is no stranger to the complex political dynamics that define the continent. In his inaugural address, he declared:

“Africa is at a crossroads, and our leadership must not only promise change but deliver it on the ground. Our mission is to transform challenges into opportunities and to empower every African citizen to thrive in peace and prosperity.”

While his rhetoric exudes optimism, Youssouf's mandate is steeped in the weight of history. His extensive diplomatic career, marked by engagements in conflict zones and high-stakes negotiations, positions him as a capable mediator. However, it also means he inherits a legacy where past initiatives, though well-intentioned—often faltered in the face of entrenched interests and structural inertia.

## Old Challenges, New Hurdles

The challenges that lie ahead for

the new Commission head are both systemic and multifaceted. Key among these is the issue of peace and security. Africa's recent history has been punctuated by violent conflicts, particularly in regions such as the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. Extremist groups, fueled by poverty and political disenfranchisement, have exploited gaps in governance to establish footholds that threaten not only individual states but the region as a whole.

Security experts warn that “without a comprehensive strategy that addresses both the symptoms and the underlying causes of conflict, any attempt at stabilization is likely to be short-lived.” The new Commission leader must, therefore, work in tandem with member states and international partners to craft a cohesive security architecture—one that transcends the narrow mandates of individual governments and fosters genuine regional cooperation.

Economic integration poses another significant challenge. Despite Africa's vast natural resources and burgeoning young population, the continent remains mired in poverty and inequality. Structural issues—such as inadequate infrastructure, regulatory bottlenecks, and overdependence on commodity exports—have hampered sustainable development. In recent years, initiatives like the African Continental

Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) have raised hopes of a more integrated and prosperous economic landscape. Yet, these projects require robust institutional backing and a level of political will that has often been in short supply.

Mahmoud Ali Youssouf's agenda, therefore, must balance short-term crisis management with long-term economic reforms. “Economic transformation is not merely about increasing GDP—it is about ensuring that growth translates into improved livelihoods for all Africans,” notes one regional economist.

## Democracy and Governance in Perpetual Transition

The quest for democratic governance remains a perennial theme in African politics. Many AU member states continue to grapple with issues of authoritarianism, electoral malpractice, and institutional weakness. The African Union itself has been a vocal advocate for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law; however, the reality on the ground often tells a different story.

Critics of the AU argue that the organization's mechanisms for enforcing democratic norms have been largely symbolic. “The new head must confront not only external challenges but also the internal culture of impunity and patronage that has historically undermined democratic progress on the continent,” observes a prominent political analyst.

In this context, Mahmoud Ali Youssouf faces a delicate balancing act. On one hand, he must steer the Union in a direction that reinforces the principles of transparency, accountability, and participation. On the other, he must engage with leaders in member states whose own democratic credentials are questionable. His success will depend on his ability to build consensus and implement reforms that are both ambitious and realistic.

## Regional and International Pressures

Beyond the borders of Africa, the geopolitical landscape is increasingly complex. The AU Commission now finds itself navigating a world where traditional alliances are shifting. Western powers, once dominant in shaping Africa's post-colonial order, are gradually yielding ground to emerging players such as Russia and China. This new dynamic has significant implications for the AU's policy choices and its ability to assert an independent African voice on the global stage.

For instance, recent moves by some African states to break away from regional blocs influenced by Western policies—such as the formation of the Alliance of Sahel States—highlight the desire among certain leaders for a more autonomous and assertive foreign policy. “The external environment is changing rapidly, and the AU must adapt if it is to remain relevant,” says one international affairs expert.

The new Commission head will need to leverage Africa's collective bargaining power to secure favorable terms in trade, security, and development cooperation. This entails reimagining relationships with both long-standing allies and new partners, ensuring that Africa's interests are not sidelined in the global arena.

## Can He Deliver? The Road Ahead

The ultimate test for H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf will be whether he can translate visionary rhetoric into concrete outcomes. The challenges are formidable: entrenched governance deficits, persistent insecurity, economic underdevelopment, and shifting international alliances. Yet there are reasons for cautious optimism.

Firstly, Mahmoud Ali Youssouf's extensive experience in diplomacy may enable him to forge pragmatic solutions to Africa's security dilemmas. His track record suggests a willingness to engage in difficult negotiations and a deep

understanding of the continent's diverse political landscape.

Secondly, initiatives such as AfCFTA and ongoing regional integration efforts provide a framework within which transformative economic policies can be implemented. If leveraged effectively, these initiatives could drive sustainable development and reduce the socio-economic disparities that fuel conflict.

Moreover, the renewed emphasis on good governance and anti-corruption measures by civil society and international partners could create an enabling environment for reforms. “There is a growing demand among Africans for accountable leadership,” notes a regional governance expert. “If the new Commission head can harness this momentum, it may well pave the way for a more democratic and prosperous continent.”

However, the path to success is fraught with uncertainty. The risk remains that political elites in many member states may resist reforms that threaten their entrenched interests. Additionally, the volatility of external factors—ranging from global economic shocks to regional security crises—could derail even the best-laid plans.

## Voices from Within

Public opinion across Africa remains divided. In many countries, citizens express a mixture of hope and skepticism. For some, the new leadership of the AU Commission represents a long-awaited opportunity to break with the past and usher in



Our mission is to transform challenges into opportunities and to empower every African citizen to thrive in peace and prosperity; says Mahmoud Ali Youssouf. Photo credit AFP

an era of genuine progress. A young entrepreneur from Lagos remarked, “For the first time in years, I feel that our voices are being heard. We need bold ideas and real change, not just empty promises.

Conversely, others remain wary of leadership that might prove to be just another iteration of the same old politics. “We've seen leaders come and go, and too often the same challenges persist,” said a civil society activist based in Nairobi. “The true measure of success will be whether this new head can deliver reforms that improve everyday lives rather than merely reshuffle power.”

## A Pivotal Moment for Africa

The appointment of a new head of the African Union Commission marks a critical juncture for the continent. H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf inherits a legacy riddled

with historical challenges—from persistent insecurity and economic underdevelopment to a democratic deficit that has long plagued African states. His mandate is clear: to steer the Union through turbulent times and to lay the foundation for a more stable, prosperous, and democratic Africa.

Yet, the road ahead is anything but straightforward. The new Commission head must navigate a labyrinth of internal bureaucratic inertia, resistance from entrenched political elites, and the shifting sands of international geopolitics. His success will ultimately be measured not by grand declarations or ambitious policy documents but by tangible improvements in the lives of millions of Africans.

As the continent watches with bated breath, one thing remains certain: Africa's challenges are as old as its struggles for independence, but the potential for transformation is equally timeless. The question now is whether the new AU Commission head can harness this potential and deliver on the promise of a united and resilient Africa.

Only time will tell if H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf can convert hopeful rhetoric into lasting reform. For a continent that has long been held back by inertia and entrenched interests, the stakes have never been higher—and the need for genuine leadership is more urgent than ever.



Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, visiting The African Union Stabilization Support Mission in Somali recently. Conflict resolution remains a headache for the AU.



# Djibouti's AUC Victory And What It Means for African Diplomacy

By Adonis Byemelwa

A Pan African Visions Senior reporter had the privilege of speaking with Lugete Mussa Lugete, a distinguished political analyst, historian, and member of the Global Pan Africanism Network, who has made significant contributions to media outlets like ITV, TBC, Azam News, DW, VOA, and BBC. Known for his deep expertise in African politics and egalitarianism, Lugete's insights offer a nuanced perspective on the recent AU Chairmanship race between Raila Odinga and Mahamoud Ali Youssouf. We delved into the shifting dynamics of African diplomacy, the impact of Kenya's foreign policy, and the role of smaller nations like Djibouti in shaping the future of the African Union.



Mahamoud Ali Youssouf's win is a testament to the power of silent diplomacy over high-profile politicking, says Lugete Mussa Lugete.

*Djibouti's Mahamoud Ali Youssouf clinched the AU Chairmanship in a surprise win over Kenya's Raila Odinga after seven rounds of voting. What does this outcome signal about the current state of African diplomacy and regional alliances?*

This outcome flips the script on African diplomacy. Youssouf's win signals a shift in the continent's power dynamics, with the Sahel and North Africa asserting their influence over traditional heavyweights like Kenya. The diplomatic undercurrents driving this result point to a growing alliance among French- and Arabic-speaking nations — regions that have quietly consolidated their grip on AU politics in recent years.

While Raila Odinga's campaign carried the weight of East Africa's legacy, it struggled against Youssouf's behind-the-scenes diplomacy. Youssouf, a veteran of African geopolitics, played the long game — building bridges across Central and North Africa where Odinga's clout simply didn't reach. His win

is a testament to the power of silent diplomacy over high-profile politicking.

Kenya's foreign policy missteps — including its controversial stance on the Israel-Palestine conflict — didn't help Odinga's case either. Many African nations are leaning toward non-alignment in global affairs, and Odinga's perceived Western tilt made him a tough sell. This race was never just about personalities — it was about alliances, influence, and Africa's strategic positioning in an increasingly multipolar world.

Looking ahead, Youssouf's victory hints at a new era where smaller nations with shrewd diplomatic strategies can outmaneuver traditional continental giants. The message is clear: in today's African Union, influence isn't just about size — it's about who you know, how you negotiate, and where your alliances lie.

*Odinga's campaign was high-profile, widely publicized, and backed by heavyweight diplomatic efforts from President Ruto. In contrast, Youssouf ran a low-key but highly effective campaign. Does this shift in campaign styles indicate that quiet diplomacy is now more powerful in African geopolitics?*

Absolutely. Youssouf's stealthy approach proved that quiet diplomacy often trumps loud campaigns. His low-key style allowed him to forge alliances behind closed doors, away from the media glare. Meanwhile, Odinga's high-profile bid may have backfired, exposing him to scrutiny and fueling perceptions of external influence. This outcome shows that in African geopolitics, power is increasingly built through discreet negotiations, not headline-grabbing endorsements. The AU's shifting landscape favors leaders who move silently but decisively — a playbook

Youssouf executed to perfection.

*Many analysts blame Kenya's foreign policy under President Ruto for alienating key AU member states. How significant was Kenya's alignment with Israel and its position on Sudan and the M23 conflict in costing Odinga crucial votes?*

Kenya's foreign policy under President Ruto undeniably played a pivotal role in Raila Odinga's defeat. The country's open backing of Israel in the Israel-Palestine conflict clashed with the AU's long-standing pro-Palestinian stance, creating friction with influential Muslim-majority nations. This alignment left many African countries questioning Kenya's commitment to the continent's collective voice on global issues. Kenya's involvement in Sudanese affairs, particularly hosting Rapid Support Forces (RSF) leaders against the AU's position,

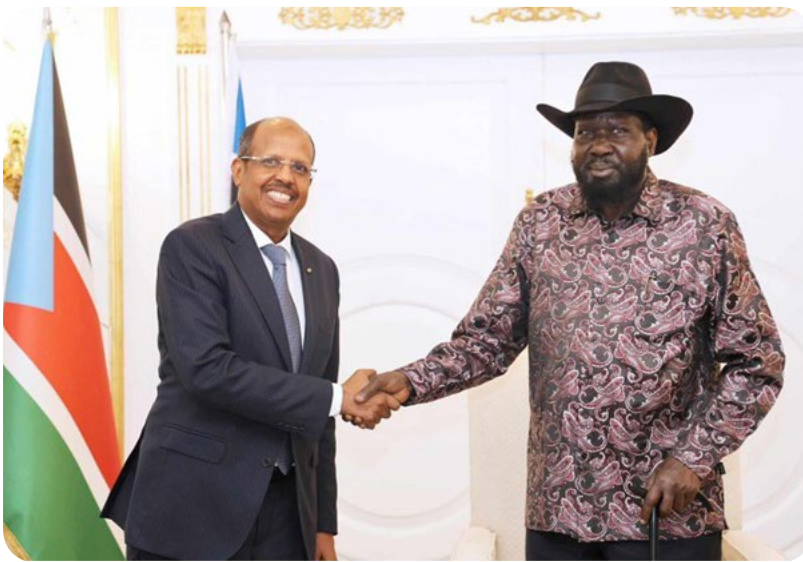
further alienated key North and Central African states. As well, Kenya's perceived economic interests in the M23 conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo fueled suspicions of self-serving diplomacy. These missteps reinforced perceptions that Kenya's foreign policy prioritizes external alliances over African solidarity. In a contest where geopolitical neutrality was paramount, these diplomatic entanglements became a liability — costing Odinga crucial votes in a tightly contested race.

***Raila Odinga is a prominent Pan-African figure with vast political experience, yet Djibouti's Youssouf — from one of Africa's smallest nations — won. Does this outcome suggest that African nations are shifting towards selecting leaders with fewer geopolitical entanglements over big-name candidates?***

Yes, the outcome signals a growing preference for leaders with less baggage and fewer geopolitical strings attached. Youssouf's win reflects a desire for leaders who can act as neutral brokers rather than figures tied to powerful external interests. Odinga's long political career, while impressive, carried the weight of historical alliances and ideological leanings that complicated his candidacy. Youssouf's understated profile allowed him to navigate diplomatic channels without the burden of past allegiances — a quality increasingly prized in a continent striving for strategic autonomy in global affairs.

***Youssouf's Muslim identity and strategic alliances with North African nations reportedly played a pivotal role in his win. How much influence do North African and Sahel countries hold in shaping AU leadership decisions today?***

The clout of North African and Sahel countries in AU leadership decisions has grown significantly in recent years — and Youssouf's win



The situation in South Sudan is one of the early challenges in need of urgent attention from the new AUC Chair.

is the clearest indicator yet. These regions have become kingmakers, leveraging their shared linguistic, religious, and geopolitical ties to forge powerful voting blocs. Youssouf's Muslim identity and long-standing alliances with North African nations positioned him as a natural candidate for this coalition.

The Sahel's security challenges and North Africa's proximity to the Middle East have made their voices more influential in AU policymaking. This alliance's ability to rally behind a common candidate signals a

strategic pivot in African diplomacy — one where regional solidarity can outweigh individual political legacies. As the continent grapples with shifting global alliances, the North African-Sahel axis is likely to play an even greater role in shaping AU leadership in the years ahead.

***As Youssouf assumes office, what key priorities should Africa expect from his leadership, especially regarding the Sudan crisis, Sahel instability, and continental economic***

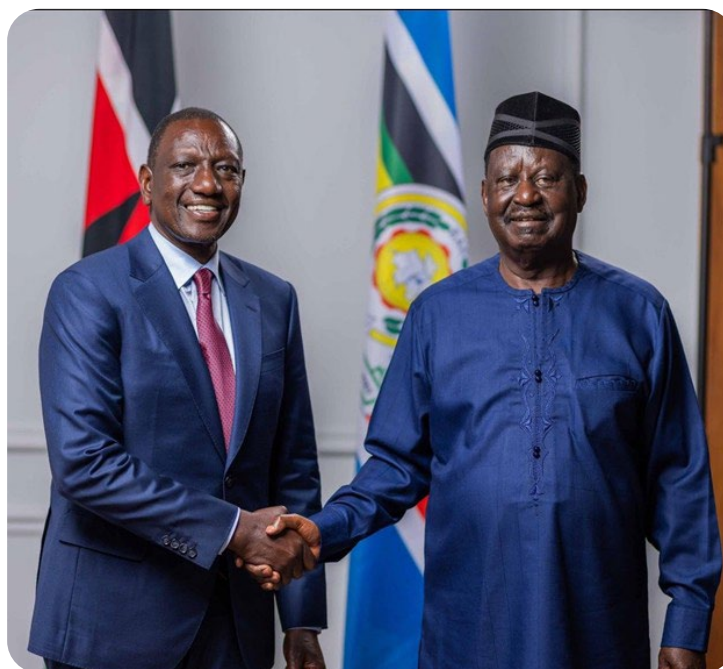
***development?***

Youssouf's leadership is expected to prioritize Africa's most pressing crises, starting with the Sudan conflict. His diplomatic background places him in a strategic position to mediate between warring factions, especially given Djibouti's historical ties with Sudan. The Sahel instability will likely be a central focus, with Youssouf aiming to strengthen the AU's security framework to counter the growing threat of militant groups. On economic development, his agenda is likely to push for greater African self-reliance by advocating for energy reforms and industrialization

policies that reduce the continent's dependency on foreign markets. His leadership will need to balance pragmatism with bold reforms to restore confidence in the AU's role as a driver of continental stability and growth.

***What lessons can Kenya and other African nations draw from this election, particularly regarding diplomacy, regional cooperation, and strategic lobbying for future AU leadership bids?***

The election holds critical lessons for Kenya and other African nations. First, it underscores the power of regional alliances in shaping AU leadership outcomes. Youssouf's strategic outreach to North African and Sahel blocs highlights the importance of coalition-building across linguistic and geopolitical divides. Second, it demonstrates that quiet diplomacy—rooted in consistent relationship-building rather than high-profile campaigns—often yields better results. Finally, it signals that aligning foreign policy with the broader African consensus, especially on sensitive issues like Palestine and regional conflicts, is crucial. Moving forward, countries seeking AU leadership roles must blend diplomacy with strategic lobbying while projecting neutrality and fostering cross-regional partnerships.



The stunning defeat of Raila Odinga was viewed as a serious blow to Kenyan diplomacy.





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# Raila-Ruto MoU: Political Realignment or a Tactical Move?

By Samuel Ouma



President William Ruto and Raila Odinga sign a political pact at KICC on March 7, 2025. Photo Credit PCS.

Kenyan politics took another unexpected twist when veteran opposition leader Raila Odinga and President William Ruto came together to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) right after Odinga's unsuccessful attempt to secure the chairmanship of the African Union Commission (AUC). This surprising agreement between two prominent political figures has created quite a stir across the country, eliciting a range of responses from various political factions and the general public.

While the specifics of the agreement remain mostly under wraps, it was signed during a time of intense speculation about Raila's political trajectory. Following his defeat in Addis Ababa, many political observers sensed a chance for realignment, especially considering the existing divisions within the government and the opposition. The M.O.U has 10-point commitments and resolutions to pursue and achieve to ensure a more cohesive and prosperous nation.

They include implementing the National Dialogue Committee (NADCO) report, promoting inclusivity in governance and national development, protecting and strengthening devolution, and addressing Kenya's debt crisis. Further, it endeavours to secure Kenya's future, promote integrity in national leadership, eliminate wastage of public resources, win the war against corruption, safeguard the right to peaceful assembly, and uphold the rule of law and constitutionalism.

"It is not enough to merely identify systemic and cultural obstacles that have denied generations a fair chance to achieve their aspirations. More importantly, we must rise above the political differences and embrace a higher vision of the Kenya we all deserve," said President Ruto.

According to Odinga, the M.O.U is meant to ease the prevailing tensions in the country, reconcile the population, and move the country forward by addressing critical issues facing ordinary Kenyans.

"As leaders of the largest political

parties in the country, we arrived at the understanding that in a time of significant challenges to our nation, it is not enough to merely grandstand or stand aside and criticize, easy as those may be," he said.

On claims that the MOU was about the 2027 elections, Odinga stated that the agreement to join hands with his foe turn ally is in the interest of the nation. He said that the Memorandum of Understanding was all about promoting national unity, boosting economic recovery, and improving governance.

For President Ruto, the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the former Prime Minister might be viewed as a clever strategy to strengthen his position as the 2027 elections approach. Political experts argue that by aligning himself with Odinga, Ruto aims to diminish the opposition that has persistently questioned his leadership. Moreover, this agreement could assist the president in addressing the rising dissatisfaction within his own Kenya Kwanza coalition, where signs of internal conflict are starting to

surface following the ouster of former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua.

The Memorandum of Understanding has sparked a range of reactions from leaders on both sides of the political spectrum. Opposition leaders, many of whom have been vocal critics of Ruto's presidency, are expressing doubts about Odinga's recent actions. Kalonzo Musyoka, the Wiper leader who has been trying to establish himself as Raila's political successor, was quick to voice his concerns, accusing Odinga of betrayal.

"What has come out of Kenyatta International Conference Centre (KICC) is the biggest BETRAYAL of Kenyans. The People's Loyal Coalition will NEVER betray Kenyans for temporary comfort," said Kalonzo, who supported Odinga's three presidential bids.

On the other hand, Deputy President Kithure Kindiki hailed the MoU, congratulating Mr Odinga for the bold decision to work with the government of the day to resolve issues affecting Kenyans.

"I am proud to see what is



happening today. Courageous decisions are made by courageous people,” said Dr. Kindiki during the signing of the MoU on March 7, 2025.

The MoU has stirred up quite a conversation among Kenyans, beyond just the political elite. Some people see it as a smart political strategy aimed at promoting stability, while others, especially younger Kenyans, feel it’s a betrayal of their fight against government overreach.

A section of Gen Z, who were at the forefront of the recent anti-government protests, expressed their frustration, accusing Raila of “selling out” after he missed out on the AU chairmanship.

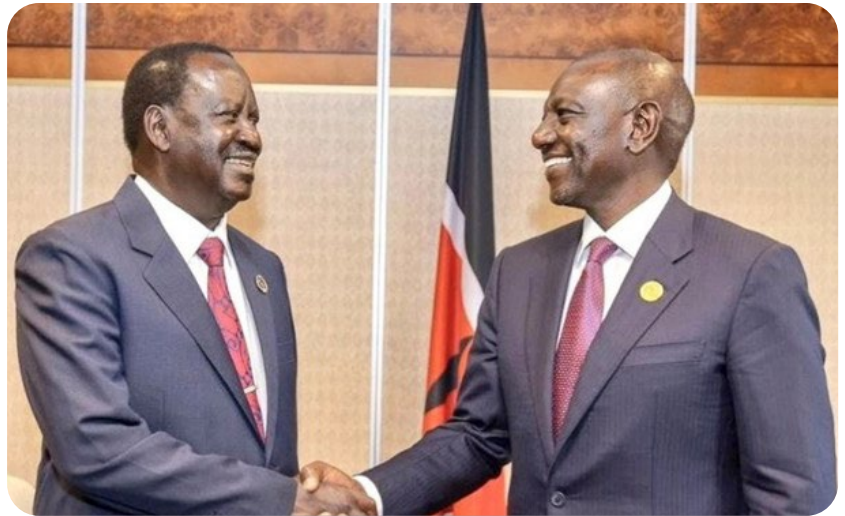
“We stood up for justice, and where was Odinga? Now he’s cozying up to the very government we were protesting against. This just isn’t

right,” one youth shared on social media.

On the flip side, many older Kenyans, especially those who lived through the post-election violence of previous years, view the MoU as an essential compromise.

“We need peace and development. If Odinga and Ruto joining forces leads to stability, then so be it,” stated Jackson Otieno, a businessman in Nairobi.

With the opposition at a bit of a crossroads, there are still plenty of questions about what this MoU really means for Kenya’s political scene in the years ahead. Will Odinga keep leading the



The deal seeks to elevate the interests of ordinary Kenyans above partisan rivalries, says Raila Odinga Photo Courtesy.



What has come out of the KICC is the biggest BETRAYAL of Kenyans, says Kalonzo Musyoka, the Wiper leader who has been trying to establish himself as Raila’s political successor

opposition, or is this the beginning of his slow exit from the spotlight? And what about Kalonzo, Martha Karua, and the other opposition leaders—will they rise to the occasion and take on the roles left vacant by Odinga’s apparent truce with Ruto?

The Odinga-Ruto MoU has shaken things up in Kenya’s political landscape. Whether it’s a genuine effort for national unity or just a clever political strategy is still up for debate. What’s evident, though, is that this agreement has split opinions among Kenyans; some see it as a move towards stability, while others view it as a betrayal of the opposition’s purpose.

Odinga recently reaped from the new bromance after more allies were picked by President Ruto to join the government which is currently termed as Broad Based Government. Dr Ouma Oluga was named Medical

Services PS, Regina Ombam (Trade), and Cyrell Odede (Public Investments and Assets Management).

In a bold step to tackle the rising tensions in South Sudan, Ruto has also appointed Odinga as Kenya’s special envoy to the country. This decision comes on the heels of the recent arrest and house arrest of South Sudan’s First Vice President and opposition leader, Riek Machar, along with his wife, Interior Minister Angelina Teny. Odinga is set to head to South Sudan on Friday, March 28 to lead initiatives aimed at preventing a flare-up of conflict in the area.

As the country keeps a close eye on how this new partnership develops, the pressing question remains: What does the future have in store for Kenya’s opposition and, even more crucially, for the upcoming 2027 elections? \_\_\_\_\_

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# Rwanda: Kagame's Diplomatic Chess

By Samuel Ouma

In a dramatic shift of regional geopolitics, Rwanda has simultaneously severed its long-entrenched diplomatic ties with Belgium and embarked on renewed talks with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) aimed at de-escalating a conflict that has gripped eastern Africa. This dual maneuver not only reflects deep historical grievances but also a strategic pivot in regional security and economic interests.

## Rwanda Cuts Diplomatic Ties with Belgium

On March 17, 2025, Rwanda announced that it had severed diplomatic relations with Belgium—one of its former colonial powers—ordering all Belgian diplomats to leave the country within 48 hours. The Rwandan Ministry of Foreign Affairs described the decision as necessary to protect national dignity and interests. In an official statement, Rwanda accused Belgium of “pitiful attempts to sustain its neocolonial delusions” and claimed that Brussels had repeatedly undermined Kigali during the ongoing conflict in the eastern DRC. According to Rwandan officials, this move was meant to send a clear message: historical wrongs and contemporary meddling would no longer be tolerated.

“The Government of Rwanda today notified the Government of Belgium of its decision to sever diplomatic relations, effective immediately,” the statement read.

Belgium responded swiftly. Belgian Foreign Minister Maxime Prévot expressed deep regret over Kigali's decision, stating, “Belgium regrets the decision of Rwanda to cut off diplomatic relations with Belgium and to declare Belgium's diplomats persona non grata. This is disproportionate and shows that when we disagree with Rwanda they prefer not to engage in dialogue.”

This diplomatic rupture has



The Kagame administration has accused Belgium of “pitiful attempts to sustain its neocolonial delusions.”

resonated beyond bilateral ties—it underscores the enduring legacy of colonial history in the region and reflects how past grievances continue to influence present-day politics. Belgium's historical role in Rwanda, marred by its involvement during the colonial era and its controversial actions surrounding the 1994 genocide, remains a sensitive subject in Kigali's national narrative. By cutting ties, Rwanda seeks not only to reclaim its sovereignty but also to reframe its regional alliances on its own terms.

## A New Chapter in Regional Diplomacy: Rwanda and the DRC

While breaking with Belgium, Rwanda has also signaled its readiness to engage in a new phase of dialogue with the DRC—a country that has long been at the heart of a complex conflict involving rebel groups, such as the Rwanda-backed M23. The conflict in eastern Congo, fueled by decades of mistrust, competition over mineral wealth, and ethnic tensions, has drawn in various regional players

and sparked one of the world's most severe humanitarian crises.

In recent weeks, efforts to revive peace talks have taken centre stage. High-level meetings have been facilitated by regional mediators, including Angolan President João Lourenço and representatives from Kenya, Nigeria, and Ethiopia. These talks are aimed at addressing not only the immediate violence but also the underlying structural issues—ranging from resource exploitation to the destabilizing presence of armed rebel groups—that continue to plague the region.

Analysts point out that Rwanda's willingness to sit down with the DRC is a significant shift from its previous posture. For years, allegations that Rwanda was supporting the M23 rebels—claims that Kigali has consistently denied by insisting its military is acting in self-defence—had stoked tensions and deepened the divide between the two nations. Recent developments, however, indicate a potential recalibration. In a recent statement during the mediation process, Rwandan officials

stressed their commitment to regional peace:

“We are ready to engage in constructive dialogue with our Congolese brothers, not only to address the immediate challenges in the east but also to build a framework for long-term stability and prosperity in the region.”

This new phase of engagement is particularly crucial as the DRC continues to grapple with the fallout from the insurgency and the staggering displacement of millions of people. The DRC government, under President Félix Tshisekedi, has signalled its openness to dialogue—albeit on terms that ensure the withdrawal of external influences from its territory. Recent peace summits, though not without controversy, have paved the way for renewed negotiations. The stakes are high: a successful dialogue could stabilize a region whose mineral wealth underpins not only local economies but also global supply chains for critical technologies.

“A stable eastern Congo is in the interests of all parties in the



region, and dialogue is the only path to ensure that humanitarian and economic devastation does not continue unchecked,” noted an EU diplomat.

## Doha Talks: A New Hope for De-Escalation

Adding another promising chapter to this evolving narrative, recent high-level talks in Doha, Qatar, have provided a fresh diplomatic impetus. In a significant move, DR Congo President Félix Tshisekedi and Rwandan President Paul Kagame met in Doha under the mediation of Qatari officials. This unprecedented direct encounter in a neutral venue has been viewed as a breakthrough, particularly after years of indirect communications and stalled negotiations.

The Doha talks, described as both informal and exploratory, saw the two leaders reiterate their commitment to an immediate ceasefire in eastern Congo. The discussions went beyond merely addressing the immediate cessation of hostilities; they also laid the groundwork for tackling broader issues such as the withdrawal of external military forces, the curbing of illicit mineral exploitation, and establishing mechanisms to protect the civilian population caught in the crossfire.

“We call for an immediate ceasefire and urge all parties to prioritize the protection of civilians,” read a joint statement emerging from the Doha



Belgium is responsible for messing up not only Rwanda, but the region, dividing people along borderlines and ethnicity and today continues to hound Rwanda, Kagame said in a recent address

meeting.

The impact of these Doha talks has been multifaceted. First, they have restored a measure of trust between two historically antagonistic states, offering a tangible platform for future, more substantive negotiations. Second, the discussions have reinvigorated international support for the peace process, with mediators and regional stakeholders now more confident in the prospect of a lasting solution. Analysts contend that if the Doha talks evolve into concrete steps—such as phased troop withdrawals and robust monitoring mechanisms—they could serve as the catalyst for comprehensive peace in a region long mired in conflict.

## Rewriting Regional Narratives

Rwanda’s simultaneous break with Belgium and outreach to the DRC illustrate a broader strategic recalibration in which historical grievances are being leveraged to redefine future alliances. On one hand, by ending relations with Belgium, Rwanda is distancing itself from a colonial legacy that it views as a source of recurring interference. On the other, by engaging with the DRC—especially through groundbreaking talks in Doha—it is positioning itself as a proactive regional partner willing to address deep-seated security and economic challenges collaboratively.

This dual-track approach is not without risks. The conflict in eastern Congo is intricate and has seen

numerous external interventions over the years. Yet, the Doha process introduces a much-needed element of direct dialogue. Both nations now face domestic and international pressure to transform these diplomatic breakthroughs into tangible peace measures on the ground.

For Rwanda, Doha represents an opportunity to reshape its regional image—from being perceived as a meddler in Congolese affairs to emerging as a responsible stakeholder committed to peace. For the DRC, it offers a glimmer of hope that a negotiated settlement might finally break the cycle of violence that has decimated its eastern provinces.

Rwanda’s bold decision to sever ties with Belgium while opening a new diplomatic chapter with the DRC encapsulates a significant transformation in regional geopolitics. The groundbreaking Doha talks, in particular, have injected fresh optimism into the peace process, signaling that both nations may now be prepared to bridge historical grievances and address contemporary challenges collaboratively. As the dialogue in Doha paves the way for further negotiations, the international community watches with cautious optimism that this renewed spirit of cooperation may finally bring lasting peace to one of Africa’s most volatile regions.



The talks between Kagame and Tshisekedi in Doha have ushered in fresh hope for peace. Photo courtesy.





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# Farewell to a Legend: Namibia Mourns Its Founding Father Sam Nujoma

By Wallace Mawire

Namibia's heartbeat slowed on February 8, 2025, when the nation's founding father, Sam Nujoma, passed away at the age of 95. Revered as the architect of Namibia's liberation from apartheid and the driving force behind its emergence as an independent, democratic nation, Nujoma's death marks the end of an era. His state funeral, held with full military honors and attended by African leaders and dignitaries, provided a solemn yet inspiring tribute to a man who dedicated his life to the struggle for freedom.

## A State Funeral Steeped in National Pride

On March 1, 2025, under a gray Windhoek sky, thousands gathered at Heroes Acre—the hallowed resting place for those who fought for Namibia's independence—to bid farewell to Sam Nujoma. The funeral ceremony was a meticulously orchestrated display of national unity and respect. Nujoma's casket, draped in the Namibian flag, was lowered with a 21-gun salute and accompanied by a flypast by the Namibian Air Force, a poignant reminder of his military and revolutionary past. In a country that observed a 21-day mourning period, flags flew at half-mast across cities and villages, and citizens from all walks of life converged to pay their final respects.

"Today, we honor not just a leader but the spirit of our nation," declared President Nangolo Mbumba during the ceremony. "He marshalled our people in the darkest hours and inspired us to rise above adversity to claim our freedom."

## A Journey of Sacrifice and Triumph

Born in 1929 in Ovamboland, Nujoma's journey from a humble cattle herder to the stalwart leader



Namibia's Founding President Dr Sam Nujoma was hailed by many as one of the last great African liberators

of Namibia's liberation movement is the stuff of legend. In his youth, he experienced the harsh realities of colonial rule under South Africa's apartheid regime—a system that oppressed the majority and stifled the dreams of millions. Determined to challenge injustice, Nujoma co-founded the Ovamboland People's Organization in 1959, which later evolved into the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO). His life in exile and his relentless advocacy on the global stage galvanized international support for Namibia's independence.

After decades of struggle and sacrifice, Namibia finally achieved its independence in 1990, and Sam Nujoma was elected as its first president. His tenure, which lasted until 2005, was characterized by efforts toward national reconciliation and the establishment of democratic

institutions in a country emerging from the shadows of oppression. Despite controversies that occasionally marred his leadership, his legacy as a unifier and freedom fighter remains undisputed.

## Leaders' Tributes: A Pan-African Mourning

The funeral was not only a national event but a pan-African one. Leaders from across the continent gathered to pay homage to a figure whose influence extended well beyond Namibia's borders. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa described Nujoma as an "extraordinary freedom fighter" who challenged the might of apartheid and paved the way for a new era in southern Africa. "Namibia's independence under his visionary leadership has inspired our own journey towards freedom," Ramaphosa said, his voice resonating

with both pride and sorrow.

African Union Commission Chair Moussa Faki Mahamat hailed him as one of the continent's "most illustrious revolutionary leaders" and a man whose life embodied the courage and resilience required to forge a new destiny for his people. Dignitaries from South Africa, Tanzania, Angola, and beyond echoed these sentiments, underscoring how Nujoma's legacy continues to serve as a beacon of hope and resistance against oppression.

## The Ceremony: Rituals of Reconciliation and Remembrance

At Heroes Acre, the atmosphere was charged with both grief and gratitude. Mourners—families, activists, veterans of the liberation struggle, and ordinary citizens—lined the pathways, many holding photographs of Nujoma from various stages of his long career. The ceremony was interspersed with stirring speeches and soulful performances that recalled the tumultuous journey toward freedom. Hymns of liberation and the national anthem filled the air, creating a tapestry of sound that celebrated his lifelong commitment to Namibia.

During the service, Utoni Nujoma, Sam's eldest son, tearfully recalled his father's enduring spirit. "He was our guiding light, a man who never wavered in his pursuit of justice and equality. Even in his final moments, his dedication to our nation shone through," he said.

The casket's descent was punctuated by a 21-gun salute—a traditional honor reserved for national heroes—and a flyover that symbolized the reach of his influence from the dusty plains of Ovamboland to the high skies over Windhoek. The solemn procession was a powerful visual of national unity, reflecting a



collective yearning to remember and learn from the past as Namibia moves forward.

### *A Legacy That Transcends Time*

Sam Nujoma's impact on Namibia is immeasurable. His leadership not only steered the country to freedom but also laid the foundations for a democratic state built on the principles of reconciliation and national pride. His memoir, *Where Others Wavered*, remains a testament to his resolve and vision, chronicling a journey filled with hardship, exile, and eventual triumph over colonial tyranny.

Yet, Nujoma's legacy is complex. While celebrated for his contributions to liberation, he also faced criticism for his autocratic tendencies and controversial views on issues such as media freedom and social policies. Nevertheless, for many Namibians, his flaws are secondary to the monumental achievements of his early life—the forging of a nation from the crucible of colonial exploitation and apartheid brutality.

"Sam Nujoma showed us that no matter how insurmountable the odds, freedom is worth every sacrifice," remarked a veteran freedom fighter during the service. His passing leaves



"We honor not just a leader but the spirit of our nation," declared President Nangolo Mbumba during the ceremony. Photo courtesy.

a void that will be deeply felt not only by his country but by all who continue to fight for justice and equality across Africa.

### *A Nation's Final Goodbye*

As Namibia bids farewell to its

founding father, the national mood is one of both mourning and hopeful reflection. The state funeral, rich in ceremony and steeped in symbolism, was a fitting tribute to a man who gave everything for his country. The legacy of Sam Nujoma will live on in the

continued efforts to build a more just, prosperous, and united Namibia. For the people of this resilient nation, his life serves as an enduring reminder that the struggle for freedom is both a personal journey and a collective endeavor.

In the quiet moments after the ceremony, as mourners dispersed and the national anthem echoed in the distance, many reflected on the enduring lessons of Nujoma's life. His unwavering belief in the power of unity and his indomitable spirit in the face of adversity remain a clarion call for future generations—a reminder that true liberation comes not just from the struggle against external oppressors, but from the collective will to overcome internal challenges and build a society where every citizen can thrive.

Sam Nujoma's final farewell was not merely a goodbye; it was a celebration of a life that reshaped a nation and inspired a continent. As Namibia looks to the future, it does so with the knowledge that the ideals of freedom, unity, and justice he championed will continue to guide its path forward.



Leaders from across the continent gathered to pay homage to a figure whose influence extended well beyond Namibia's borders.





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# Breaking Away-West Africa Severs Francophonie Ties

By Jude Ndeh Asah

In a seismic shift that has rattled longstanding post-colonial structures, Mali has now joined its regional neighbors Niger and Burkina Faso in severing formal ties with the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF). This move—framed by military juntas as a reclaiming of national sovereignty—signals not only a dramatic realignment of diplomatic allegiances but also a broader repudiation of France’s enduring influence in West Africa.

## A New Chapter in Post-Colonial Politics

Over the past few years, West Africa has been witnessing an era of rapid political transformation. Following a series of military coups, the governments in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso have increasingly expressed dissatisfaction with institutions they view as vestiges of colonial rule. The OIF, established in 1970 to promote the French language and foster cultural, economic, and political cooperation among French-speaking nations, now finds itself under intense scrutiny. In an official communication, Mali’s foreign ministry stated,

“Mali cannot remain a member of an organisation whose actions are incompatible with the constitutional principles that guide public action in Mali, based on the sovereignty of the State, the sovereign choices of the people and the defence of their interests.” This stark denunciation is emblematic of the junta-led governments’ broader agenda to dismantle what they see as outdated colonial frameworks and reassert national autonomy.

## The Catalyst: Coup, Sanctions, and Sovereignty

The decision to exit the OIF did not occur in isolation. It follows a period of mounting tension after repeated military coups upended the democratic order in these



Mali cannot remain a member of an organisation whose actions are incompatible with the constitutional principles that guide public action in Mali, says Foreign Affairs Minister Abdoulaye Diop

nations. Niger’s coup in 2023, which saw the military seize power and prompt ECOWAS to impose severe sanctions—including border closures and freezing of assets—set a precedent. The three countries decried the “selective application of sanctions” and accused the OIF of “contempt for their sovereignty,” a phrase that has since become the rallying cry for the new political order. As one official letter from Mali put it:

“Since the beginning of the transition, instead of helping Mali realize the legitimate aspirations of its people, the OIF has been characterized by the selective application of sanctions and disregard for Mali’s sovereignty.”

For the junta leaders, these actions by the OIF—and by extension, France—represent an affront to their newly forged national narratives. The exit, set to become effective after a six-month review period, is not merely bureaucratic but ideological, marking a clear break from an institution they view as “a politically manipulated instrument.”

## Shifting Alliances in the Sahel

This dramatic departure dovetails with another significant geopolitical reorientation in the region. Following their exit from ECOWAS last January, Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso have also taken steps to consolidate their military and economic cooperation by forming the Alliance of Sahel States (AES). The AES not only symbolizes a collective repudiation of Western influence but also underscores an intent to forge closer ties with alternative partners.

Reuters reported that these countries have “severed military ties with France and other Western allies and are now looking to bolster their security framework with support from non-Western partners such as Russia.”

The establishment of a joint military force—already nearing 5,000 troops according to Niger’s defense minister—underscores this pivot toward self-reliance in security matters. With violent insurgencies from extremist groups intensifying in the region, the need for a robust, indigenous defense mechanism has never been more pressing.

## The Decline of French Influence

For decades, France has leveraged its historical ties with its former colonies to maintain considerable influence over West African political, economic, and cultural affairs. However, this traditional “Françafrique” model has come under increasing fire. Critics argue that French policies have often been out of touch with the aspirations of local populations, particularly as the nations in question seek to assert their independence and address internal security challenges without foreign interference.

Bloomberg noted that “the juntas, which have broken ties with France, stated that the organisation no longer supports their national goals,” reflecting a growing sentiment that former colonial powers are more interested in maintaining control than fostering genuine development.

This sentiment is echoed by prominent voices within the region who view the exit as an essential step toward “decolonizing” public spaces and governance—a move that has even seen streets and public squares in Bamako renamed to erase colonial imprints.

## International Reactions and Implications

The ripple effects of this decision are profound. Within diplomatic circles in Paris and Brussels, reactions have ranged from cautious concern to outright criticism. French political figures have lamented the “loss of influence” while some left-wing voices in France have accused President Emmanuel Macron’s policies of having “paved the way” for these exits. Jean-Luc Mélenchon, leader of La France Insoumise, commented: “France is paying dearly for Macron’s missteps in Africa: Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali have left the International Organisation de la Francophonie in the last 48 hours.”

For the West African region, however, the implications are twofold. On one hand, the exit from the OIF and ECOWAS signals a bold assertion of sovereignty and an opportunity to reconfigure regional cooperation on terms more favorable to local realities. On the other hand, analysts warn of potential economic and diplomatic isolation. With these nations already among the poorest in the region, a further decline in foreign investment and aid could exacerbate existing challenges. Business Insider Africa reported that “the economic outlook for these countries remains bleak due to potential declines in foreign investments” as they pivot away from traditional alliances.

Moreover, the creation of the AES,



The military leaders of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso have turned their backs on the Francophonie.

while a symbol of unity among the junta-led states, has raised questions about the future of regional security and integration. As the bloc now operates with its own biometric passports and military apparatus, there is uncertainty about how these new arrangements will interact with existing frameworks like the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA).

### A Future in Flux

The departure from the OIF is emblematic of a broader trend sweeping across West Africa -a trend marked by a reassertion of national sovereignty, a rejection of perceived neo-colonial influence, and an urgent need to adapt to an evolving security landscape. The junta-led regimes, by

aligning themselves more closely with alternative powers and reconfiguring regional alliances, are betting on a future where they can govern without the constraints imposed by external actors.

Yet, this new path is fraught with challenges. With a rapidly shifting geopolitical environment, the balance between asserting independence and ensuring economic stability remains delicate. As these nations chart a course away from longstanding institutions, the international community will be watching closely to see whether their bold moves will usher in an era of genuine self-determination or further isolate them on the world stage.

Mali’s exit from the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie,

following in the footsteps of Niger and Burkina Faso, marks a pivotal moment in West African history. It is a decisive break with the colonial past and an assertion of the region’s desire to forge a new identity based on sovereign decision-making and regional solidarity. Whether this recalibration will translate into long-term stability and prosperity remains to be seen, but one thing is clear: the era of unquestioned French influence in the region is drawing to a close.

As the dust settles on this historic move, all eyes will be on the Alliance of Sahel States and the future they are determined to shape—one that promises to be as challenging as it is revolutionary.

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# A New Offensive On Debt Relief From African Leaders

By Adonis Byemelwa

**C**ape Town, South Africa - In a historic gathering on 27 February 2025, a coalition of African leaders called for an urgent and sweeping plan for debt relief, warning that without immediate action, Africa's future remains under siege.

The African Leaders Debt Relief Initiative (ALDRI), meeting in Cape Town, declared that Africa is being strangled by an unsustainable debt burden at a time of economic turmoil, climate disasters, and global instability.

"The world has faced debt crises before and solved them," said Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of Nigeria and chair of the initiative. "Now it must do so again. The question is: does the world have the will?"

At a time when interest rate hikes are choking economies, food and energy crises are deepening poverty, and climate change is wreaking havoc on African nations, leaders argue that Africa is not just in crisis but also poised for opportunity.

The continent is rich in resources, has a youthful and ambitious population, and is at the forefront of the green transition.

Yet, it remains trapped by unsustainable debt, with many



calling on the G20 to move beyond empty promises and take concrete steps toward comprehensive debt restructuring, former African leaders affirm.

nations spending more on interest payments than on health, education, or climate resilience.

The implications of this are staggering. With more than half of Africa's population living in countries weighed down by debt repayments, critical investments in infrastructure, innovation, and human capital are being stalled.

Many African economies are unable to fully participate in the global market or unlock their

growth potential due to financial constraints imposed by mounting debt obligations.

This crisis raises a critical question: Have these debts been used meaningfully? Critics argue that while some borrowing has been channeled into essential infrastructure and development projects, much of it has been wasted through mismanagement, corruption, and inefficient projects.

"Many African governments have taken loans under opaque terms, some of which have not translated into real economic growth," said a financial analyst from Lagos. "Without accountability and structural reforms, relief alone will not solve the problem."

South Africa's leadership of the G20 in 2025 presents a turning point. With President Cyril Ramaphosa committing to prioritize debt sustainability for developing nations, African leaders are seizing this moment to push for real change.

They are calling on the G20 to move beyond empty promises and take concrete steps toward comprehensive debt restructuring.

"We cannot talk about global financial stability if Africa is drowning in debt," said Joyce Banda, former President of Malawi. "Debt relief is not charity—it is an investment in a stronger Africa and a stronger global economy."

The leaders propose a twofold solution: first, a fair and predictable debt restructuring process involving all creditors—private, bilateral, and multilateral—to ensure comparability and prevent prolonged financial crises.

Second, they call for lowering the cost of capital for developing nations, including credit enhancements through multilateral institutions and debt suspension mechanisms that create fiscal space for critical development and climate investments.

History has shown that bold action on debt relief can work. Germany benefited from significant debt cancellation under the 1952 London Debt Agreement, helping to drive its post-war economic recovery.

In the 1990s, the Brady Plan and the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative provided relief that



The world has faced debt crises before and solved them," says Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of Nigeria and chair of the ALDRI.



spurred growth in several developing nations. The argument now is that Africa deserves the same decisive intervention.

However, not everyone is convinced. Critics warn that debt relief, while necessary, will not be a panacea. Some economists argue that without structural reforms, African governments may fall into the same debt traps again.

Others point to the role of international lenders, including China, in fueling the crisis. "Debt relief must be accompanied by greater financial transparency and responsible borrowing," said a senior economist from Nairobi. "We can't keep kicking the can down the road."

Still, African leaders insist that without relief, Africa's development goals—and the broader global economy—will suffer. Unlocking Africa's economic potential would mean stronger global supply chains,



Debt relief is not charity—it is an investment in a stronger Africa and a stronger global economy, says Joyce Banda, former President of Malawi.

increased trade, and acceleration of the green transition.

Among those lending their voices to this urgent call are some of the continent's most respected statesmen and women: Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, Macky Sall of Senegal, Joyce

Banda of Malawi, Jakaya Kikwete of Tanzania, Nana Akufo-Addo of Ghana, Ameenah Gurib-Fakim of Mauritius, Hailemariam Desalegn of Ethiopia, and Yemi Osinbajo of Nigeria.

These leaders, each carrying the

weight of their nations' struggles and hopes, have united under the African Leaders Debt Relief Initiative, not just as politicians but as guardians of a vision—one in which Africa is not shackled by unsustainable debt but empowered to build a future where prosperity is shared, and opportunities are abundant.

As the world watches, the message from Cape Town is clear: the time for action is now. "A strong Africa is a strong world," said Jakaya Kikwete, former President of Tanzania. "If we are serious about a just and prosperous global economy, debt relief is the first step."

With the G20 on the horizon and economic instability deepening, the decisions made in the coming months will determine whether Africa remains shackled by debt or finally steps into its full potential. The choice is not just Africa's to make—it is the world's.

## Debt Reform For Africa Imperative Now-Ameenah Gurib-Fakim

By Adonis Byemelwa

With Africa been at the epicentre of the global debt crisis and home to the highest concentration of highly indebted countries, former Mauritius President Ameenah Gurib-Fakim says it is of critical interest for the continent to find solutions. Fielding questions from PAV after a meeting of the African Leaders Debt Relief Initiative- (ALDRI), Ameenah Gurib Fakim says debt relief for highly indebted countries, along with efforts to lower the cost of capital for all African countries, is critical to creating the fiscal space and enabling Africa to invest in climate-resilient green growth for the continent.

"With South Africa hosting the G20 Presidency in 2025 and putting



Africa has a critical interest in finding a solution to the debt crisis, says former President Ameenah Gurib-Fakim.

debt relief on the agenda, the African Union being part of the G20, and a campaign for a Jubilee Year 2025 getting underway with the support

of Pope Francis, there is a unique opportunity for African leadership to champion essential reforms in the international architecture on debt

and finance," says Ameenah Gurib Fakim.

Ameenah Gurib Fakim who has remained a champion of noble development courses across Africa since leaving office, uses several metrics to argue that the status quo is untenable.

"External debt levels have increased by 240% between 2008-2022 due to external shocks from climate impacts, energy and food price spikes, and the hiking of interest rates by central banks in advanced countries. Half of African nations are now spending more on interest payments alone than on their public health budgets. Debt owed to private bondholders which is particularly expensive soared from 25\$ Billion in 2008 to 187Bn\$ in 2022. Since 2020, four

African nations have defaulted, and the number of regional economies effectively barred from international capital markets has grown from one in 2010, to 11 in 2024,” says the former Mauritius President.

Far from been an African problem, President Ameenah Gurib Fakim posits that a more productive Africa with its ample resources of renewable energies, minerals and land could become a critical part of global sustainable development.

*Could we start with some background context on the African Leaders Debt Relief Initiative (ALDRI), - why was it created and what is its mission?*

Many African countries are now in the throes of a sovereign debt crisis. They are spending more on servicing their debt than on critical development issues like education, health, or on investment in future growth. For a large group of countries, the yield on government bonds is now higher than expected economic growth rates, making it harder to break free from the debt trap. Each bond issuance drives them deeper into debt. Debt relief for highly indebted countries, along with efforts to lower the cost of capital for all African countries, is critical to creating the fiscal space and enabling Africa to invest in climate-resilient green growth for the continent.

*The African Leaders Debt Relief Initiative (ALDRI) recently came out with the Cape Town Declaration calling for bold and urgent action on a comprehensive plan for debt relief for Africa, why the call and why the call and urgency at this point?*

Africa is at the epicentre of the global debt crisis and is home to the highest concentration of highly indebted countries. As a result, Africa has a critical interest in finding a solution to the debt crisis. With South Africa hosting the G20 Presidency in 2025 and putting debt relief on the agenda, the African Union being part of the G20, and a campaign for a Jubilee Year 2025 getting underway



A more productive Africa with its ample resources of renewable energies, minerals and land could become a critical part of global sustainable development, says President Ameenah Gurib Fakim

with the support of Pope Francis, there is a unique opportunity for African leadership to champion essential reforms in the international architecture on debt and finance

*You and the other leaders maybe privy to figures that are oblivious to many Africans, are there any vital stats you may want to share on how indebted Africa is and to who?*

External debt levels have increased by 240% between 2008-2022 due to external shocks from climate impacts, energy and food price spikes, and the hiking of interest rates by central banks in advanced countries. Half of African nations are now spending more on interest payments alone than on their public health budgets. Debt owed to private bondholders which is particularly expensive soared from 25\$ Billion in 2008 to 187Bn\$ in 2022. Since 2020, four African nations have defaulted, and the number of regional economies effectively barred from international capital markets has grown from one in 2010, to 11 in 2024. At least 34 African countries will need significant debt relief to unlock the necessary funding for the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Agreement targets, alongside other forms of low cost and concessional financing. Low-cost finance alone will not be enough to

close their funding gap.

*How did Africa find itself in the current debt predicament, who bears the blame- is it the African leaders including some who are part of the ALDRI, or it is the international system that some argue is designed to keep Africa in debt?*

Current debt predicament stem since the independence of many African countries. Also, over the past 15 years, many poor countries have been encouraged to borrow from the bond market at a time when interest rates were low due to quantitative easing policies in the leading developed economies. At the beginning of the 2020s, a number of external shocks drove countries much deeper into debt: First the COVID-19 crisis which hit many poor countries particularly hard. Then the global price shock of energy and food in the context of the war in Ukraine, driving many countries to the brink of insolvency. Central banks tightened money supply to fight inflation, and interest rates climbed. And the climate crisis has hit vulnerable countries particularly hard. Many countries are therefore in a spiraling debt crisis and unable to break out of this debt trap. Unfortunately, the international, current international financial infrastructure is not conducive towards helping poorer

countries.

*In the Cape Town Declaration, you and the other former leaders say debt relief is not charity but an investment in a prosperous, stable, and sustainable future—for Africa and the global economy, can you shed some light on this?*

There is a global demographic shift happening worldwide. Many of the rich countries have an ageing population and are in need of a younger work force to drive and sustain their economies. Yet, political parties decry immigration. The African continent is already the youngest continent with a median age of 17 years in some regions. By 2050, 1 in 4 of working age adults will be African. But investment is lacking due to excess debt. In the absence of productive investment, infrastructure and education, many of these young, creative and entrepreneurial young people are not able to contribute fully to global growth and development. A more productive Africa with its ample resources of renewable energies, minerals and land could become a critical part of global sustainable development. It is a win-win for all.

*On proposals what are some of the concrete measures or recommendations that*



***the ALDRI is proposing as palliatives to Africa's debt crisis?***

Several proposals have been put forward to the international community so that debt relief is aligned with broader sustainability goals. A climate-sensitive debt sustainability analysis by World Bank and IMF would be the first step to identify and distinguish between countries that need debt relief and countries that do not need debt relief but rather liquidity support. For the group of countries in need of debt restructuring and relief, meaningful debt relief needs to be provided. The participation of all creditor classes, including private bond holders in debt restructuring, is critical. Also, countries receiving debt relief need to commit to using freed up fiscal resources in line with their Nationally Determined Contributions to the Paris Agreement and implementation plans for the SDGs. They will need to subscribe to establishing full public debt transparency and enhancing public debt management standards. Also, non-distressed countries facing liquidity constraints should be provided with credit enhancements and further support to reduce their capital costs and access to liquidity. Besides the issuance of new Special Drawing Rights (SDR) and the rechanneling of SDRs from advanced countries, efforts need to be reinforced to provide new concessional finance by MDBs. Instruments like debt for climate/nature/development swaps and credit enhancements for new sovereign sustainability linked bonds can complement such efforts.

***The Cape Declaration is coming at a time when US President Donald Trump has inadvertently triggered a debate on aid to Africa, where do you stand on this, should a continent with the size and potential of Africa be counting on aid and handouts to lead it to emergence in 2063?***



There is a unique opportunity for African leadership to champion essential reforms in the international architecture on debt and finance, says President Ameenah Gurib Fakim

There is no doubt that Aid has helped Africa in some areas. I think of the Health sector with PEPFAR and the availability of antiretrovirals. However, a continent of the size and potential as that of Africa must go beyond Aid. She must draw on the talents of her people, her own abundant natural resources that must be carefully stewarded to drive her development and issues like corruption and governance must also be addressed.

***When you look at the continent and see the slow implementation of initiatives like the AfCFTA, when you see how frustrating it still is for Africans to travel from one country to another, when you look at the crisis in the DR Congo, in Sudan, South Sudan, do you personally and others in the ALDRI get the feeling that beyond debt reduction Africans need to seriously look inward***

***for solutions to shape the better future that its people deserve?***

It is easy to slam the slow integration of African countries through the AfCFTA which has been implemented only a couple of years ago. When one looks at Europe, it took over 50 years to reach a certain level of integration. Trade is already happening in regional blocks like SADC etc and which remain powerful initiatives to promote regional integration. Africa also is also a victim to her own abundance and the crisis in the countries you mentioned are symptomatic of that.

***The Cape Declaration comes at a time when South Africa and President Ramaphosa will be taking over the Presidency of the G20, what does this mean for the continent and beyond debt relief, what are some issues you think should define the mandate?***

Already it is historical that the G20 is meeting in Africa for the first

time. The G20 after all represents over 80% of the world economy and its membership includes key global leaders. It is the forum where issues like climate crisis, debt, inequality, better returns for the exploitation of African resources must be addressed.

***Only eight former African leaders signed the Cape Declaration, does this mean that the issue is not of interest other leaders and beyond declaration what more will the ALDRI be doing to ensure that the debt issues and others you are interested in get deserved attention?***

The issue of debt matters to all leaders past and present on this continent. ALDRI is a very young initiative. We are at the beginning of our mission and our work has just started. I am sure ALDRI will garner more members and more interest on how best to alleviate the debt burden.



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# No Turning Back...

## NJ Ayuk On The African Energy Crusade

By Ajong Mbapndah L

For the African Energy Chamber -AEC and its Executive Chairman NJ Ayuk, there is no turning back in the crusade for African Energy independence. With high profile events in Suriname, London, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Congo, and China within the first quarter of 2025, the AEC is resolute in ensuring that the African energy sector gets the attention and investment it deserves.

"It's time to reframe the narrative and showcase Africa's potential as a global energy leader. We're not just talking about fossil fuels; we're also embracing renewable energy and innovative technologies that will power our future. By working together, we can unlock Africa's energy potential and create a brighter future for all Africans," says NJ Ayuk in interview with PAV on the energy landscape in Africa.

Proudly unapologetic about the drill and invest message touted by the AEC and its teeming and growing followers, NJ Ayuk says the international engagements are driven by a clear message: Africa has the sovereign right to develop its energy resources to eradicate poverty and foster economic growth. The efforts have yielded tangible results says NJ Ayuk, citing increased foreign direct investments, technology transfer to African energy projects, and recent collaborations with Tima Networks to create a \$100 million fund as testaments to global commitments to Africa's energy future.

With the African Energy Week reaching the hugely symbolic milestone this year, NJ Ayuk says the 2025 edition promises to be the largest and most impactful yet, featuring high-level discussions on investment strategies for the continent. The event will also showcase cutting-edge solutions through exhibitions and provide networking opportunities



By working together, we can unlock Africa's energy potential and create a brighter future for all Africans, says NJ Ayuk .

to foster collaborations that drive Africa's energy agenda forward

"We are driving momentum in Africa's energy sector with significant strides made in securing financing for energy projects. We are optimistic about the prospects for investment in Africa's energy sector, hoping to see deals in excess of \$25 billion. A solid partnership has been forged with S&P Global Commodity Insights, Afreximbank and the South African government – with plans to engage the G20 to leverage their expertise and resources in support of Africa's energy development," says NJ Ayuk.

**How would you sum up the African energy scene as we hit the first quarter of 2025?**

As we enter 2025, Africa's energy sector stands at a pivotal crossroads. The continent is actively balancing the development of its abundant fossil fuel resources with a growing

commitment to renewable energy initiatives. Milestones achieved in 2024 have set the continent up for accelerated growth in 2025. We saw African capital expenditure grow 23% in 2024, reaching \$47 billion. Expenditure is on track to surge to \$54 billion by 2030. We saw a rise in offshore and onshore drilling, with rig demand expected to increase to 46 rig years in 2025. Exploration continues to rise, surpassing \$6 billion in 2024, while various licensing rounds will be launched across the continent. Concurrently, investments in green hydrogen, power infrastructure and new technologies took off, but much more investment is needed to unlock the full potential of the continent's resources.

**The AEC under your leadership has been hyperactive on the international scene with high profile activities in Suriname,**

**Brazil, Saudi Arabia, London, China, and more. Can you re-emphasize the message you have taken to these forums and the impact or results for the energy landscape in Africa?**

Drill, baby drill. Invest, baby, invest. Our international engagements are driven by a clear message: Africa has the sovereign right to develop its energy resources to eradicate poverty and foster economic growth. In forums across Suriname, Brazil, London and China, we've advocated for strategic partnerships that respect Africa's unique energy context. These efforts have yielded tangible results, including increased foreign direct investment and technology transfer to African energy projects. Notably, collaborations with Tima Networks to create a \$100 million fund are a testament to the global commitment to Africa's energy future.

*In the face of the rocky patch it went through politically last year, the AEC remained resolute in calling on investors not to give up on Mozambique. What made the Chamber think the country should remain a safe bet?*

Mozambique's vast natural gas reserves position it as a cornerstone for Africa's energy future. Despite political challenges in Mozambique, the AEC has remained steadfast in advocating for continued investment in the country. Our confidence is bolstered by the U.S. Export-Import Bank's re-authorization of a \$4.7 billion loan for Mozambique's LNG project, reflecting international trust in its potential. We believe that with strategic partnerships and a focus on local participation, Mozambique's energy sector can drive significant economic growth and contribute to regional energy security.

*You and the AEC were very bullish last year on energy financing for Africa, may we know what progress you have seen on this front?*

Africa's energy sector has made significant strides in securing financing. The AEC has endorsed the Africa Energy Bank, a joint initiative by Afreximbank and the African Petroleum Producers' Organization. With initial capital of \$5 billion, the bank will mobilize investments for energy projects, bridging the financing gap and unlocking Africa's energy potential.

Meanwhile, our efforts to challenge discriminatory banking practices are yielding results. We've signed a \$100 million agreement in China to establish a fund and plan to take on radical Western NGOs, such as Extinction Rebellion, Just Stop Oil, Friends of the Earth, and Greenpeace, that oppose African development and hinder our efforts to alleviate energy poverty.

*The African Energy Week will hit a historical milestone this year with its 5th edition, what does*



Africa has the sovereign right to develop its energy resources to eradicate poverty and foster economic growth, says NJ Ayuk.

*this mean for you and the folks at the AEC, and could you give us some privileged insights on how the Sept 29-Oct 4th event will look like?*

We are driving momentum in Africa's energy sector with significant strides made in securing financing for energy projects. We are optimistic about the prospects for investment in Africa's energy sector, hoping to see deals in excess of \$25 billion. A solid partnership has been forged with S&P Global Commodity Insights, Afreximbank and the South African government – with plans to engage the G20 to leverage their expertise and resources in support of Africa's energy development.

African Energy Week: Invest in African Energies has established itself as the premier event for Africa's energy sector. The 2025 edition promises to be the largest and most impactful yet, featuring high-level discussions on investment strategies for the continent. The event will also showcase cutting-edge solutions through exhibitions and provide networking opportunities to foster collaborations that drive Africa's energy agenda forward.

A key highlight of this year's event is the inaugural National Oil Company and International Oil Company Forum. This dynamic platform brings together key public and private sector stakeholders for direct conversations aimed at driving investment, securing

new deals, fostering local capacity building and advancing exploration. African Energy Week remains a vital catalyst for the continent's energy growth and development.

*Could you share some of the palpable progress and impact that the AEW has had in changing the energy fortunes of the continent?*

AEW: Invest in African Energies is a pivotal platform for catalyzing change within Africa's energy sector. By bringing together key stakeholders, the event has facilitated strategic partnerships, leading to increased investments and the initiation of transformative projects across the continent. Notably, discussions and collaborations fostered during AEW have contributed to greater engagement across the sector, leading to new projects, investment commitments and collaborations. Million-dollar deals are signed at every edition, highlighting the value of the event as a dealmaking platform in Africa. The event has also been instrumental in promoting policy dialogues that align with Africa's unique energy needs, balancing development with sustainability.

We are giving a platform to frontier explorers bringing money into African Energy. Africans are driving the narrative about our energy future. By empowering local stakeholders and promoting African-led solutions AEW

is shaping the continent's energy destiny and ensuring that Africa's energy resources are utilized for the benefit of African people.

*How is the Trump Administration's approach to energy issues affecting the outlook in Africa and investment ties with the USA?*

President Donald Trump, Chris Wright, Tommy Joyce and many others have demonstrated their support for Africa and its energy sector. Chris Wright, in particular, has been a passionate advocate for Africa, emphasizing the importance of investments and empowerment over aid and handouts.

As the newly appointed US Secretary of Energy, Wright is expected to play a key role in shaping America's energy policy. His stance on energy aligns with Trump's vision, which prioritizes utilizing all forms of energy to drive growth and development.

President Trump has expressed his commitment to supporting Africa's energy sector, recognizing the continent's vast potential for energy production. By promoting investment and partnerships Trump aims to help Africa overcome energy poverty and unlock its economic potential.

The Trump Administration's support for African energy initiatives has positively influenced the continent's energy outlook. The U.S. Export-Import Bank's re-authorization of a \$4.7 billion loan for Mozambique's LNG project exemplifies this commitment. Such backing not only bolsters investor confidence but also strengthens U.S.-Africa energy ties, paving the way for increased collaboration and investment in Africa's burgeoning energy sector.

*The AEC recently took the unprecedented step of hiring a lobbying firm in Washington, DC. May we know the logic behind this move, and what is the sales pitch the Chamber is making to American investors?*

To amplify Africa's energy narrative



on the global stage, the AEC has partnered with Stryk Global Diplomacy, a Washington, DC-based consulting firm. This collaboration aims to enhance U.S. engagement in Africa's oil and gas sector by articulating the continent's energy potential and investment opportunities. Our message is clear: come to Africa, invest in projects and forge partnerships that unlock value for both the African and American continents.

It's time for a new era of African leadership, one that takes charge and shapes the continent's energy future. We can't afford to ignore the influence of Washington, so we're taking proactive steps to engage and educate policymakers about Africa's energy sector.

Our generation of Africans must shed the victim mindset and reject the soft bigotry of low expectations. We're not just recipients of aid; we're drivers of growth and development. By using lobbying firms to tell our story, we're ensuring that Africa's energy sector gets the attention and investment it deserves.

It's time to reframe the narrative and showcase Africa's potential as a global energy leader. We're not just talking about fossil fuels; we're also embracing renewable energy and innovative technologies that will power our future. By working together, we can unlock Africa's energy potential and create a brighter future for all Africans.

*As you and then AEC work relentlessly to draw investors and articulate African energy issues, may we know the kind of support you are getting from African governments? Are the governments showing enough political will for things to evolve from*



It's time to reframe the narrative and showcase Africa's potential as a global energy leader, says Ayuk.

*investment climates, to putting resources or proceeds at the service of development?*

African governments are increasingly demonstrating political will to enhance the continent's energy landscape. Major reforms are being implemented in Nigeria, with the signing into law of the Petroleum Industry Act; in the Republic of Congo, with the upcoming launch of a new Gas Code and Gas Master Plan;

South Africa, with the establishment of a new national oil company; and many more. Additionally, countries such as Djibouti have established sovereign wealth funds to invest in energy infrastructure, aiming to double assets within a decade. Uganda and Tanzania's NOCs have also committed millions to the development of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline, showcasing a drive to partnering with international

firms in realizing major projects.

*As Prof Benedict Oramah steps down at the helm of Afreximbank, any word on his contributions in the growth of the African energy sector?*

Professor Benedict Oramah is a titan of African development, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with legends like Kwame Nkrumah and Nelson Mandela. As a champion of African growth, he's been a driving force behind the continent's rise, earning global respect and admiration. Under his leadership, Afreximbank has become a beacon of African excellence, an institution that the world holds in high esteem.

His legacy is a testament to his unwavering dedication to African development. He has fought tirelessly for the continent's interests, paving the way for future generations to build upon his accomplishments. As he passes the torch, there's no doubt that his impact will continue to be felt, inspiring a new wave of leaders to carry the mantle of African growth and development.

Oramah's tenure as President of Afreximbank has been transformative for Africa's energy sector. Under his leadership, the bank facilitated billions of dollars in financing for energy projects, notably launching the Africa Energy Bank in 2024. His visionary approach earned him the Mohammed S. Barkindo Lifetime Achievement Award in 2024 at AEW, recognizing his dedication to advancing energy access and economic empowerment in Africa. His departure marks the end of a significant era, but his legacy will undoubtedly continue to influence Africa's energy development trajectory.



Prof Oramah's departure from Afreximbank marks the end of a significant era, but his legacy will undoubtedly continue to influence Africa's energy development trajectory, say NJ Ayuk

# Trump's Second Term: A Rare Opportunity for Real African Energy Independence

By NJ Ayuk\*

Donald Trump's return to the White House in 2025 represents a pivotal moment for Africa's fossil fuel industry. His administration's swift reapproval of a USD4.7 billion loan from the U.S. Export-Import Bank (Exim) for TotalEnergies' liquefied natural gas (LNG) project in Mozambique — initially greenlit in 2020 during his first term but sent into deep-freeze for the full duration of the Biden years — sets the tone for what could be a transformative era for Africa's energy sector.

Despite Mozambique's stabilization of security issues and concerns that the transfer of power in America would delay receipt of the loan even further, the Biden Administration refused to release the funds ahead of Trump's inauguration, a decision reflective of the administration's reluctance to support new fossil fuel initiatives throughout Biden's time in office. In contrast, Trump's decisive action within weeks of taking office signals a renewed, positive working relationship between the United States and Africa — one that prioritizes energy development over ideological objections and the Green Agenda's influence.

The African Energy Chamber (AEC) contends that Africa should seize this potentially brief moment in history and embrace the Trump administration as a partner rather than an opponent. For too long, global pressures have insisted that African nations move toward green energy projects only and leave their fossil fuel resources behind.

While renewable energy has its place, and will be important to Africa's future, fossil fuels still clearly constitute the backbone of any realistic efforts for African industrialization and economic growth — goals we simply cannot afford to sideline.

Alignment with Trump's energy-first ethos would mean that Africa could unlock significant funding for



wide-ranging fossil fuel projects, and not just the offshore oil and gas ventures that dominate the headlines. The continent should capitalize on all opportunities in onshore projects, wildcat wells (exploratory drilling in unproven areas), and the proliferation of numerous small operators. These avenues lead the way to diversity in Africa's energy portfolio, job creation, and massively strengthened energy security.

The reapproval of funding for Mozambique LNG is a case in point. The project's revival under Trump demonstrates how quickly thick bureaucratic congestion can dissolve when political will aligns with economic practicality. This USD4.7 billion infusion will boost Mozambique's economy while sending a message to other African nations: Under Trump, at long last, America is open for business.

In contrast to the previous administration, which openly regarded fossil fuel development with skepticism and disdain, Trump's "drill baby drill" mantra — while rooted in an "America First" agenda — pairs seamlessly with the ambitions of the African oil and gas industry. Africa should adopt a similar mindset and position itself as an attractive destination for American investment dollars.

Coal's Comeback

Another of Trump's domestic priorities, no doubt a response to China's unabashed expansion of coal production within its borders, is to revive clean coal production in the U.S. This initiative offers a compelling blueprint for Africa. While coal remains a contentious, harshly criticized resource globally, its advantages are undeniable: It's cheaper to produce, often doesn't require big bank financing, and is abundant across the continent. For African nations grappling with energy poverty, coal can serve as a means to an end, delivering affordable power to millions in the interim while the infrastructure for other energy sources matures. Simply put, Africa deserves to be the last global holdout on coal production and should leverage its coal reserves to meet domestic needs and export demands. Trump's willingness to disregard the international campaign against coal should embolden African leaders to reopen their abandoned coal mines and rest assured that this time around, they'll be able to operate freely, without fear of U.S. opposition.

Fossil Fuels Unleashed

Looking beyond coal, over the next four years, Africa has the rare chance to pursue an aggressive fossil fuel agenda. The continent should unite under an "Africa First" banner and adopt its own "drill baby drill" mentality

in support of every promising oil exploration and production project, every possible natural gas project, and a multinational effort to slash through regulatory red tape.

In Nigeria, for instance, the wheels of progress moved agonizingly slowly when it came to passing the Petroleum Industry Act, first proposed in 2008 and not signed into law until 2021. Even after the law was passed, Nigeria has been slow to fully implement it. This kind of inertia deters investment and slows development. A Trump-inspired push to clean up such bureaucratic roadblocks could unleash a wave of prosperous development. Similarly, addressing security issues — like those that drove U.S. firms out of Libya — will be critical to restoring confidence and attracting capital from abroad.

While the offshore sector will undoubtedly remain a cornerstone of Africa's fossil fuel strategy, the continent's onshore potential is equally vast. Wildcat wells offer high-risk/ high-reward prospects that could uncover new reserves. Meanwhile, instead of relying solely on multinational oil and gas giants, empowerment of more independent companies and indigenous small operators could diversify the industry, build up local entrepreneurship, and ensure the economic benefits are more widespread. It is highly unlikely that the Trump administration, with its emphasis on deregulation and energy independence for its own shores, would obstruct such efforts on ours. Conversely, it may actively encourage them through financing and technical support, as seen with the Exim loan.

Balancing Development and Climate Realities

Though critics will argue that this push for fossil fuel proliferation contradicts global climate goals, at the AEC, we insist that the calculations for Africa are simply different.

Africa accounts for a fraction



of global emissions but bears a disproportionate burden when it comes to energy poverty. Fossil fuels offer a realistic and relatively quick path to electrification and industrialization, the proven prerequisites for lifting millions out of poverty. Trump's indifference to international climate orthodoxy, while controversial, gives Africa the much-needed breathing room to prioritize development over decarbonization. This is in no way an outright rejection of renewables but a recognition that fossil fuels can and will facilitate a just transition to green technologies once their capabilities catch up to Africa's current needs.

#### Seizing the Moment

The next four years under Trump could redefine Africa's energy landscape. With U.S. interference a thing of the past, Africa can pursue a multi-pronged energy strategy. With a ramp-up in natural gas to meet global demand, a coal revival to power

its own grids, and on and offshore opportunities tapped into, Africa could finally secure its full resource base.

However, this approach will require bold leadership. Governments will have to eliminate obstructive policies and address security challenges head-on to secure foreign investments. The payoff could be immense: energy abundance, economic growth, and a partnership with the U.S. that is stronger than ever before.

For example, Nigeria's oil and gas sector has been hampered by regulatory uncertainty and security threats in the Niger Delta. A Nigerian "drill baby drill" mindset could accelerate regulatory, social, and economic reforms needed to address the Niger Delta's deep-rooted instability. This kind of mindset could restart stalled projects and attract American firms eager to invest in a Trump-approved climate. Likewise, in Libya, a resolution to security concerns

could lure back U.S. companies that fled during years of instability, reviving a once-thriving oil industry. Across the continent, small operators could flourish under a lighter regulatory touch, drilling wildcat wells and tapping into overlooked reserves.

South Africa, with its vast coal deposits, could take the lead on clean coal technologies to balance affordability and environmental concerns. Smaller nations with untapped coal reserves could follow Trump's lead in defying global pressures against production. The result would be a continent less dependent on foreign aid and more capable of powering its own future.

Trump's presidency offers Africa a chance to unapologetically double down on its fossil fuel potential. The USD4.7 billion Mozambique loan is just the beginning — a proof of concept for what collaboration with the U.S. can achieve. By embracing

this partnership, Africa can shed the shackles of the Biden era and chart a course toward energy sovereignty.

The tools are all there: offshore rigs, onshore fields, wildcat wells, established mines, and a willing ally in Washington. The question that remains is whether Africa's leaders have the courage to stand up to the anti-carbon lobby.

Trump's second term could be remembered as the moment Africa's fossil fuel industry came into its own — as a partner to the U.S. in a shared vision of energy abundance. With four years of clear skies ahead, there is no question that Africa should build, mine, and yes, drill, baby, drill like never before.

If we don't act now, it might be a very long wait for an opportunity like this one to present itself again.

\*NJ Ayuk is Executive Chairman, African Energy Chamber

## Namibia's Energy Crossroads: A Pragmatic Path Forward

By Simnikiwe Hlatshaneni

In this exclusive interview, Knowledge Ndunge Ipinge—architect of Namibia's landmark Erongo Offshore Safety Conference—challenges conventional wisdom about Africa's energy future. As global energy markets oscillate between fossil fuels and renewables, Namibia stands at a pivotal moment.

As nations rush toward renewables, Ipinge offers a balanced alternative: using oil revenues to develop Namibia's economy while prioritizing safety from day one. Learning from past oil disasters and successful resource models, he charts a practical path forward.

Namibia's new oil discoveries have made it an energy contender, but tough decisions lie ahead. Leading the discussion is Ipinge, a seasoned strategist, whose practical approach balances oil development with safety and sustainability.

His message is clear: with presidential oversight and Pan-



Our strategic partnership with AECIPA presents a unique Pan-African approach to promoting industry-friendly legislation, standards, and more, says Knowledge Ipinge

African partnerships, Namibia's energy boom must first and foremost benefit Namibians. As the country prepares to host industry leaders at May's critical safety summit, this conversation offers a timely look at how African nations might navigate the energy transition on their terms.

How is the global economic

shift, including the transition to renewable energy and fluctuating oil prices, impacting offshore safety priorities in the oil and gas industry?

The global push for rapid renewable energy transition overlooks oil and gas's role in funding Namibia's industrialization and social programs. While BP and others are increasing

hydrocarbon investments, we're responding by making safety a national priority through the Erongo Offshore Safety Conference. Placing oil/gas under presidential oversight ensures these resources benefit all Namibians, starting with safe operations as the foundation for sustainable development.

The upcoming Erongo Offshore Safety Conference, scheduled for May 1–2, 2025, at The MTC Dome in Swakopmund, is being positioned as a national platform for reshaping how we define and implement offshore safety standards. This is not just a technical conversation; it is a strategic one.

Under normal circumstances, economic fluctuations influencing oil prices and geopolitical tensions would lead to maintaining capital discipline. However, a recent report from the UK confirmed our stance by indicating that only a small fraction of offshore oil and gas companies are committing to transitioning to renewable energy

sources. A few weeks ago, oil major BP announced it would cut its renewable energy investments and refocus on increasing annual oil and gas spending to \$10 billion, which will benefit safety priorities globally.

## *In what ways is NAOGSP adapting its strategies to ensure safety remains a top priority amid these economic changes?*

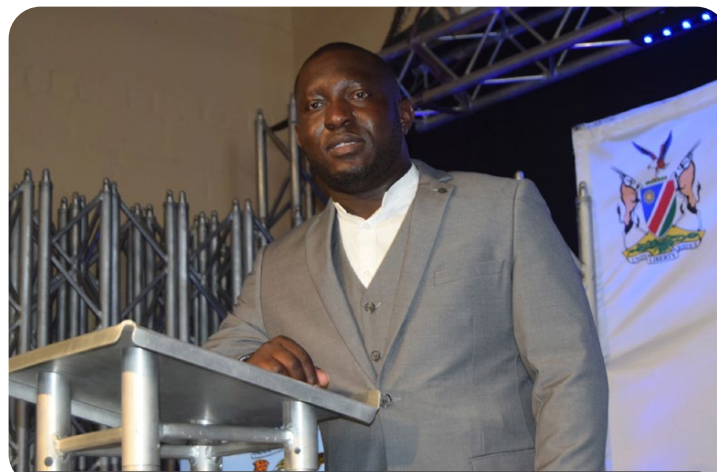
Through NAOGSP's objective of policy and legislative advocacy, we conceptualized the inaugural Erongo Offshore Safety Conference to serve as a platform for participants to engage in robust discussions and presentations of case studies focused on responses to incidents, key regulatory processes, and lessons learned from the loss of well control associated with the Macondo well in the Gulf of Mexico and the Montara well off the coast of Australia. This important initiative is designed to cultivate a culture of safety and provide public assurance that offshore petroleum activities in Namibia will be conducted safely. It will emphasize the accountability of operators, service companies, and regulators in managing associated risks offshore Namibia to ensure excellence in safety performance and employee well-being.

## *How do partnerships like the MOU with AECIPA help the African oil and gas sector remain competitive and resilient in a shifting global economy?*

Our strategic partnership with AECIPA presents a unique Pan-African approach to promoting industry-friendly legislation, standards, joint project participation, supply chain optimization, market intelligence, and research. This collaboration gives us a competitive edge to achieve genuine local content in our respective countries.

## *What role do innovation and technology play in addressing both safety and sustainability challenges in the industry?*

AI-driven predictive maintenance and IoT sensors prevent 40% of potential accidents by flagging equipment failures in real-time,



With presidential oversight and Pan-African partnerships, Namibia's energy boom must first and foremost benefit Namibians, says Knowledge Ipinge.

according to research by Deloitte. That's why we partnered with DNV - they reinvest 5% of revenue into R&D, bridging safety and sustainability through innovation.

Digital transformation is a priority as the market becomes increasingly competitive and regulated due to geopolitical implications, unstable prices, and the evolving landscape. The latter largely influenced our decision to onboard DNV as our Technical Advisors, given that DNV is a firm believer in the pan-industry development of new technology and innovation to solve common challenges. They invest at least 5% of their annual revenue into research, development, and innovation to address both safety and sustainability challenges in the oil and gas industry.

## *How can the oil and gas industry balance the need for economic growth with the increasing global demand for sustainable practices?*

I firmly believe that to enhance the well-being of our people and enable them to live dignified lives, we need to build a diversified economy where oil and gas fund education, healthcare, and address historical marginalization. Economic growth in low- and middle-income countries is not straightforward but is largely affected by governance and the effectiveness of institutions.

That's why we are exploring sustainability-linked safety and procurement frameworks, ensuring that operators not only meet

environmental standards but also commit to local hiring, knowledge transfer, and transparent community engagement. These ideas were echoed in recent industry convenings, which called for a national roadmap aligning technical excellence with social equity. This directly responds to the President's vision: managing these industries to maximize benefit for all Namibians, with oversight at the highest level of state to ensure accountability.

## *What lesson can the African offshore oil and gas sector learn from other regions that are also navigating this economic shift?*

Under current circumstances, we should utilize the five-point policy roadmap by the American Petroleum Institute (API) as a toolkit to alleviate poverty and resist neocolonial pressure to prematurely abandon fossil fuels. We should consider using the API lobbying style to negotiate equitable contracts, bolster geopolitical strength, join Pan-African regional business integration initiatives, direct revenue into a sovereign wealth fund like Botswana's diamond model, and cultivate a well-equipped workforce. This approach can lead to economic efficiency, resulting in increased employment, higher productivity levels, a broader manufacturing base, and strengthened competitiveness.

## *How do you see the role of offshore oil and gas evolving in the next decade, especially as*

## *the world moves toward cleaner energy sources?*

The offshore oil and gas industry will continue to play a vital role, heavily influenced by the rate of production in non-OPEC countries, geopolitical factors, and the strategic push for energy independence boosted by the return of Donald Trump to the White House. The discoveries off the coast of Guyana, Namibia, and Brazil's pre-salt fields are expected to rise significantly over the coming years, entering a new phase of production growth.

For Namibia, the Erongo Offshore Safety Conference will help define how this growth is managed, not only from an engineering standpoint but from a governance and accountability lens. By setting clear safety benchmarks early in our production cycle, we can avoid the pitfalls other producers have experienced. Moreover, with oversight now directed from the Office of the President, the conference becomes a strategic vehicle to ensure the sector evolves in alignment with national values.

## *What opportunities does the current globaleconomic situation present for Namibia and the broader African continent in energy development?*

Opportunities are vast across Namibia, but the most crucial in my view is creating a skilled safety workforce to address youth unemployment. This involves building safety infrastructure, negotiating advanced safety technology, and establishing local innovation hubs to secure market access.

One promising initiative that has emerged from recent national consultations is the concept of a Safety Workforce Compact, a joint commitment between government, industry, and education stakeholders to expand offshore safety training and certification programs. With the President's office now overseeing oil and gas strategy, such initiatives gain not just momentum but long-term policy support. This ensures our people, not just our resources, remain central to Namibia's growth story.





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# Billions in Investment Opportunities Presented by Premier Invest at Congo Energy & Investment Forum (CEIF) 2025

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

**P**remier Invest has presented a range of investment opportunities, totaling a minimum \$1.37 billion, in Africa's energy and oil and gas sectors at the inaugural Congo Energy & Investment Forum

Financial services provider Premier Invest has announced a series of investment opportunities in the African energy and oil and gas sectors, covering a range of four energy projects across Benin, Zambia and South Africa and five oil and gas projects across Nigeria and Ghana, as well as Guyana.

The announcement was made on March 26 by Rene Awambeng, Founder and Managing Partner of Premier Invest during a dedicated deal-room session – Showcasing Upstream Oil and Gas Transactions in Africa – at the inaugural Congo Energy & Investment Forum (CEIF) in Brazzaville.

“The deal-room sessions on the sidelines of the Congo Energy & Investment Forum are an opportunity to provide a platform for sponsors, developers and project promoters



Premier Invest presented a range of investment opportunities, totaling a minimum \$1.37 billion, in Africa's energy and oil and gas sectors at the inaugural Congo Energy & Investment Forum

to showcase significant upstream, midstream, downstream and power transactions in Africa to potential investors,” stated Awambeng.

The first opportunity, a 43 MW clean gas project in Benin, is seeking

\$84 billion in project finance. Currently in the commercial close stage of development, the project will help reduce the cost of energy in the country while bolstering economic growth, job creation and improving

Benin's energy security.

Meanwhile, Zambia features a \$92 million investment opportunity in a 71 MW hybrid solar PV and wind project. The project will feature a power purchase agreement over a period of 25 years and is estimated to feature an annual production of 232 GWh per year.

In South Africa, a 100 MW solar PV project has an \$87 million investment opportunity. The project will feature an offtake agreement with the National Energy Regulator of South Africa and a power purchase agreement of 20 years. The project will boast an annual production rate of 195 GWh per year.

Concluding the energy investment opportunities South Africa is also seeking \$100 million in investment to finance a 100 MW clean-gas project to complement intermittent renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind, while offering a cleaner solution to the country's reliance on coal. The project features a proposed capital



The 2025 Congo Energy and Investment Forum was themed Revitalization of the Republic of Congo's Hydrocarbon Sector-Building on Energy Success Blueprint.



structure of 70:30 and is in the active implementation stage.

Phase 1 of the project will feature a commitment of \$140 million to develop inland facilities, pipelines and site works while the second phase will feature an investment of \$60 million focusing on engineering, procurement and construction contracts for tanks, instrumentation and commissioning.

Meanwhile, a state-of-the-art gas-to-liquids plant – the details of which are subject to a non-disclosure agreement – is seeking interested parties to participate in an upcoming formal investment process. The project will have a validated production capacity of

1,850 barrels of oil per day and will feature an earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization measure of approximately \$50 million.

Ghana is seeking \$759 million in financing to develop four offshore production wells. Financing will be used to develop tie-back infrastructure to existing FPSO infrastructure, targeting 57.8 million standard barrels of oil. The project aims to produce 5 million barrels of oil per year, with potential investors set to receive 84% of the total project net present value.

An indigenous oil development company in Nigeria is seeking an experienced management team to

invest \$18 million to drill additional wells and increase production at a field with a projected production rate of 2,300 barrels per day. The field area covers 46km<sup>2</sup> and is covered by 3D seismic surveys.

Finally, Awambeng also announced a \$25 million investment opportunity in Guyana. The project will be adjacent to one of the most productive offshore oil fields in the region and boasts recoverable reserves of approximately 400 million barrels. Investment will be used to support conventional offshore drilling and FPSO tie-up.

The companies involved in the investment opportunities will be disclosed upon inquiry, with

financing options subject to non-disclosure agreements.

The inaugural Congo Energy & Investment Forum, took place from March 24-26, 2025, in Brazzaville, under the highest patronage of President Denis Sassou Nguesso and supported by the Ministry of Hydrocarbons and Société Nationale des Pétroles du Congo, brings together international investors and local stakeholders to explore national and regional energy and infrastructure opportunities.

\*Courtesy of Energy Capital & Power

## Hon. Eng. Lual Chol Dak On Making South Sudan A Hub For Oil & Gas Investment

Appointed to serve as Director General of the South Sudan Petroleum Authority by President Salva Kiir, Hon. Eng. Lual Chol is firmly focused on implementing strategic measures to make South Sudan a competitive and attractive destination for oil and gas investments.

With his appointment coming at a time when South Sudan's oil industry is facing significant challenges, Eng. Lual Chol and his team are focused on optimizing production from existing oil fields while also encouraging new exploration activities. PAV shares the portrait of a man dedicated to transforming South Sudan's oil and gas sector, ensuring its long-term prosperity and sustainability

### Personal Background and Education

Hon. Eng. Lual Chol Dak is an accomplished engineer and executive in South Sudan's oil and gas industry, with over 15 years of experience in petroleum operations, infrastructure management, and regulatory oversight. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering (Honors) from the University of



Hon. Eng. Lual Chol says he is firmly focused on implementing strategic measures to make South Sudan a competitive and attractive destination for oil and gas investments

Juba and a Master's degree in Oil and Gas Management from UNICAF University, UK. His academic and professional background has equipped him with the technical expertise and leadership skills necessary for guiding South Sudan's petroleum sector towards efficiency, sustainability, and long-term growth.

### Professional Career and Leadership in the Petroleum Industry

Eng. Lual Chol Dak's career in the petroleum industry spans over a decade, during which he has held several key technical and leadership roles. He worked extensively with DAR Petroleum Operating Company Ltd., one of South Sudan's major oil operators, where he managed production operations, power systems, and infrastructure development projects.

His career trajectory includes serving as a Maintenance and Reliability Team Leader, Acting Production Manager, and Power System Coordinator. He played a crucial role in planning and managing power plant operations, transmission networks, and pump stations.

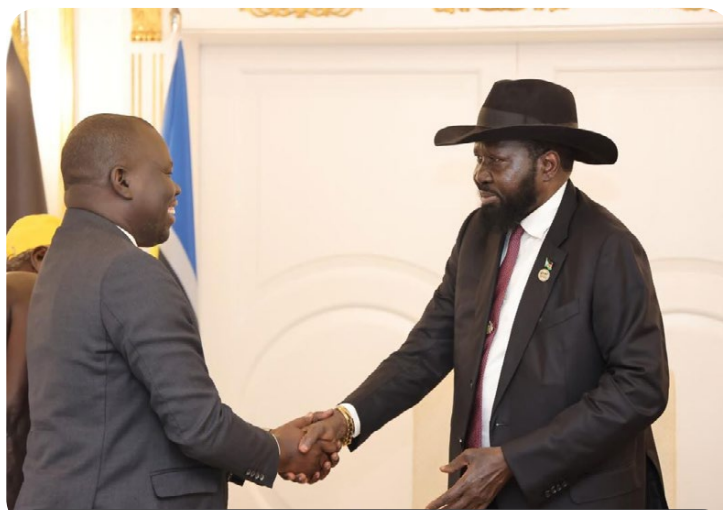
Additionally, he has successfully overseen the implementation of high-value engineering projects, including automation upgrades and power plant maintenance services. His leadership in these roles has significantly contributed to optimizing production processes and improving energy efficiency within the oil sector.

Hon. Eng. Lual Chol Dak has participated in various professional training programs and workshops overseas, enhancing his expertise in oil and gas management, power systems, and maintenance strategies. He attended a Maintenance Management and Enhancement Strategies course in Dubai, UAE in 2012, a teamwork and team-building course at PETRONAS Institute Malaysia in 2015, and a pipeline operation and maintenance technology course in China in July 2015. Additionally, he took part in the FAT (Factory Acceptance Test) for the EPCC of two power generators for the expansion of Paloch Power Plant-2 in Vaasa, Finland, in September 2019, followed by a kick-off meeting for the same project in March 2019. His international training experiences have significantly contributed to his leadership role in South Sudan's petroleum sector, ensuring the application of global best practices in oil production and power system management.

In recognition of his expertise and leadership, President Salva Kiir Mayardit appointed Eng. Lual Chol Dak the Director General of the Petroleum Authority. In this role, he is responsible for overseeing South Sudan's oil and gas regulatory framework, managing licensing and production-sharing agreements, and ensuring compliance with environmental and operational standards.

## Strategic Vision for South Sudan's Oil and Gas Sector

As Director General, Eng. Lual Chol Dak is spearheading key initiatives to enhance the efficiency, sustainability, and transparency of South Sudan's oil sector. His strategic vision revolves around three key pillars:



In recognition of his expertise and leadership, President Salva Kiir Mayardit appointed Eng. Lual Chol Dak the Director General of the Petroleum Authority.

1. Enhancing Operational Efficiency – Implementing modern oil recovery technologies and industry best practices to optimize production from existing fields while promoting new exploration activities.
2. Investment Promotion & Transparency – Creating a conducive investment environment through policy stability, regulatory transparency, and competitive fiscal incentives for both local and foreign investors.
3. Sustainability & Environmental Responsibility – Strengthening environmental regulations to ensure responsible oil production while addressing community concerns and promoting social responsibility programs.

Additionally, he is committed to workforce development, focusing on training South Sudanese engineers and technicians to take on key industry roles. His leadership in fostering capacity-building initiatives is aimed at ensuring that the country develops local expertise to drive its petroleum sector forward.

## Key Achievements and Contributions

Throughout his career, Eng. Lual Chol Dak has been instrumental in the successful execution of major engineering projects. Some of his key accomplishments include:

- Leading the implementation of power plant upgrades and automation systems, improving operational efficiency at key oil

production sites such as Paloch Power Plant.

- Overseeing multi-million-dollar contracts for power plant maintenance, pump station operations, and energy infrastructure expansion.
- Strengthening regulatory oversight mechanisms within the Petroleum Authority to ensure compliance with international industry standards.
- Enhancing security and stability measures around South Sudan's oilfields, ensuring continuous and safe petroleum production operations.

## Future Prospects and Optimism for South Sudan's Energy Sector

Eng. Lual Chol Dak remains optimistic about the future of South Sudan's oil and gas industry. His long-term strategy includes boosting exploration activities, adopting advanced oil recovery techniques, and diversifying the country's energy resources by developing gas production capabilities. He is also focused on strengthening regional and international partnerships to attract investments and accelerate infrastructure development.

With a strong commitment to policy reforms, technological advancements, and sustainability, he envisions a future where South Sudan emerges as a leading oil producer in Africa, contributing significantly to national economic growth and stability.

## Recognition and Awards

In recognition of his outstanding contributions, Eng. Lual Chol Dak has received multiple awards, including the Best Employee Award from DAR Petroleum Operating Company in 2014, 2016, and 2018. His technical expertise and strategic leadership continue to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of South Sudan's petroleum industry.

Through his visionary leadership, Hon. Eng. Lual Chol Dak is dedicated to transforming South Sudan's oil and gas sector, ensuring its long-term prosperity and sustainability.



Through his visionary leadership, Hon. Eng. Lual Chol Dak is dedicated to transforming South Sudan's oil and gas sector, ensuring its long-term prosperity and sustainability.





**RABAT, MOROCCO**  
5-13 APRIL



**DAKAR, SENEGAL**  
26 APRIL - 4 MAY

**KIGALI, RWANDA**  
17-25 MAY



**PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA**  
6-14 JUNE

# BASKETBALL AFRICA LEAGUE EXPANDS FOOTPRINT IN SEASON 5

## #AFRICAScores

BY NINETEEN31

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

By Ajong Mbapndah L

While African states retain legal ownership of natural resources, effective control is constrained by foreign corporate dominance, infrastructural deficits, governance failures and inequitable international trade frameworks, says Dr M'zée Fula Ngege, Chairman of the African Diamond Council. In an exclusive interview on the African Diamond industry, Dr M'zée Fula Ngege says strengthening local capacity, enhancing governance, and renegotiating investment terms are imperative for African nations to assert greater sovereignty over their resource wealth.

Africa dominates global diamond production, accounting for over 61% by volume and more than half by value, with Botswana, Angola, South Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as key producers, says Dr M'zée Fula Ngege. Collectively, Africa's diamond reserves underpin the global industry, driving economic development and influencing market dynamics, Dr M'zée Fula affirms.

"Ultimately, the developmental outcomes of diamond exploitation hinge on effective governance, transparency and economic diversification. Without these, diamonds risk exacerbating inequality, social tensions and institutional fragility, underscoring the duality of natural resources as both a potential catalyst for progress and a driver of conflict," says Dr M'zée Fula Ngege in the interview which offers broad insights into the potentials, challenges, dynamics and perspectives of the African Diamond industry

**How will you sum up the state of the diamond sector in Africa today from worth to potential and impact on the global scene?**

Africa dominates global diamond



Collectively, Africa's diamond reserves underpin the global industry, driving economic development and influencing market dynamics, Dr M'zée Fula affirms.

production, accounting for over 61% by volume and more than half by value, with Botswana, Angola, South Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as key producers. Botswana, the world's leading diamond producer by value, derives approximately 32% of its GDP from the sector. However, informal mining persists, exacerbating issues such as smuggling, revenue loss and poor labor conditions. While the Kimberley Process (KP) has curbed conflict diamond trade, challenges remain in regions like the DRC and Central African Republic. Many African nations, heavily reliant on diamond revenues, remain vulnerable to market volatility, compounded by governance deficits and infrastructural limitations.

Efforts to enhance domestic value addition through cutting, polishing, and jewelry manufacturing are gaining momentum, alongside

initiatives to improve transparency, ethical sourcing, and environmental sustainability. New discoveries in Zimbabwe and Sierra Leone offer growth potential, albeit amid political complexities. Africa's diamonds, renowned for their quality, particularly from Botswana, Namibia and Lesotho, have historically shaped global supply chains and fueled the rise of major industry players like De Beers, Alrosa and Rio Tinto. The sector has also driven economic development, funding infrastructure, education, healthcare and cultural initiatives.

The 2003 Kimberley Process Certification Scheme emerged in response to Africa's challenges with conflict diamonds, establishing a global standard for ethical trade. Despite persistent issues like artisanal mining and governance gaps, ongoing formalization and sustainability efforts are fostering a more resilient

industry. Africa's diamonds remain central to global markets, economies, and cultural narratives, underscoring the continent's enduring influence on the world stage.

**Looking at the geographical spread, may we know some of the countries or sub regions with good reserves of diamond?**

Africa, a cornerstone of the global diamond industry, hosts some of the world's most prolific and geographically diverse diamond reserves, spanning Southern, Central, West and East Africa. While Russia leads global diamond production, Africa's deposits are unparalleled in both quality and economic significance. Botswana, home to the Jwaneng and Orapa mines, exemplifies this, with Debswana, which is a De Beers-government partnership that drives high-quality output and substantial GDP contributions. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) dominates production volume, though its artisanal and industrial sectors are often conflict-prone. Angola, a frontier for diamond mining, is modernizing its sector to harness untapped potential. South Africa, historically pivotal, hosts major mines like Venetia and Cullinan, while Namibia is renowned for its high-quality offshore diamonds.

Lesotho produces some of the world's most coveted diamonds, favored by elite jewelers, while the Central African Republic (CAR), despite past instability, has significant reserves and was recently reinstated into the Kimberley Process. Sierra Leone, known for gems like the "Star of Sierra Leone", boasts extensive alluvial deposits, particularly in the Kono District. Liberia and Guinea are emerging players, with Guinea's Forest Region yielding high-quality gemstones. Tanzania's Williamson



Diamond Mine highlights its control.

potential for further discoveries and Zimbabwe, despite governance challenges, remains a key producer, particularly from the Marange fields.

Collectively, Africa's diamond reserves underpin the global industry, driving economic development and influencing market dynamics. The continent's rich, yet unevenly exploited resources, coupled with ongoing efforts to formalize and modernize the sector, ensure its continued centrality in the diamond trade.

### ***On ownership and control how much of these resources are under effective African control?***

In most African states, natural resources are constitutionally vested in the government, held in trust for the populace. However, effective control is frequently compromised by systemic inefficiencies and external influences. While legal ownership resides with African governments, the extraction, processing and commercialization of these resources are predominantly managed by foreign corporations, which possess the requisite capital, technology and expertise often lacking domestically. This dynamic entrenches a dependency on external entities, exacerbated by corrupt or inept local officials who prioritize personal enrichment over national development.

Contractual agreements between governments and multinational corporations are frequently asymmetrical, disproportionately favoring the latter and resulting in minimal revenue retention for African states. This is compounded by inadequate local infrastructure and technical capacity, necessitating partnerships with foreign entities that further erode sovereign control. Political instability, corruption and weak governance exacerbate these challenges, with resource-rich regions sometimes falling under the control of insurgent groups or being subjected to illicit exploitation. Economic fragility often forces governments into unfavorable concessions with foreign investors, further diminishing

International trade agreements and economic partnerships also play a pivotal role, as African nations are often compelled to liberalize markets and resource access to attract foreign investment. While regional initiatives like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and organizations such as the African Union (AU) aim to enhance collective bargaining power, their efficacy hinges on greater regional cohesion.

Interesting case studies such as Nigeria, Africa's largest oil producer, illustrate these dynamics. Africa's top oil producer cedes significant control of its sector to multinationals like Shell and ExxonMobil, with the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) often relegated to a junior partner role. Similarly, Angola, another major oil producer, faces analogous challenges. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), critical minerals such as cobalt and coltan are extensively exploited by foreign entities, with illegal mining diverting wealth away from local populations.

In conclusion, while African states retain legal ownership of natural resources, effective control is constrained by foreign corporate dominance, infrastructural deficits, governance failures and inequitable international trade frameworks. Strengthening local capacity, enhancing governance, and renegotiating investment terms are imperative for African nations to assert greater sovereignty over their resource wealth.

### ***In terms of contribution to socio-economic developments and progress across the continent, would you say diamonds have been a curse or blessing?***

The socio-economic impact of diamonds in Africa is a multifaceted issue, contingent on governance, institutional frameworks and global market dynamics. Diamonds can catalyze development by generating government revenue through taxes, royalties and exports, which, if managed transparently, can fund

public services, infrastructure and social programs. Botswana exemplifies this potential, leveraging diamond wealth to transition from extreme poverty to middle-income status through strategic investments in education, healthcare and infrastructure. Similarly, diamonds can stimulate job creation and attract foreign investment, fostering economic diversification and technological transfer.

However, diamonds also pose significant risks. Over-reliance on diamond revenues exposes economies to volatile global prices, undermining stability and diversification efforts. Resource-driven currency appreciation can erode competitiveness in non-extractive sectors, while weak governance often and unfortunately leads to rent-seeking, elite capture and institutional decay. In countries like Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), diamonds have fueled conflict, human rights abuses and environmental degradation, perpetuating cycles of poverty and instability. The Kimberley Process, while mitigating some trade in conflict diamonds, has not fully addressed these systemic challenges.

Ultimately, the developmental outcomes of diamond exploitation hinge on effective governance, transparency and economic diversification. Without these, diamonds risk exacerbating inequality, social tensions and institutional fragility, underscoring the duality of natural resources as both a potential catalyst for progress and a driver of conflict.

### ***At the level of the African Diamond Council that you lead, what is been done to help ensure that Africans reap maximum dividends from the sector?***

Since its establishment in 1999, the African Diamond Council (ADC) has been instrumental in advancing the interests of African diamond-producing nations, ensuring the continent maximizes the benefits of its diamond resources. The ADC

promotes best practices in the diamond industry, emphasizing transparency, accountability and good governance to ensure diamond revenues contribute to socio economic development. It also supports and constructively critiques the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) in its efforts to enhance the global reputation and market access of African diamonds.

The ADC provides capacity-building initiatives, including training programs for government officials, industry stakeholders and local communities on diamond valuation, mining techniques and regulatory compliance. It offers technical assistance to develop and implement autonomous, effective diamond sector policies without the interference or subjugation of obsessive international industry bodies. The ADC also champions small-scale and artisanal miners by facilitating access to finance, technology, and markets, while advocating for fair trade practices to secure equitable pricing for African producers.

The ADC's efforts have spurred local beneficiation, job creation, and value addition within the diamond supply chain, while its advocacy for transparency and governance has reduced corruption and increased revenues in African diamond producing nations. By fostering economic diversification, market access and sustainable practices, the ADC is driving transformative change in Africa's diamond industry, balancing uncompromising advocacy for African interests with tangible socio-economic benefits for the continent.

### ***You recently authored an op-ed questioning the rationale of the Kimberly process, what issues do you have with it and how it impacts the Diamond industry in Africa?***

The Kimberley Process (KP), while not ever a subject of personal contention, remains an institution I critique unapologetically for its systemic inefficacy. My critiques

are consistently rooted in principle, and I maintain a steadfast commitment to ensuring that professional disagreements, particularly within the diamond industry, remain constructive and devoid of ad hominem attacks. It is imperative to recognize that the African Diamond Council (ADC) stands resolutely against the subjugation of African diamond producing nations to foreign dominance, a principle that underpins my engagement with the KP and its supporting stakeholders.

Recent exchanges have only reinforced my conviction that the KP's defenders often resort to deflection, unsubstantiated assertions and personal attacks rather than addressing the substantive flaws of the certification scheme. Such tactics not only undermine the credibility of those employing them but also exacerbate the KP's institutional shortcomings. The global diamond industry

has, regrettably, witnessed a troubling shift from principled debate to character assassination, a trend that distracts from meaningful discourse and perpetuates a culture of avoidance rather than accountability.

I shall always welcome and encourage professional disagreements as a catalyst for progress, yet I remain acutely aware that hypersensitivity or indifference to principled critiques often stems from a defensive posture aimed at preserving the KP's status quo at all costs.

To reiterate, my critiques of the KP are meticulously grounded in principle and remain unequivocally valid, underscoring the urgent need for systemic reform. The ADC's focus must remain unwavering, especially if there is to be a favorable result or reward that advances the interests of the African diamond industry, while ensuring that its producing nations are neither marginalized nor exploited. This mission demands clarity, integrity, courage and an unyielding commitment to progress,



It is imperative to recognize that the African Diamond Council stands resolutely against the subjugation of African diamond producing nations to foreign dominance, says Dr M'zée Fula Ngenge

even in the face of entrenched resistance.

*Besides the African Diamond Council, do you see any other moves that African countries are taking individually or collectively to have a stronger say in the diamond industry?*

Africa, as a preeminent global producer of diamonds, has undertaken a multifaceted and concerted approach, both individually and collectively, to consolidate its strategic position and amplify its influence within the international diamond industry. These initiatives are designed to maximize the socioeconomic benefits derived from Africa's natural resources and to assert a more authoritative voice in shaping global diamond trade dynamics.

Central to these efforts is the active participation of African diamond-producing nations in the Kimberley Process (KP), an international certification scheme established to

curtail the trade in conflict diamonds. By ensuring that their diamonds are ethically sourced and traded, African nations make attempts to enhance their credibility and secure greater market access. However, to transcend their current role as participants and assume leadership within the KP, African countries must courageously and independently move to adopt more proactive and innovative strategies.

The African Diamond Manufacturers Association (ADMA) represents a pivotal institutional mechanism aimed at optimizing the diamond supply chain. By fostering an enabling environment for value addition, ADMA seeks to bolster the entire ecosystem of diamond production and trade. Several African nations have enacted policies to promote local beneficiation, thereby shifting from the export of raw diamonds to the domestic processing and cutting of stones. Botswana, for instance, has forged a strategic partnership with De

Beers to establish cutting and polishing facilities, generating employment and augmenting the value of its diamond exports. Similarly, Namibia has implemented policies to retain a greater share of the diamond value chain within its borders. State-owned enterprises such as Debswana in Botswana and Endiama in Angola have been strengthened to ensure greater national control over diamond resources, often through joint ventures with international firms while retaining significant equity and decision making authority.

The African Diamond Producers Association (ADPA) has endeavored to prioritize local beneficiation and advocate for equitable trade practices. Despite its potential, ADPA has faced credibility challenges, largely due to compromises on its founding principles for short-term gains. Nonetheless, its mandate rThe African Diamond Council (ADC) has emerged as

a key advocate for transparency and accountability in the diamond trade. By supporting the implementation of anti-corruption measures and adherence to international standards, the ADC has encouraged the adoption of frameworks such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). This ensures that diamond revenues are meticulously accounted for and channeled toward public welfare. Furthermore, African nations are investing in critical infrastructure and advanced technologies to enhance the efficiency and sustainability of diamond mining operations. Improvements in transportation networks, the establishment of regional diamond trading hubs, and the adoption of environmentally responsible mining practices are integral to these efforts. It remains critical in advancing the collective interests of African diamond-producing nations.

At the regional level, collaborative initiatives such as those spearheaded by the Southern African Development



Community (SADC) have been instrumental in harmonizing diamond policies and empowering member states to assert greater control over their resources. Concurrently, diamond dependent economies are pursuing economic diversification to mitigate over-reliance on diamond exports. Investments in sectors such as tourism, agriculture, and manufacturing are being prioritized to build more resilient and diversified economic foundations.

On the international stage, African diamond-producing nations are engaging more assertively with global markets and institutions. Participation in international diamond conferences, trade exhibitions and negotiations with major buyers underscores their commitment to securing fair trade practices and equitable market access. Additionally, there is a growing focus on formalizing and supporting artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM), which constitutes a significant portion of diamond production. By providing training, market access, and fair pricing mechanisms, African nations are empowering these miners to contribute more effectively to the industry's growth.

A critical dimension of Africa's strategy is the advocacy for fair pricing and improved market access. This involves challenging the entrenched dominance of major diamond corporations and ensuring that African producers receive a proportionate share of the profits generated by their resources. Equally important is the emphasis on sustainable and ethical mining practices, which encompass environmental stewardship, fair labor standards and community development initiatives in mining regions.

Through these comprehensive and strategic measures, African nations are not only fortifying their position within the global diamond industry but also ensuring that the wealth generated by their natural resources is more equitably distributed, thereby fostering inclusive and sustainable development.

*Any policy recommendations that you want to share on how the sector could fare better from local actors to companies, governments and potential investors?*

To catalyze the transformation of the African diamond sector into a more equitable, sustainable and economically robust industry, a multifaceted policy framework must be adopted. This framework should prioritize local beneficiation, enhance governance, attract investment and ensure sustainable development. I shall take a moment to outline a series of targeted recommendations designed to achieve these objectives. Governments should consider mandating a reasonable proportion of rough diamonds undergo local processing prior to export. This policy would not only generate employment, but also augment the intrinsic value of diamonds within the producing nations. Concurrently, fiscal incentives such as tax breaks and subsidies should be extended to enterprises that establish cutting and polishing facilities domestically. Investment in specialized education and training programs is imperative to cultivate a skilled workforce, encompassing gemologists, jewelers and engineers.

To backtrack, robust regulatory frameworks should be developed and strictly enforced to mitigate corruption, uphold fair trade practices and safeguard the rights of workers and local communities. The establishment of independent oversight bodies is essential to monitor compliance and promote transparency within the industry.

To attract both foreign and domestic investment, it is crucial to create a stable and predictable investment climate. This can be achieved through the implementation of clear legal frameworks, protection of property rights, and streamlined bureaucratic processes. Additionally, fiscal incentives such as tax holidays, grants and other financial mechanisms should be considered to stimulate investment in the diamond sector. Leveraging private sector expertise

and capital through PPPs can significantly enhance infrastructure development and mining operations. These collaborations should be structured to ensure mutual benefits and long-term sustainability.

Stringent environmental regulations must be enforced to minimize the ecological footprint of diamond mining and promote sustainable practices. Mining companies should be mandated to contribute to local community development through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, focusing on infrastructure, education, and healthcare. Fair labor practices must be upheld to ensure that workers are compensated equitably and operate in safe conditions.

Strengthening regional alliances through organizations like the African Diamond Producers Association (ADPA) is vital. ADPA can facilitate collective bargaining, share best practices and work harder to develop cohesive regional strategies. Harmonizing policies and regulations across African diamond-producing nations will create a more unified and competitive regional market. To reduce dependency on diamond exports, economic diversification into sectors such as agriculture, tourism and manufacturing should be encouraged. Developing downstream industries, particularly jewelry manufacturing and retail, will enable African nations to capture more value from the diamond supply chain.

Establishing local diamond exchanges will facilitate fair pricing and provide a platform for local producers to sell their diamonds. Aggressive global marketing campaigns should be launched to promote African diamonds, emphasizing their ethical sourcing and unique qualities. Engaging in negotiations with major diamond buyers and international organizations will help secure better trade deals and fair pricing. Policies must be developed to formalize the ASM sector, providing legal recognition and support to small scale miners. Facilitating access to finance

through micro-finance institutions, grants or low-interest loans will enhance the sector's productivity. Training and capacity-building programs should be implemented to improve the skills and efficiency of artisanal miners.

Investment in advanced mining technologies is essential to improve efficiency, reduce environmental impact, and increase diamond recovery rates. Digital platforms should be utilized to enhance transparency and traceability in the diamond supply chain, ensuring ethical sourcing and trading practices. Mining codes and regulations must be regularly updated to reflect current industry standards and best practices. Ensuring that artisanal miners have a voice in policy-making processes and protecting their rights is equally important.

Effective dispute resolution mechanisms should be established to address conflicts between stakeholders in the diamond industry, fostering a more collaborative and harmonious sector. It is safe to conclude that the implementation of these policy recommendations will have success in positioning African nations to create a more equitable, sustainable and profitable diamond sector. This will not only benefit local actors, companies and governments, but also attract and retain investment, ensuring long-term prosperity for the continent.

*What impact do you think the diamond sector will have in shaping events and developments across the continent in the medium- and long-term future?*

Rather than employing to what I think, allow me to share what I actually fully cognizant of. The global diamond sector will continue to exert a profound and multifaceted influence on the African continent, shaping its economic, social, political and environmental trajectories in the medium to long term. As a critical revenue source for numerous African nations, natural diamond exports will remain instrumental in financing infrastructure development, social

services, and economic diversification initiatives. The industry, spanning mining, processing, and retail, will sustain employment opportunities, both directly and indirectly, thereby mitigating unemployment and elevating living standards. Concurrently, the sector will attract foreign direct investment, particularly in mining and associated infrastructure, fostering economic growth and facilitating technological transfer.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives by diamond mining companies will persist in driving improvements in healthcare, education and infrastructure within local communities. Moreover, the global emphasis on ethical sourcing and fair labor practices will invariably elevate working conditions across the African diamond industry, enhancing the well-being of workers and their families. Given the historical association of diamonds with conflict in certain regions, sustained efforts to ensure ethical sourcing and transparency, such as through the Kimberley Process (KP), are imperative to advancing peace and stability.

This global demand for accountability will also pressure governments to strengthen governance frameworks, reduce corruption and foster more transparent and effective regulatory structures, not only in Africa but also in other diamond-producing regions, such as the Russian Federation.

The imperative to meet international standards and remain

competitive in the global market will catalyze greater regional cooperation among African diamond-producing nations. This collaboration will yield more cohesive and impactful regional policies, particularly if the Kimberley Process (KP) evolves to address contemporary challenges and avoid obsolescence. Recent trends toward resource nationalism, wherein African states seek greater control over their diamond resources through renegotiated contracts or increased state ownership, reflect a strategic shift toward leveraging natural resources for sustainable development. As far as I am concerned, this trajectory is both, necessary and commendable.

Environmental sustainability is increasingly shaping the diamond industry, with African mining operations adopting more eco-friendly practices to mitigate ecological degradation and promote sustainable development. The sector must also confront the challenges posed by climate change, including water scarcity and extreme weather events, which will necessitate innovations in mining technologies and practices. The integration of advanced technologies, such as automated mining equipment, blockchain and data analytics for market intelligence, will effectively enhance operational efficiency, transparency and industry accountability.

The implementation of certificates of origin, the adoption of public blockchain-based traceability solution that is compatible with private blockchain, the utilization

of nanotechnology and the issuance of Titles of Ownership, for instance, would effectively revitalize the credibility of the Kimberley Process while addressing longstanding concerns about supply chain integrity. It is important to know that the diamond journey begins at a mining site in a producing country, rather than on a shelf inside the boutique of a luxury jewelry designer.

The digital transformation of the diamond industry, exemplified by platforms like the African International Diamond Exchange (AIDEX) and the proliferation of digital marketing, will expand African producers' access to global markets. However, the sector must navigate the inherent volatility of diamond prices, which poses risks to diamond-dependent economies. Economic diversification remains a critical strategy to mitigate these vulnerabilities and ensure resilience.

Changing consumer preferences, particularly the growing demand for ethically sourced and sustainable diamonds, will profoundly influence the African diamond sector. African producers must adapt to these trends by emphasizing the unique qualities and ethical provenance of their diamonds to maintain competitiveness.

The rise of synthetic diamonds further underscores the need for differentiation, as African producers must articulate the inherent value and cultural significance of natural diamonds. Strategic partnerships with forward-thinking international organizations, ethical corporations

and governments will be essential to bolstering Africa's diamond industry. These collaborations will provide access to capital, cutting-edge technologies, and global markets. Equally important is the negotiation of favorable trade agreements with major diamond-consuming nations to ensure equitable market access and pricing.

Beyond its economic dimensions, the diamond sector holds cultural significance, symbolizing wealth and prestige while contributing to the cultural heritage and identity of African nations. Effective branding and marketing strategies are crucial to enhancing the global reputation of African diamonds and establishing a distinct identity in the international market. African filmmakers and cultural influencers have a unique opportunity to showcase African diamonds and luxury brands, leveraging media and product placement to elevate their global profile. The same holds true for African media outlets that broadcast globally.

In the end, the global diamond sector will remain a pivotal force in Africa's development, provided that stakeholders prioritize ethical practices, sustainability, innovation and uncontaminated strategic collaboration. By addressing the imperatives that I have outlined, the industry will not only sustain its economic contributions, but will convincingly reinforce its role as a catalyst for positive transformation across the continent

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# DRC's High-Stakes Mineral Deal with the U.S.: A Desperate Gamble or Strategic Shift?

By Adonis Byemelwa

**T**he Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) sits on a fortune that could define the future of global technology. With over 70% of the world's cobalt reserves and the largest supply of coltan, its mineral wealth is indispensable for electric vehicle batteries, semiconductors, and high-tech industries.

Yet, instead of prosperity, this immense resource has long been a source of conflict, foreign exploitation, and internal instability. Now, as President Félix Tshisekedi negotiates an exclusive mineral deal with the United States, the stakes couldn't be higher.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with Fox News, Tshisekedi emphasized the need for stronger U.S. investment in the Congolese mineral sector, valued at an estimated \$24 trillion.

He made no secret of his eagerness to see a shift in partnerships, highlighting that the Trump administration has brought a sense of urgency to the discussions.

"We are looking for partnerships, and we have established partnerships with many other countries," he said. "We think the United States of America, given its role and influence around the world, is an important partner to have, and we are very happy to see that with the Trump administration, things are moving a lot faster on both sides."

For decades, Western investment in the DRC has been hesitant, deterred by persistent instability, armed conflict, and concerns over governance.

This vacuum allowed China to dominate the country's mining sector, securing critical minerals through long-term contracts and infrastructure deals.

Tshisekedi appears determined to rebalance these ties, signaling that



President Tshisekedi's outreach to the U.S. comes at a time when his hold on power is increasingly fragile. photo courtesy.

his government wants more than just resource extraction—it wants in-country processing, job creation, and sustainable partnerships.

"We want to extract these minerals, but also process them, as this would create a lot of jobs, and we want a partnership that will provide lasting peace and stability for our countries," he explained.

However, peace and stability remain elusive in the eastern DRC, where armed groups, including M23 rebels, continue to seize territory.

Securing mining operations is a growing challenge, and Tshisekedi hinted that U.S. involvement could extend beyond economic ties into the realm of security.

"We can build our defense and security capability, and I think that the U.S. can use either pressure or sanctions to make sure that armed groups who are in the DRC can be kept in check," he said.

This potential mineral-for-security arrangement reflects a growing geopolitical battle between the U.S. and China over Africa's resources.

Washington has been increasingly vocal about countering Beijing's expanding influence, and Tshisekedi appears ready to leverage that rivalry. While acknowledging

China's contributions to Congo's infrastructure, he didn't hide his frustration with the power dynamics at play.

"Nature abhors a vacuum, as the saying goes. It's not that China is waxing in Africa; it's more that America is waning in Africa," he remarked. "We would be very happy to have our American friends here, who used to be more present than China in the 70s and 80s."

For the U.S., access to Congolese minerals is more than just an economic opportunity—it's a strategic necessity. Silicon Valley and other high-tech industries depend on a steady supply of cobalt and coltan to maintain their competitive edge.

Tshisekedi made it clear that a strengthened U.S.-DRC partnership could give American companies the stability they need to secure their supply chains. "This partnership will help these industries develop more and more innovative products," he said.

Yet, even as Tshisekedi courts U.S. support, the situation in eastern Congo grows increasingly volatile. He doubled down on accusations against Rwanda, blaming its involvement in the conflict for perpetuating instability.

His calls for tougher sanctions reflect long-standing grievances, dating back to the 1994 genocide, when millions of Rwandan refugees poured into the DRC.

"Since then, unfortunately, this hellish situation that was in Rwanda at the time has seeped into the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That is why we insist on having sanctions," he stated.

Rwanda, in turn, has accused the DRC of failing to address discrimination against Congolese Tutsis and harboring groups like the FDLR, linked to genocide-era militias.

Tshisekedi's outreach to the U.S. comes at a time when his hold on power is increasingly fragile. As M23 rebels advance toward Kisangani and instability deepens in North and South Kivu, his administration is under immense pressure to deliver security and economic progress.

Regional peace efforts have so far yielded little, and his disappointment in mechanisms like the East African Community-led mediation is evident.

There is an eerie resemblance between the crisis in the DRC and other global conflicts where resources and political survival intertwine. The mineral wealth that should have been a blessing has instead fueled power struggles, both domestic and international.

If the U.S.-DRC deal materializes, it could mark a turning point in global mineral supply chains, but whether it will bring stability to one of the world's most conflict-prone nations remain an open question.

The reality is that minerals-for-security deals often reflect desperation rather than long-term solutions, and history has shown that external interventions—whether by the U.S., China, or regional actors—rarely offer the elixir that embattled regimes seek.



# Joshua Osih Outlines SDF's Vision for Cameroon Ahead of 2025 Polls

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

The Chairman of Cameroon's opposition party, the Social Democratic Front (SDF), Joshua Osih, has presented the political programme for the 2025 Presidential election, outlining an ambitious roadmap aimed at transforming Cameroon's governance, economy, and social structures.

Joshua Osih presented the bold proposal at an extraordinary congress in Yaoundé, during which the once leading opposition party validated the candidacy of Osih to go up against the incumbent President Paul Biya and others. Joshua Osih equally unveiled a document detailing the policies and priorities the SDF plans to implement if elected.

His candidacy is seen as a continuation of the party's long-standing commitment to democratic change and inclusive governance, following in the footsteps of its late founder, John Fru Ndi.

100-Day Plan to End Violence in North West and South West Regions

Addressing party delegates and the press, Osih underscored the urgency of tackling the country's pressing challenges, particularly the ongoing crisis in the North West and South West regions.

The proposal, which seeks to restore trust and peace, includes key measures such as the conditional release of prisoners linked to the crisis, inclusive dialogue, and the establishment of a community-based security force. He declared that within the first 100 days of an SDF-led administration, the party would take decisive steps to end the violence that has plagued the English-speaking regions for over seven years.

«We propose 100 days to end violence in the North West and South West,» Osih stated. «The crisis has persisted for too long, and we are committed to restoring peace through



Hon Joshua Osih, SDF's candidate for the 2025 Presidential election.

dialogue, inclusive governance, and practical solutions that address the root causes of the conflict.»

As part of its strategy, the opposition party is calling for impartial mediation and inclusive dialogue to address the root causes of the conflict. The SDF also advocates for the gradual replacement of military intervention with a community police force, believing this approach will foster trust and encourage local participation in maintaining peace.

The plan further emphasizes an immediate humanitarian response, ensuring the safe return of internally displaced persons, the reopening of schools with guaranteed security, and providing psychosocial support and

rehabilitation for victims of the crisis.

The SDF leadership argues that these measures if implemented, will mark a turning point in efforts to resolve the long-running crisis that has devastated communities in the English-speaking regions.

## A Comprehensive Plan for Change

The SDF's 2025-2026 political programme sets clear timelines for major reforms which include: One year to restore the dignity of the people in the Far North; One mandate for the socio-economic transformation of Cameroon; Three years to implement a constitutional referendum; Introduction of free

national identity cards and the abolition of the probationary exam.

Osih emphasized that many of these reforms could be enacted immediately without requiring approval from the National Assembly or Senate. «These are measures that fall under executive power and can be implemented through decrees,» he noted.

Another major focus of the SDF's political programme is the rehabilitation of the Far North region, which has suffered from years of Boko Haram insurgency, poverty, and neglect.

Osih committed to a one-year plan aimed at: Boosting security through enhanced counterterrorism efforts;



Rehabilitating displaced communities providing economic opportunities and investing in agriculture, infrastructure, and education to improve living conditions.

“The people of the Far North have been left behind for too long,” Osih emphasized. “Our administration will ensure that this region is fully integrated into Cameroon’s economic development plan.”

Osih noted that Cameroon’s economy has suffered due to corruption, mismanagement, and a lack of clear policy direction. He promised a governance model that prioritizes accountability and economic inclusivity.

“A strong economy means jobs for our youth, better living standards for our people, and more resources to invest in education and healthcare,” Osih explained. “We will create an environment where businesses thrive, and young people have opportunities to succeed.”

## Constitutional Referendum and Governance Reforms

The SDF’s programme includes a three-year plan to introduce a constitutional referendum, aimed at redefining Cameroon’s governance structures and ensuring greater representation for all regions.



Osih’s candidacy is seen as a continuation of the party’s long-standing commitment to democratic change and inclusive governance.

This move seeks to address long-standing concerns about centralization of power, electoral transparency, and equal representation. Among the key proposals are: the introduction of a federal or decentralized governance model; reforms to ensure free and fair elections; and a restructuring of state institutions to reduce corruption and inefficiency.

The SDF has also pledged to eliminate the probationary exam (Probatoire) in Cameroon’s educational system. The party argues that the exam places unnecessary financial and academic pressure on

students and families.

Osih explained that the reform is part of a broader plan to modernize the education system, improve access to quality learning, and ensure that young Cameroonians are equipped with the skills needed for a competitive global economy.

## A Party Ready to Govern

With the official endorsement of Joshua Osih as its presidential candidate, the SDF has made it clear that it is prepared to challenge the ruling Cameroon People’s Democratic Movement (CPDM) in the 2025

elections.

Osih expressed confidence in the party’s ability to win, citing the growing dissatisfaction with the current administration’s handling of security, governance, and economic issues.

“We have spent almost a year developing this programme, and it reflects the real needs of Cameroonians,” he said. “The time for change is now.”

With Cameroon heading toward the 2025 presidential election, the political landscape is becoming increasingly dynamic, with opposition parties like the SDF positioning themselves as viable alternatives to the ruling party.

The coming months will be crucial in determining whether the SDF can mobilize support, build strong alliances, and convince Cameroonians that it is the party best suited to lead the country into a new era of peace, stability, and economic growth.

For now, Joshua Osih and the SDF have made their intentions clear: they are ready to govern, and they have a plan to transform Cameroon. “We are not here to make empty promises,” Osih declared. “We are here to offer real solutions. Cameroonians deserve better, and the SDF is ready to deliver.”



The SDF has made it clear that it is prepared to challenge the ruling Cameroon People’s Democratic Movement (CPDM) in the 2025 elections.



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# Niger's Five-Year Plan: Democracy Deferred or Dictatorship Reinvented?

By Jude Ndeh Asah

In the wake of the 2023 coup that unseated President Mohamed Bazoum, Niger now finds itself at a crossroads. A new five-year plan has been unveiled, a blueprint that promises a transition back to civilian rule but on terms that many observers find deeply unsettling. As the junta-led government, under Brigadier General Abdourahamane Tchiani, pledges to remain in power throughout the transition period, the fundamental question arises: Is Niger merely postponing its return to democracy, or is it inventing a new form of dictatorship under the guise of a transitional roadmap?

## Historical Context: A Legacy of Turbulence

Niger's political history is marked by recurring cycles of democratic experiment and military intervention. Since gaining independence from French colonial rule in 1960, the country has endured several coups and constitutional crises. The early years under President Hamani Diori saw relative stability until economic hardships and widespread discontent led to military takeovers. Subsequent attempts at democratic governance—such as the democratic transition in the early 1990s and the controversial 2009 constitutional referendum—were frequently derailed by power

grabs and military interventions. This turbulent legacy has left an indelible mark on Niger's political culture, where trust in democratic institutions remains fragile and the specter of authoritarian rule is never far away.

## The Five-Year Transition Proposal

In a recent development that has captured international attention, a national committee composed of 700 community leaders, including members of Niger's diaspora, proposed that the junta-led state remain in power for a period of five years before a return to civilian rule is initiated. Under this plan, all current political parties would be abolished and replaced with a new charter that limits the number of political parties to no more than five. Notably, the plan would allow Brigadier General Tchiani—the leader of the junta—to stand as a candidate in the future elections.

Speaking on state television, Tchiani declared, «I am committed to fulfilling the sovereign people's hope. You have done your part; I will do mine.»

This statement, broadcast to a nation weary of endless political limbo, was met with both cautious optimism and deep skepticism. While some citizens and analysts see the



General Abdourahamane Tchiani led the military in a coup two years ago, he has now been sworn in as President for five years.

proposal as a pragmatic response to long-standing insecurity and governance failures, others argue that it merely cements military power, delaying genuine democratic accountability.

## Democracy Deferred or Dictatorship Reinvented?

At its core, the five-year plan presents a paradox. On one hand, it appears to offer a clear timeline—a promise that Niger will eventually return to civilian rule. On the other hand, by allowing the current military regime to remain in control and even participate in future elections, it raises the specter of an engineered democracy where the playing field is heavily tilted in favor of the coup leaders.

Critics contend that this model effectively reinvents dictatorship under a democratic façade. Rather than dismantling the entrenched power structures, the junta appears determined to institutionalize its authority. By dissolving existing political parties and imposing a cap on their number, the plan not only curbs political pluralism but also creates a controlled environment where dissent can be easily managed. As one political analyst noted,

«This move is less about preparing for a democratic transition and more about entrenching military rule in a new, more palatable form.»

Indeed, the measure can be seen as part of a broader regional trend. In recent years, several countries in the Sahel—most notably Mali and Burkina Faso—have experienced similar coups and have since embarked on transitions marked by prolonged military oversight. These regimes, under the banner of fighting extremism and restoring order, have increasingly aligned themselves with Russia and its mercenary forces, distancing themselves from traditional Western partners.

## Regional and International Implications

Niger's strategic position in the Sahel and its abundance of natural resources, particularly uranium, make it a linchpin in regional geopolitics. The junta's decision to adopt a five-year plan occurs against a backdrop of shifting alliances and a contest for influence between the West and emerging powers like Russia and China.

After the coup, Niger, along with Mali and Burkina Faso, severed ties with the Economic Community of



By wresting uranium mining from foreign control, the military has scored points with the population. Photo courtesy.



West African States (ECOWAS) and formed the Alliance of Sahel States (AES). This realignment is not only political but also economic. The AES is pursuing initiatives that include establishing a common currency, joint military forces, and integrated economic policies designed to reduce dependency on Western aid and influence. While these measures are touted as steps toward greater regional self-reliance, they also signal a pivot toward authoritarian governance models that favor military regimes.

As one Reuters report highlighted, «The junta's pivot away from ECOWAS and towards an alliance with like-minded regimes reflects a desire to build a power bloc that can operate independently of Western pressures.»

From an international perspective, the five-year plan has elicited mixed responses. Western governments and human rights organizations have repeatedly condemned the coup and the junta's subsequent actions, including the harsh conditions of detention imposed on former President Bazoum. Meanwhile, Russia and China have offered tacit support, underscoring their broader strategic interests in Africa. This divergence in global reactions not only complicates Niger's political future but also underscores the fragmented nature of international order in regions where governance remains unstable.

### **The Challenge of Legitimacy and Governance**

One of the most significant challenges posed by the five-year plan is the question of legitimacy. Democratic transitions are typically predicated on the clear, uncontested transfer of power from one regime to another—a process that reinforces public trust in democratic institutions. However, when a military junta effectively writes the rules of the game, the resulting government may lack both internal legitimacy and international recognition.

In Niger, this concern is compounded by the country's history of contested elections and coups.



Ousted President Bazoum remains in detention. Photo courtesy.

The junta's decision to remain in power during the transitional period, coupled with its plans to participate in future elections, has led many to question whether the forthcoming electoral process will be free, fair, and genuinely competitive. As one Nigerien opposition leader warned, «If the military continues to control the political landscape, the promise of democracy will be nothing more than an illusion.»

Moreover, the emphasis on a controlled political environment—with restrictions on the number and type of political parties—could stifle the diversity of political expression necessary for a robust democracy. While proponents argue that such measures are necessary to prevent the fragmentation and instability that have plagued Niger in the past, critics see them as a deliberate strategy to limit opposition and consolidate power.

### **Economic Pressures and Security Concerns**

The justification for the five-year plan is rooted in the dire security and economic conditions that have beset Niger for years. The country has long struggled with a range of challenges—from chronic poverty and underdevelopment to the constant threat posed by jihadist insurgencies in the Sahel. Proponents of the plan argue that a prolonged period of military oversight is essential to restore order and rebuild the state's institutions.

Indeed, the junta has pointed to persistent insecurity as evidence that

previous democratic governments were incapable of safeguarding the nation. In a climate of escalating violence—where extremist groups have killed thousands and displaced millions—the military regime contends that its approach is the only viable path to stability. As one government spokesperson put it:

«In times of crisis, decisive action is required. Our plan is not about perpetual military rule; it is about ensuring that when we hand over power, it is to a state that is secure and capable of protecting its people.»

However, critics warn that relying on military solutions to address deeply rooted economic and social problems is a risky strategy. The junta's focus on security has often come at the expense of economic reform and social development. With foreign assistance having been curtailed and sanctions imposed by ECOWAS, Niger's economy has suffered—exacerbating poverty and undermining public support for the regime.

### **Voices from the Ground**

Amid these debates, the voices of ordinary Nigeriens offer a sobering perspective. For many citizens, the promise of a return to democracy is a distant hope overshadowed by daily struggles for survival. In interviews conducted in Niamey and the northern regions, citizens expressed skepticism about the junta's commitment to genuine political reform.

One young Nigerien, speaking anonymously, stated, «We have seen promises before. The military says

they will return power, but we are still suffering. Our schools are closed, our hospitals underfunded, and we live in constant fear of violence.»

Such sentiments underscore a broader disillusionment with the political system that has repeatedly failed to deliver on the promise of prosperity and security. For many, the five-year plan appears less like a pathway to democratic renewal and more a mechanism for entrenching an elite that is disconnected from the needs of the people.

### **A Crossroads for Niger**

As Niger embarks on this uncertain transition, the five-year plan stands as a pivotal moment in the country's long and troubled political history. It is a plan that promises a return to civilian rule while simultaneously ensuring that the military retains a firm grip on power. Whether this approach will eventually lead to a flourishing democracy or simply perpetuate a new form of dictatorship remains to be seen.

What is clear, however, is that the road ahead will be fraught with challenges. Niger must confront not only the legacy of past coups and the deep-seated distrust of its institutions but also the immediate threats posed by extremism and economic hardship. For the international community, Niger's experiment will serve as a crucial test of whether external pressure, diplomatic engagement, and strategic alliances can eventually help steer a country away from authoritarianism and towards genuine democratic governance.

In the end, the true measure of success for Niger's five-year plan will be judged not by the rhetoric of its leaders or the formal milestones it sets, but by the everyday lives of its people—whether they eventually experience a government that is transparent, accountable, and responsive to their needs, or one that remains a distant echo of the promises made on state television. Only time will tell if this bold new chapter will herald a renaissance of democratic ideals or the reinvention of dictatorship in a nation long haunted by its turbulent past.

# Malawi's Broken Promise – 'From Hope to Crisis'

By James Woods-Nkhutabasa\*

When Lazarus Chakwera swept to power in 2020, Malawians hoped for a clean break, an end to corruption and a revival of the economy. Instead, four and half years later the country is mired in a crisis of governance and credibility. Chakwera's administration, once buoyed by the Tonse Alliance coalition, has been rocked by scandal and dysfunction. The President's vaunted anti-graft campaign has floundered, his hand-picked Anti-Corruption Bureau chief, Martha Chizuma, investigated a record number of high-profile bribery and fraud cases but faced relentless obstruction. Starved of funding and political support, Chizuma resigned in 2024, a damning symbol of Chakwera's faltering commitment to clean government.

Meanwhile, Chakwera's own inner circle has not been immune to graft allegations. Even Vice-President Saulos Chilima, once a partner in reform, was charged with taking bribes in the Zuneth Sattar procurement scandal. Chakwera suspended Chilima and even dissolved his entire cabinet in early 2022 amid multiple corruption charges but these dramatic gestures have not translated into lasting change. Instead, the government appears adrift, cracking down on some corrupt officials while tolerating or mishandling others, sending mixed signals that have eroded public trust.

Public sentiment has soured dramatically. Malawians who cheered Chakwera's promises of a "new dawn" now seethe at what they see as incompetence and betrayal. Nepotism and cronyism, sins Chakwera once accused his predecessor of, have crept back into government appointments, according to critics, undermining meritocracy. More visibly, the grand pledge to create one million jobs has become a national punchline as unemployment and underemployment remain rampant. Demonstrations and



Malawians who cheered Chakwera's promises of a "new dawn" now seethe at what they see as incompetence and betrayal. Photo courtesy.

civil society outrage have flared over the government's failures; the administration that rode in on a platform of hope now finds itself the target of citizens' anger. In short, Malawi's governance under Chakwera is in disarray, major policy initiatives stalled, corruption fighting units demoralised, and an electorate that feels deceived and fed up.

## *Economic Freefall, Inflation, Debt, and the Kwacha Collapse*

Compounding the leadership vacuum is an economy in tailspin. Malawi is suffering its worst economic crisis in decades. Inflation has surged into double digits, gutting household incomes. By late 2023, consumer prices were rising about 28% annually, a devastating rate for a country where even before the crisis over 70% of people lived on less than \$2.15 a day. Basic commodities have become unaffordable luxuries for many. The Malawian kwacha has been in freefall, losing more than half its value since 2022 after a series of sharp devaluations (25% in 2022, then a whopping 44% in late 2023).

Even after these adjustments, the currency remains under intense pressure, with a persistent black-market premium signaling that forex remains scarce. For a net-importing country, the collapse of the kwacha has been catastrophic, fuelling import costs and further stoking inflation in a vicious cycle.

At the root of this turmoil is a biting foreign exchange shortage that has left Malawi unable to pay for essential imports. Official foreign reserves dropped below one month's import cover in 2023, effectively empty coffers. The result has been acute shortages of fuel, medicines, fertilizer and other basics. Motorists now endure 1970s-style fuel queues stretching for hours, if not days, across the country. By late 2024, Malawi had only 5 days of petrol and 15 days of diesel supply in stock, perilously short of the 90-day requirement. The inevitable happened: pumps ran dry. Cars lined up by the dozens outside gas stations became the new normal. Public transport fares have spiked, goods shipments stalled as trucks sat empty, and even ambulances

in some hospitals were grounded for lack of fuel. This is not a minor inconvenience – it is a national economic paralysis. Factories and businesses cannot operate reliably, farmers can't get goods to market, and daily life is disrupted at every level by the energy emergency.

Malawi's debt situation has deteriorated into a full-blown debt crisis. The government's chronic budget deficits – reaching over 10% of GDP in 2023 and heavy borrowing have pushed public debt above 80% of GDP. By 2022, Malawi effectively defaulted on its external debt, and it has been in default ever since. Debt servicing became impossible amid the forex crunch, forcing the country to seek relief. An emergency IMF package of \$88 million in late 2022 provided only a temporary Band-Aid. By 2023, the situation was so dire that Malawi had to beg its major bilateral creditors, notably China and India to agree to restructure loans in order to unlock an IMF lifeline. With Beijing and New Delhi finally signaling assent, the IMF approved a 4-year \$175 million Extended Credit



Facility in November 2023. This has thrown Malawi a financial lifeline – a first tranche of \$35 million arrived to shore up the treasury, but the conditions are steep. The government in Lilongwe must enforce austerity and reforms to regain macro stability, a bitter pill that thus far it has struggled to swallow. Even with the IMF program, two-thirds of Malawi's external debt (mostly to multilateral lenders) isn't covered by relief and continues to drain the public purse. In short, Malawi remains in debt distress, lurching from one bailout to the next, its economic sovereignty severely compromised.

Years of fiscal mismanagement and external shocks have left the economy anaemic, GDP grew a mere 1.5% last year, basically stagnation. The government's inability to stimulate growth or even meet basic obligations (like paying fuel suppliers on time) has shredded its credibility. Businesses face not only power outages and fuel scarcity but also a collapse in consumer demand as inflation eats incomes. The private sector, starved of forex for inputs, has cut back or closed, driving unemployment higher. Malawi's youthful population (median age 18) finds itself with few prospects at home, job creation has been essentially zero while the labour force grows each year. Chakwera's economic stewardship can only be described as calamitous. As one columnist quipped, Malawi is experiencing a "cashgate without the cash" a reference to the infamous 2013 corruption scandal, but now the looting is replaced by sheer economic collapse. Confidence in government finances has collapsed, and with it, the hope that the current administration can right the ship.

### Lights Out, No Medicine, and Empty Stomachs

The true cost of Malawi's crisis is measured in human welfare, the breakdown of essential public services. Electricity has become a rarity for many. A series of climate disasters, notably Cyclone Ana in 2022 and Cyclone Freddy in 2023, knocked out major power



Former President Mutharika says he is ready to rescue Malawi from its current misery and race to the bottom.

infrastructure, including a loss of 130 MW at Kapichira hydro dam and other facilities. This amounts to a significant share of Malawi's already meagre 400-500 MW generation capacity. The result: interminable load shedding. Through 2023 and 2024, blackouts of 8-12 hours a day became routine in both cities and villages. At one point after Cyclone Freddy, parts of the country had as little as one hour of electricity per day. Imagine running a business, a hospital, or a school under such conditions. Even as engineers hustled to restore some capacity, supply remains far short of demand. Over 89% of Malawians have no access to electricity at all and rely on firewood and charcoal, a figure that underscores both the developmental failure and the environmental strain (deforestation is accelerating as people hack down trees for fuel). The national utility is cash-strapped and unable to invest, while promised new solar and thermal projects have stalled. "Darkness" has become both a literal and metaphorical descriptor of Malawi's direction.

Then there is the healthcare system, now on life support. Hospitals and clinics are overwhelmed and under-resourced. Critical drug shortages are pervasive, over 70% of health facilities

have repeatedly run out of essential medicines in recent months. Doctors report telling patients to "bring your own" perishables / supplies for treatment, a grim indicator of collapse. In parts of the country, health centres have temporarily closed because they simply have nothing to treat patients with. This healthcare breakdown has had deadly consequences. Malawi endured its worst cholera outbreak in decades in 2022-2023 amid poor sanitation and lacking medical supplies, killing over a thousand people. Now, with the fuel shortage, some hospitals can't even operate ambulances or generators. Patients are turned away or forced to pay exorbitant prices for drugs in the private market. The poor, as always, suffer the most, for them, even a basic antibiotic has become a luxury beyond reach. Frontline health workers are demoralised, some leaving the country, others striking intermittently for better pay and supplies. The fabric of a functioning public health system is coming undone, raising the spectre of preventable deaths and a reversal of hard-won gains in child survival and disease control.

Perhaps most viscerally, hunger is stalking the population. Malawi is no stranger to food insecurity, droughts and floods often threaten harvests,

but the current situation is especially severe. A combination of climate shocks (a fierce El Niño-related drought in 2024) and the economic crunch have left an estimated 25% of the population facing acute food insecurity. That is about 5 to 6 million Malawians struggling to meet daily food needs. In rural areas, many families' crops withered in the drought or washed away in floods, while fertiliser was either unavailable or priced out of reach due to the forex crisis. Urban households, on the other hand, are hammered by soaring food prices, inflation on staples like maize, cooking oil, and bread well above 20%. The World Food Programme and other agencies have sounded alarm bells that Malawi faces its worst hunger in over a decade, appealing for emergency aid. Tragically, the government's own Affordable Inputs Program (AIP), which is supposed to provide subsidised fertiliser and seed to poor farmers, has been a shambles, marred by procurement scandals and delays. In one notorious incident, the agriculture ministry paid a UK-based dodgy broker (purportedly a fertiliser supplier) that turned out to be a small-time furniture and sausage company, wasting millions of dollars and delaying inputs. Such blunders mean that many farmers didn't get

fertiliser at all this season, virtually guaranteeing poor yields. As a result, Malawi's vaunted food security net has frayed. Malnutrition is rising; stunting in children, already around 37%, is feared to climb. Food rations have been cut for refugees and the ultra-poor due to lack of funding. In the countryside, some desperate families are surviving on one meal a day, foraging for wild yams or banana stems, a throwback to the famines of the past. It is a humanitarian crisis unfolding in slow motion, under the watch of a government seemingly paralysed by the enormity of the problem.

## *The Rise of the Opposition – Old Faces, New Hope?*

In this context of collapse, Malawians are looking for salvation, and increasingly, many are looking to the opposition for answers. The political winds have shifted dramatically since 2020. Chakwera's Malawi Congress Party (MCP), once in a broad alliance, is now largely isolated and on the defensive, while opposition forces are regrouping. Perhaps most striking is the comeback of Peter Mutharika, the very man Chakwera defeated in the court-ordered 2020 election re-run. Mutharika, now 84, was president from 2014 to 2020 and leads the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Initially written off after his 2020 loss, APM (as he's known) has sensed the public mood and positioned himself as the elder statesman who can "rescue" Malawi from Chakwera's misrule. In August 2024, the DPP emphatically endorsed Mutharika as its presidential candidate for the 2025 elections. In his acceptance speech, the octogenarian did not mince words about the state of the nation: he blasted the "anaemic" economy and promised to fix the foreign exchange shortages that have led to lack of fuel and medicines. "We are coming to fix the economy," Mutharika declared, evoking his administration's record of lower inflation and infrastructure projects. It was a clear signal that the 2025 race will be a referendum on economic management and

Chakwera's abysmal record has given the opposition its opening.

But Mutharika is not the only opposition figure eyeing the presidency. In a remarkable twist, Malawi could see a contest of three presidents, the incumbent and two former presidents. Aside from Mutharika, Joyce Banda (who ruled 2012-2014) has also re-emerged, hinting at a run or at least leveraging her People's Party as a kingmaker. Banda has been reminding voters that during her brief tenure a decade ago, Malawi had adequate fuel, forex and electricity a pointed contrast to today's shortages.

While Banda's electoral viability is questionable (her party lacks the nationwide support of MCP or DPP), her presence underscores a broader point: the opposition lacks a fresh face, and so the country's disillusionment is channeling toward familiar figures who themselves once fell short. This raises a troubling question, are Malawians simply caught in a revolving door of disillusionment? Banda's administration was tainted by the massive "Cashgate" corruption scandal; Mutharika's by allegations of nepotism. Yet such is the desperation in Malawi today that many seem willing to give the old guard another chance, if only to stave off the current disaster.

The primary challenger remains Mutharika. His DPP base in the populous Southern region, which felt marginalised under the Central-dominated MCP government, is fired up and eager to return to power. Importantly, Mutharika is working to broaden his appeal beyond his traditional stronghold. He has openly courted the United Transformation Movement (UTM), the party of the late VP Chilima – to form an opposition alliance. This is a strategic masterstroke: Chilima (before his untimely death in a plane crash in 2024) had a strong following among urban youth and in parts of the Central region. UTM was a key partner in Chakwera's 2020 victory, but after feeling betrayed and then losing Chilima, the party has bolted from the ruling coalition.

If Mutharika can seal a deal to bring UTM into the fold, perhaps by offering its new leaders a prominent role or running mate slot, it could dramatically reshape the electoral landscape. Also in play is the United Democratic Front (UDF), another opposition party with roots in the Eastern region, which allied with DPP in the past. Coalition politics will be crucial because Malawi now requires a 50%+1 majority to elect a president, making a runoff likely if three heavyweights run. Every alliance and vote transfer agreement will count.

Crucially, public opinion appears to be swinging to "anyone but Chakwera." Independent surveys and by-election results in late 2024 show the MCP losing ground even in areas it once dominated. Citizens across Malawi consistently cite the economy, jobs, and corruption as their top concerns, and on each, the perception is that Chakwera has failed to deliver. "Life has never been this hard," is a common refrain from market traders in Blantyre and farmers in Dedza alike. This despair is the opposition's fuel. In rallies and local meetings, DPP and other opposition politicians hammer home stories of governance failure: the mother who died in childbirth because the hospital had no blood or gas for an ambulance; the college graduate riding a motorcycle taxi to survive because there are no jobs; the small business owner who closed shop because she couldn't get forex to import spare parts. These real-life examples hit home far more than abstract GDP numbers. The mood in Malawi today is one of anguished reflection: we removed the old government for these new guys, but are worse off than before. That sentiment is Chakwera's greatest vulnerability, and it's one the opposition is keen to exploit fully.

## *Voters' Priorities and the Battle Ahead*

As Malawi marches towards the September 2025 elections, voters are galvanised by bread-and-butter issues. For the first time in recent memory, the economy is absolutely front and centre of a Malawian

election. All across this nation of 19 million, from the cities to the villages, people are asking which candidate can stabilise prices, restore fuel and electricity, and put food back on the table. Traditional political loyalties in Malawi, often tied to ethnicity or region, may blur in this election as hardship levels the differences. A hungry, jobless young man in the north and a struggling market woman in the south share the same immediate need: economic relief. Jobs for the youth is a particularly acute issue. Malawi's youth (over half the electorate) face an unemployment crisis so severe that many have given up hope of formal employment entirely. These young voters were a key constituency for the Tonse Alliance in 2020 after Chakwera and Chilima promised job creation; feeling betrayed, they may swing to whoever convinces them of a real plan for livelihoods. We may witness an unprecedented youth surge at the polls, a phenomenon seen in nearby Zambia, where youth turnout was decisive in unseating a failed incumbent in 2021.

Key electoral battlegrounds will likely be urban centres and swing districts. Cities like Blantyre, Lilongwe, Mzuzu are melting pots where party strongholds overlap, and the youth vote is concentrated. In 2020, the opposition alliance swept urban votes by promising change. In 2025, the opposition (now DPP/UTM/UDF alliance possibly) will aim to do the same by pointing to the urban chaos under MCP, the fuel queues, blackouts, and high cost of living that city dwellers know all too well. Rural areas, traditionally MCP's heartland in the Central region, cannot be taken for granted by Chakwera either. Farmers are furious about the fertiliser program failures and poor crop yields; they too feel the sting of inflation when buying soap or maize flour. Regions like the North, which have swung between parties in the past, are up for grabs and may go to the candidate who best addresses national (versus regional) issues. The battle for narrative is also underway: Chakwera will attempt to convince



voters that the hardships were unavoidable, a result of global factors (like COVID-19 and the Ukraine war's impact on fuel) and natural disasters, essentially pleading for more time to fulfil promises. The opposition will retort that while shocks are real, it was leadership incompetence and corruption that turned challenges into catastrophe. That argument has resonance given neighbours like Zambia or Tanzania faced the same global turbulences but did not descend into this level of crisis.

Ultimately, Malawians head into this election season with sombre determination. They know the stakes: this vote could decide whether Malawi remains stuck in a downward spiral or has a chance to reset. The collective priority of the electorate is clear, rescue the economy, save the country from collapse. The question is which political force can credibly offer that rescue. As things stand, President Chakwera is limping into the campaign with a track record that is indefensible on many counts. The opposition, though not without blemishes, is seizing the moment to present itself as the lesser evil and



From hero to villain. Chakwera's Tonse government institutionalized corruption, incompetence and impunity have angered Malawians.

the only viable path to recovery. In the coming months, expect to see this clash intensify: rallies filled with fiery rhetoric about "saving Malawi", manifestos heavy on economic fixes, and likely a healthy dose of mudslinging over who is more corrupt than whom. But strip away the political theatre, and one finds a citizenry that has been pushed to the brink and will no longer settle for

excuses. Come September, Malawian voters seem poised to prioritise performance over party, a welcome maturation of democracy forged in the crucible of hardship. If that indeed happens, it could mark the beginning of Malawi's long climb out of the abyss.

\*James Woods is a former diplomat with a commendable record of service for Malawi in various

European nations, including Belgium, Andorra, France, the Principality of Monaco, the Netherlands, Italy, Luxembourg, and the European Union. Complementing his practical experience, James is an MBA holder from the University of Oxford. He is also an Archbishop Desmond Tutu Fellow.

# SAVE THE DATE

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# Tanzania: Debt Crisis Spark National Outrage and Calls for Accountability

By Adonis Byemelwa

The murmurs began as whispers, carried through bustling markets and crowded commuter buses, before swelling into an uproar that now echoes across Tanzania's social media platforms. The nation—once a beacon of stability in East Africa—is grappling with a profound crisis of trust.

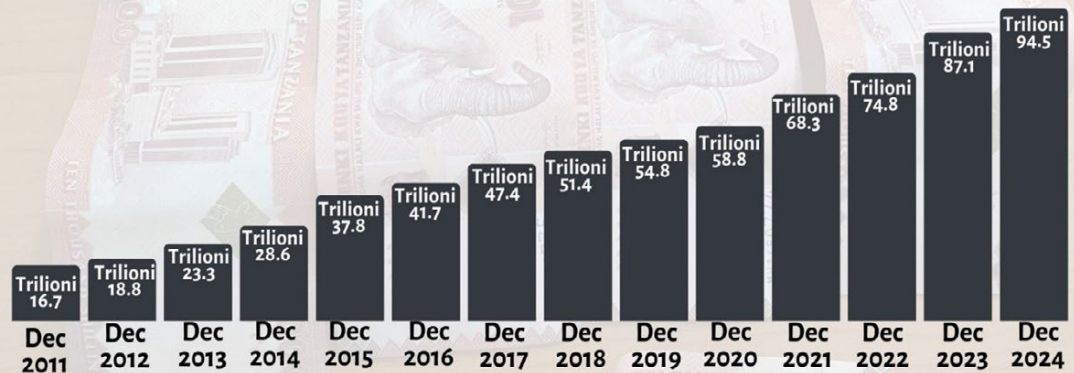
Behind the numbers that flood the headlines lies a painful reality: while the country's public debt skyrockets, the promise of shared prosperity remains a distant dream for most Tanzanians.

A damning report by The Chanzo, an English online newspaper, released on March 4, 2025, laid bare the scale of the country's borrowing spree. Citing data from the Bank of Tanzania's monthly reports, the investigation shows how the country's public debt has ballooned from Sh16.7 trillion in 2011 to a staggering Sh94.5 trillion by the end of 2024.

According to data from the Bank of Tanzania, Tanzania's government debt has witnessed an unprecedented surge over the past decade, rising from TZS 16.7 trillion in December 2011 to a staggering TZS 94.5 trillion by December 2024.

The consistent upward trajectory has raised concerns among economists, policymakers, and

## DENI LA SERIKALI TANZANIA 2011-2024



Machi 04, 2025

Takwimu Kutoka Ripoti za Mwezi Benki Kuu Tanzania

The CHANZO INITIATIVE

Tanzania's public debt has ballooned from Sh16.7 trillion in 2011 to a staggering Sh94.5 trillion by the end of 2024.

citizens alike regarding the country's financial sustainability and long-term economic prospects.

The data reveals that Tanzania's national debt has more than quadrupled in 13 years, with the sharpest increases occurring in recent years.

Between 2020 and 2021, the country's debt rose from TZS 58.8 trillion to TZS 68.3 trillion, marking a TZS 9.5 trillion jump in just one year.

The trend continued with a notable increase to TZS 87.1 trillion by the end of 2023 before reaching TZS 94.5 trillion in 2024.

The consistent growth in public debt reflects the government's efforts to finance various development projects, particularly in infrastructure, energy, and transportation.

However, the rapid pace of borrowing has sparked debates about the country's ability to service its debt without compromising essential public services.

While investments in infrastructure are expected to spur long-term economic growth, critics argue that the government must balance development goals with fiscal responsibility. High debt levels could strain public finances, leading to higher taxes, reduced social spending, and limited fiscal space to respond to future crises.

The graphic depiction of the debt curve—rising year after year without pause—has ignited national outrage, forcing a reckoning with the government's borrowing habits

and the mounting burden placed on ordinary citizens.

The outcry is not just about the figures—it's about what they symbolize. For many Tanzanians, the rising debt is a mirror reflecting the widening gap between the ruling elite and the struggling masses.

Anger boiled over as rumors began circulating about the Finance Minister's alleged construction of a luxurious TZS500 million mansion in Wazo Hill, Kinondoni District—reportedly for his side partner.

The allegations, though unverified, have struck a nerve in a society where stories of officials living lavishly while citizens battle unemployment and high taxes have become all too familiar.

"What hurts the most is not just the debt," one Twitter user lamented, "It's that the money we are borrowing is not for us—it's for their mansions and their foreign bank accounts."

The Finance Minister, when pressed, has maintained that Tanzania's debt remains within sustainable levels. But such



While investments in infrastructure are expected to spur long-term economic growth, critics argue that the government must balance development goals with fiscal responsibility



reassurances ring hollow against the backdrop of persistent poverty and youth unemployment hovering around 15%.

The government's favorite defense—that the loans are financing mega projects like the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) and the Julius Nyerere Hydropower Plant—offers little comfort to those struggling to put food on the table.

Critics argue that while these projects may yield long-term benefits, they have yet to create the immediate economic relief that millions of Tanzanians desperately need. The concept of “debt-fueled development” has become a bitter pill for many, reinforcing the suspicion that the government's borrowing spree is driven more by political prestige than by genuine economic priorities.

The Chanzo report has reignited a wider debate about Africa's addiction to foreign loans—a debate that economists like Dambisa Moyo have been warning about for years. In her seminal book *Dead Aid*, Moyo argues that reliance on external financing locks African nations into cycles of dependency, corruption, and stagnation.

NJ Ayuk, Executive Chairman of the African Energy Chamber, has echoed these concerns, calling on African leaders to harness the continent's vast natural wealth to fuel homegrown development instead of turning to donors.

“The real scandal,” Ayuk said in a recent op-ed, “is that Africa is rich enough to finance its future. What we lack is the political will to break free from the chains of aid and debt.”

Tanzania is a case in point. The country sits on some of the largest natural gas reserves in East Africa. Its gold mines produce hundreds of thousands of ounces every year.

Nickel, graphite, and rare earth minerals—essential for the global clean energy transition—lie beneath its soil. With the right policies, Tanzania could easily transform itself



Julius Nyerere Hydropower Plant. Photo courtesy.

from a borrower into a donor nation. Instead, the government's growing appetite for external loans has followed a familiar script seen across Africa. Nigeria, Zambia, and Mozambique have all walked the same path—borrowing heavily to finance mega-projects while neglecting critical investments in education, health, and job creation.

Today, Zambia spends nearly half of its budget on debt servicing. Mozambique's debt crisis, triggered by hidden loans, plunged the country into recession. Nigeria, despite its oil wealth, is among the world's highest borrowers from the IMF.

What makes Tanzania's case particularly frustrating is that the debt burden has fallen squarely on the backs of ordinary citizens.

Over the past few years, the government has imposed a barrage of taxes and levies—from phone tolls to mobile money transaction fees—tightening the screws on those who can least afford it.

The feeling on the streets is that citizens are being asked to bear the weight of debts they never consented to.

“In the village, they tell us the government is building railways and

power plants,” said Juma, a boda-boda rider in Dar es Salaam. “But what we see is more taxes on mobile money and no jobs for our children.”

As the 2025 general elections approach, many fear that the debt spiral will only worsen. African governments have a long history of ramping up spending during election years to shore up political support—often through foreign loans that saddle future generations with the bill. The specter of election-driven borrowing is casting a long shadow over Tanzania's already fragile economy.

Economists are urging the government to adopt a more sustainable path—one that prioritizes domestic resource mobilization, curbs corruption, and invests in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as engines of job creation.

Dambisa Moyo has long advocated for African countries to move away from aid dependency by expanding their tax bases, cracking down on illicit financial flows, and creating business-friendly environments that attract private investment.

“The way out of debt is not through more debt,” Moyo once said. “It's through economic self-reliance.”

But self-reliance remains a distant dream in Tanzania, where transparency in debt management is minimal and public participation in decision-making is virtually nonexistent.

The social media storm sparked by The Chanzo's report has shown that Tanzanians are no longer willing to suffer in silence. The nation is at a crossroads—either it heeds the growing demand for accountability and reform, or it continues down the perilous path of unsustainable borrowing.

For now, the lived reality for many Tanzanians is one of deepening hardship. The question hanging in the air is whether those in power will choose to listen.

The future of Tanzania's economy—and the fate of millions—depends on whether the country's leaders will finally break free from the cycle of debt and chart a new course toward economic independence.

The Chanzo's report may have opened the floodgates of public outrage, but the power to reshape Tanzania's destiny rests with its people. If the government will not act, then perhaps the ballot box—or the streets—will.

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# Security or Symbolism? Inside South Africa and Nigeria's New Pact

By Wallace Mawire

A landmark bilateral agreement between South Africa and Nigeria has recently been unveiled—a pact that has already ignited debate across the continent. Touted by its architects as a robust framework for deepening security cooperation, intelligence sharing, and joint operational readiness, the pact has also been met with skepticism. Critics argue that it may serve more as a symbolic gesture of pan-African unity than a practical instrument to address persistent security challenges. With both nations long seen as regional powerhouses, the pact's dual promise of practical security measures and bold political symbolism raises the question: Is this a true step toward effective collaboration, or is it merely a display designed to project strength in an uncertain geopolitical climate?

## A History of Strategic Partnerships

South Africa and Nigeria are two of Africa's most influential nations, each with its own unique security and diplomatic challenges. Nigeria, grappling with a legacy of insurgencies in the northeast and the specter of extremist violence across its borders, has repeatedly sought international partnerships to bolster its security apparatus. South Africa, meanwhile, has navigated a post-apartheid era defined by ambitious efforts to reposition itself as a key diplomatic player on the continent while facing its own domestic security issues, including organized crime and internal unrest.

Historically, both countries have played pivotal roles in regional organizations such as the African Union (AU) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), working together on peacekeeping and conflict-resolution



The potential for tangible outcomes is contingent on the political will of both governments to move beyond high-level declarations. Photo courtesy

initiatives. However, with shifting global alliances and rising domestic pressures, both nations have increasingly recognized that a deeper, bilateral engagement might provide the flexibility and autonomy needed to confront today's rapidly evolving security landscape.

## The New Pact: Substance and Significance

The newly inked agreement—launched in a joint press conference in Johannesburg—aims to create a comprehensive framework for cooperation that spans multiple facets of security. Key provisions include:

### • Joint Intelligence and Counter-Terrorism Efforts:

Both sides have committed to establishing a joint intelligence-sharing platform designed to track cross-border terrorist networks and criminal organizations. South Africa's Minister of International Relations emphasized,

«This pact is not merely symbolic. It is a concrete step toward harnessing our collective intelligence capabilities to thwart threats that no single nation can handle alone.»

### • Military Training and Joint

### Exercises:

In an effort to boost operational readiness, the pact outlines regular joint military exercises. Nigerian Defence officials have indicated plans for coordinated training programs designed to enhance interoperability between the two countries' armed forces—a critical component for any potential joint operations, whether in crisis intervention or routine security maintenance.

### • Cybersecurity and Emerging Threats:

Recognizing that modern warfare extends far beyond conventional battlefields, the pact also includes provisions for cooperation in cybersecurity. Both countries acknowledged that safeguarding critical infrastructure from cyber-attacks is a priority in an increasingly digital world.

### • Economic and Infrastructural Initiatives:

Security is inextricably linked to economic stability. Thus, the agreement also touches on measures aimed at promoting economic cooperation—such as joint ventures in energy and technology—that are intended to address the

socioeconomic drivers of instability. Nigerian officials have noted that strengthening economic resilience will help undercut the conditions that extremist groups exploit.

## Security Implications: A Real Shift?

For proponents, the pact represents an innovative approach to continental security challenges. The joint intelligence framework, for instance, could lead to more timely and accurate threat assessments, ultimately resulting in quicker responses to emerging dangers. Military observers have pointed out that both South Africa and Nigeria

have amassed considerable military resources over the years. By pooling these assets, the pact could offer a formidable counterweight to transnational security threats ranging from terrorism to human trafficking.

Moreover, the emphasis on cybersecurity and economic stability reflects a modern understanding of security. As one Nigerian security analyst remarked, «Security today is not just about troops on the ground. It's about protecting our digital domains, our economies, and ultimately, our people.»

The potential for such tangible outcomes, however, is contingent on the political will of both governments to move beyond high-level declarations. Historical precedents across Africa suggest that while pacts can foster enhanced dialogue, their success often depends on sustained implementation and the willingness to reform entrenched bureaucratic practices.

## Symbolism: The Political Theatre of Pan-African Unity

Detractors argue that, despite its promising provisions, the pact is laden with symbolism that may

overshadow its practical benefits. Critics note that both South Africa and Nigeria have, in recent years, employed grand gestures to signal leadership and unity within Africa. The very public nature of the pact's signing—complete with flag-raising ceremonies, cultural performances, and media blitzes—has led some to view it as a political performance intended more to bolster national prestige than to solve security problems.

One political commentator observed, «In the face of severe internal challenges, these grandiose gestures risk becoming nothing more than window dressing. Without concrete follow-through, we may see little more than political theater.»

Indeed, the pact is set against a backdrop of regional disillusionment with international organizations. With ECOWAS and the AU often criticized for their slow responses and bureaucratic inefficiencies, the new bilateral agreement can be seen as a direct challenge to these institutions—a statement that South Africa and Nigeria are capable of charting their own course independently.

## Regional and Global Context

The timing of the pact is significant. Africa is undergoing rapid geopolitical shifts as emerging powers like China and Russia vie for influence. In this context, the new security arrangement is as much a response to global trends as it is to internal pressures. By strengthening ties between South Africa and Nigeria, the two nations are positioning themselves as counterweights to external interventions. This alignment may also encourage other African states to pursue similar bilateral or multilateral agreements outside the traditional frameworks dominated by Western influence.

For instance, analysts have noted that the pact could serve as a model for future cooperation initiatives that prioritize regional solutions over external prescriptions. As one expert put it, «This could be the dawn of a new era where African nations take



By strengthening ties between South Africa and Nigeria, the two nations are positioning themselves as counterweights to external interventions.

the reins of their own security and development destinies.»

## Challenges

### Implementation and Trust

Despite the promising language of the pact, significant challenges remain. One of the most critical is ensuring that the lofty goals of the agreement translate into real-world actions. Past experiences with regional pacts in Africa have often faltered during implementation—hampered by political infighting, lack of funding, and bureaucratic inertia.

Building trust will be essential. Both South Africa and Nigeria have complex domestic political landscapes, and there is a historical legacy of skepticism toward regional agreements that appear to benefit political elites more than ordinary citizens. Ensuring transparency and accountability in the pact's implementation will be key to sustaining its momentum.

Furthermore, while the pact promises joint military exercises and intelligence sharing, operationalizing these commitments requires overcoming substantial logistical and doctrinal differences between the two nations' armed forces. Critics argue that without standardized protocols and regular, rigorous joint training, the pact's security provisions could remain largely theoretical.

## Voices from the Ground

Public opinion in both countries offers a mixed picture. In Nigeria, where insecurity remains a daily reality for many, there is cautious optimism that increased cooperation with South Africa might bolster national security. A Lagos-based entrepreneur recently remarked, «We have suffered too long from cross-border terrorism and organized crime. If this pact means more coordinated efforts to tackle these issues, I am all for it.»

Conversely, in South Africa, there is a palpable wariness that the pact might serve primarily as a political statement rather than an effective security mechanism. A Johannesburg political activist expressed concern, «It's refreshing to see leaders commit to continental solidarity, but we must demand that this isn't just about slogans. Real change will be measured by how much safer our streets and communities become.»

## Beyond Symbolism or True Security?

The new security pact between South Africa and Nigeria sits at the intersection of ambition and pragmatism. It encapsulates the dual imperatives of modern statecraft—addressing immediate security threats while projecting an image of unity and resilience on the global stage. Whether the agreement will emerge as a transformative tool that fundamentally reshapes the security

landscape of Africa, or merely as a symbolic gesture that fails to deliver tangible benefits, remains to be seen.

For the pact to succeed, both nations will need to commit to rigorous implementation, sustained dialogue, and continuous reform. The promise of enhanced intelligence sharing, joint military readiness, and economic cooperation is compelling, yet the track record of similar initiatives across Africa serves as a cautionary tale. The real test will lie in the everyday lives of citizens—whether they experience improved security, economic stability, and a genuine sense of national empowerment.

In the final analysis, the pact challenges both South Africa and Nigeria to rise above past failures and embrace a model of cooperation that is both visionary and effective. It is a call for deeper integration that transcends rhetoric and targets the structural challenges undermining security across the continent. As the agreement unfolds, the international community, as well as the citizens of these two pivotal nations, will be watching closely. The stakes are high, and the outcome will likely influence the trajectory of Africa's security architecture for years to come.

Only time will reveal if this bold new pact is a step toward a secure and united continent or if it remains a well-intentioned yet ultimately superficial display of pan-African solidarity.



# Soaring Ambitions: Ethiopia's \$7.8 Billion Leap into Aviation Dominance

By Ajong Mbatndah L

Ethiopia is poised to redefine Africa's aviation landscape with an unprecedented mega project—a state-of-the-art international airport that promises to transform the continent's air travel, stimulate economic growth, and cement the nation's position as a global aviation hub. The new Bishoftu International Airport, set to replace some of the growing pressures on the current Addis Ababa Bole International Airport, is backed by a landmark \$7.8 billion funding agreement between the Ethiopian Airlines Group and the African Development Bank (AfDB).

## A Vision for a Game-Changing Hub

At the heart of this ambitious endeavor is Ethiopia's desire to upgrade its aviation infrastructure to meet skyrocketing demand. The new facility is strategically planned to be constructed in Abusera, near Bishoftu—approximately 45 kilometers from Addis Ababa. Designed with future growth in mind, the airport is projected to boost annual passenger capacity from 17 million to over 60 million by 2040, a transformation that industry experts are already hailing as “game-changing”.

Ethiopian Airlines' CEO, Mesfin Tasew, and AfDB's Vice President for Regional Development, Integration, and Strategy, Nnenna Nwabufu, formally inked this groundbreaking deal in Abidjan. The signing ceremony underscored the project's strategic importance, with high-profile figures such as AfDB President Dr. Akinwumi Adesina and Ethiopia's Finance Minister Ahmed Shide in attendance. Adesina commended Ethiopia's robust economic performance—highlighting an 8.1% GDP growth rate over the past year—



Finance Minister Ahmed Shide of Ethiopia and AfDB President Akinwumi Adesina at the signing ceremony. Photo credit Ministry of Finance, Ethiopia

and positioned the Bishoftu project as a flagship initiative that will propel the country's economic and infrastructural transformation.

## Beyond Runways: Economic and Social Impact

The impact of the new airport is anticipated to be far-reaching. By diverting significant air traffic away from the currently congested Bole Airport, the Bishoftu facility will not only ease logistical bottlenecks but also drive job creation, spur economic development, and enhance global connectivity. The project is seen as a catalyst for regional integration, aligning with broader initiatives to “integrate Africa” and boost intra-continental trade and mobility.

A detailed analysis by industry observers points out that such large-scale infrastructure projects have historically served as engines of economic growth. With the capacity to accommodate 270 aircraft and modern facilities designed for world-class cargo handling, flight catering, and maintenance, the airport is expected to stimulate ancillary sectors and attract foreign direct investment. The economic multiplier effect is anticipated to benefit not just

Addis Ababa but the entire region, turning Bishoftu into a vibrant hub of commerce and innovation.

## Strategic Partnerships and Future-Proofing Aviation

The partnership between Ethiopian Airlines and AfDB represents more than just a financial transaction—it is a strategic alignment of visions. Both institutions have recognized that “hope is not a strategy,” and concrete investments in critical infrastructure are necessary to meet the continent's burgeoning travel demands. The AfDB's involvement, including a noted portfolio of over \$1.2 billion in current investments across key sectors, reinforces its commitment to driving transformative projects that support sustainable development and regional integration.

Experts emphasize that this project will set a new benchmark in African aviation. The modern design, multi-runway configuration, and advanced passenger processing systems are all intended to future-proof Ethiopia's air transport capabilities against rising global competition. As rapid advancements in aviation technology and emerging travel patterns reshape the industry, having a facility that

can adapt to future demands is crucial. One industry commentator noted that Ethiopia's “obsessive inclination towards aviation” is not just a matter of national pride but a strategic move to secure a dominant position in Africa's increasingly competitive air travel market.

## A Catalyst for Continental Transformation

Beyond its national significance, the Bishoftu International Airport project is set to act as a precedent for Africa as a whole. The initiative is not merely an upgrade to Ethiopia's existing infrastructure; it is a bold statement about the continent's potential when visionary leadership meets innovative financing models. By successfully executing a project of this scale, Ethiopia will demonstrate that even in regions traditionally challenged by infrastructural deficits, world-class facilities are achievable.

## Enhancing Regional Connectivity and Trade:

A modern, high-capacity airport is critical for facilitating smoother and faster trade routes, not just within Ethiopia but across Africa. Improved air connectivity will enable quicker movement of goods and people, bolstering tourism, fostering cross-border business, and encouraging cultural exchange. In turn, this integration is expected to drive significant economic growth throughout the continent, turning isolated markets into interconnected hubs of opportunity.

## Job Creation and Skill Development:

Large-scale infrastructure projects invariably lead to job creation—both directly, through construction and operations, and indirectly, via the growth of ancillary industries.

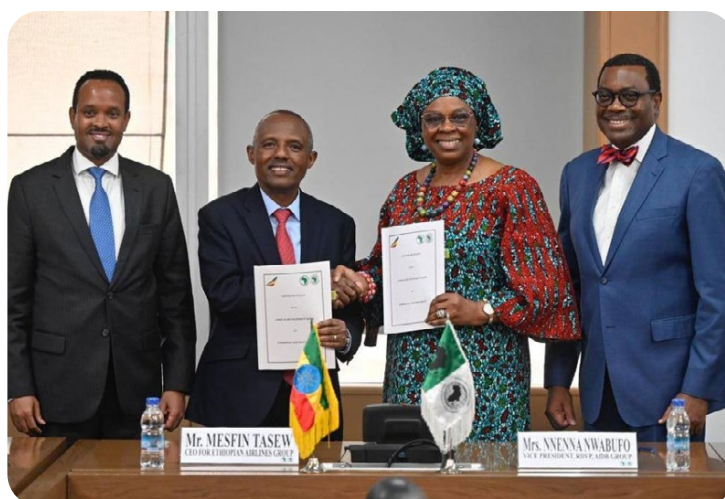
The Bishoftu project is expected to generate thousands of jobs, stimulating local economies and providing a model for human resource development. This ripple effect can inspire neighboring countries to invest similarly in their infrastructure, paving the way for broader socioeconomic advancement across Africa.

## Inspiring Replicable Public-Private Partnerships:

The collaboration between Ethiopian Airlines and AfDB is a prime example of how public-private partnerships can mobilize the resources necessary for transformative projects. By sharing risks and leveraging the strengths of both sectors, this model can be replicated in other African nations. Such partnerships can help bridge the gap between ambitious development plans and the financial constraints that have historically hindered infrastructural investments on the continent.

## Environmental and Technological Leadership:

Modern airports are not just about capacity—they are also about sustainability and technological innovation. With state-of-the-art



**Designed to handle over 60 million passengers by 204 up from the current 17 million the project will enhance Ethiopia's standing as a premier aviation hub and stimulate economic growth.**

designs and systems that emphasize energy efficiency and minimal environmental impact, the Bishoftu International Airport is set to become a benchmark for sustainable infrastructure. Its successful implementation could encourage other African countries to adopt similar green technologies, further establishing the continent as a leader in sustainable development.

## Setting a Precedent for Future Infrastructure Initiatives

The Bishoftu International Airport is more than a singular project—it represents a paradigm shift. Africa

has long been characterized by rapid urbanization and a growing middle class, yet many nations have struggled with outdated and insufficient infrastructure. This new airport project sets an ambitious precedent by showcasing how strategic investments can overcome these long-standing challenges.

## Blueprint for Success:

By combining robust financial backing, visionary leadership, and modern technology, Ethiopia is crafting a blueprint for success that other African countries can emulate. If the Bishoftu project meets its

targets—boosting capacity, creating jobs, and enhancing economic integration—it will serve as tangible proof that large-scale infrastructure investments are not only feasible but essential for the continent's future.

## Catalyst for Continent-Wide Progress:

As African nations observe Ethiopia's progress, there is every reason to expect a ripple effect. Improved aviation infrastructure can lead to enhanced regional integration, more competitive international markets, and a stronger collective bargaining position in global trade. In this light, the Bishoftu airport is not merely an isolated achievement; it is a catalyst for continent-wide progress and a signal to global investors that Africa is ready for a new era of infrastructural excellence.

## The Road Ahead: A Vision Realized for Africa

In summary, Ethiopia's ambitious airport project is not just about addressing local congestion or increasing passenger capacity. It embodies a broader vision for a more connected, economically vibrant, and technologically advanced Africa. As the Bishoftu International Airport takes shape, its impact will extend far beyond Ethiopia's borders, setting a precedent that could inspire similar transformational projects across the continent.

Ethiopia's bold leap into aviation dominance may well become the cornerstone upon which Africa builds its future—a future where state-of-the-art infrastructure, sustainable development, and robust economic integration are not mere aspirations, but everyday realities.

Ethiopia's new aviation venture is a beacon of progress for Africa, illuminating a path toward interconnected growth and shared prosperity. With strategic partnerships, innovative financing, and an unwavering commitment to excellence, the continent is poised to take flight into a new era of global leadership.



**More than just an airport, this initiative represents a bold reimagination of Africa's transport and logistics ecosystem.**



# CONNECTING ATLANTA

FOUR TIMES WEEKLY TO OVER 136  
DESTINATIONS IN AFRICA,  
MIDDLE EAST AND BEYOND



# Tanzania to Build East Africa's Largest Conference Centre in Arusha

By Adonis Byemelwa

Tanzania is making a bold play for the lucrative business tourism market with plans to construct the largest conference centre in East and Central Africa.

The Mount Kilimanjaro International Conference Centre (MKICC), set to rise in the vibrant northern town of Arusha, will cost over \$152 million and is expected to transform the country into a premier destination for global conventions and high-profile events.

The project is a partnership between the Arusha International Conference Centre (AICC), which currently accommodates up to 1,300 delegates, and Tanzania's Public Service Social Security Fund (PSSSF).

The new centre, slated for completion by 2027, will dwarf existing facilities with a 5,000-seat auditorium, a luxury 500-room five-star hotel featuring 10 presidential suites, a vast 20,000-square-meter commercial area, parking for 2,000 vehicles, and even a helipad for VIP arrivals.

Designed by British firm Blonski Architects, the structure draws inspiration from the baobab tree—often referred to as the 'Tree of Life'—a symbol of community gathering in African culture.

The site offers stunning views of Mount Meru and the distant peaks of Kilimanjaro, reinforcing its appeal as a world-class venue.

The MKICC is already generating buzz as it prepares to host major international events, including the Apimondia International Bee and Honey Conference.

This development signals Tanzania's strategic pivot towards Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) tourism, a sector poised for rapid expansion in the post-pandemic era.

What makes this even more remarkable is that the project is



This ambitious initiative is more than just bricks and mortar; it's a statement of intent. Photo courtesy.

being financed entirely by domestic investment—without foreign funding—underscoring Tanzania's confidence in its economic potential.

This ambitious initiative is more than just bricks and mortar; it's a statement of intent. Tanzania's tourism sector has long been synonymous with safari adventures in the Serengeti and luxury retreats in Zanzibar, but this move signals a diversification strategy aimed at capturing a different kind of traveler—business leaders, policymakers, and high-spending international delegates.

The implications are far-reaching. First, the MKICC will directly address Tanzania's existing limitations in hosting large-scale conferences.

According to Minister for Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation Mahmoud Thabit Kombo, the country recently had to turn away over 1,500 delegates due to capacity constraints at a major event.

This loss isn't just about missed revenue from hotel stays and dining—it's about positioning. Every high-profile event that goes elsewhere cements a competitor's status as a go-to destination for business tourism.

Second, the economic ripple effect of a project this size is immense. The centre will create thousands of jobs, from construction to hospitality, and

inject millions into local businesses.

Hotels, restaurants, tour operators, and transportation services will see a significant boost, ensuring that the benefits trickle down to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) across the region. Arusha's already bustling economy—driven by tourism and diplomacy—will only grow stronger as it cements its reputation as East Africa's conference capital.

What's particularly striking about the MKICC is its self-sufficiency. Unlike many large-scale projects in Africa that lean on foreign loans or development aid, this centre is funded entirely by Tanzanian investment.

This decision reflects a growing trend across the continent—African nations taking ownership of their development, moving away from dependency, and leveraging internal resources to drive economic growth.

By choosing to invest locally, Tanzania ensures that the profits and benefits remain within its borders. The PSSSF's involvement also demonstrates how domestic social security funds can be strategically mobilized to build long-term assets that generate sustainable returns.

This model could inspire similar investments in other sectors, from transport infrastructure to tech hubs, reinforcing Tanzania's broader economic ambitions.

In the competitive landscape of African business tourism, Tanzania is sending a clear message: it wants a seat at the table. For years, Nairobi and Kigali have been the go-to cities for high-profile summits and corporate events, with their state-of-the-art conference venues and well-established international networks.

The MKICC will level the playing field, offering an alternative that blends world-class facilities with Tanzania's unique cultural and natural appeal.

Moreover, this development aligns seamlessly with Africa's broader integration efforts under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

As trade and investment flows increase within the continent, the need for high-quality venues to host negotiations, exhibitions, and summits will only grow.

With its strategic location, vibrant business environment, and rich tourism offerings, Arusha is well-positioned to become a focal point for pan-African engagement.

Tanzania's commitment to building the MKICC is more than just an infrastructure project—it's a visionary move towards a self-sustaining, diversified economy. By tapping into the booming MICE tourism sector, the country is not only attracting global businesses but also reshaping its economic landscape.

With a mix of innovation, strategic investment, and cultural richness, Tanzania is proving that Africa can build world-class facilities on its terms.

All eyes are on Arusha as 2027 draws closer. If executed successfully, the MKICC won't just be the largest conference centre in East Africa—it will stand as a powerful symbol of Tanzania's ambition, resilience, and growing influence on the global stage.



# Scaling New Heights: How the 2025 SBEC Forum Will Transform Women-Led Businesses in Cameroon

By Bruno Ittia\*

**W**omen entrepreneurs in Cameroon represent a powerful force for economic development, with the country ranking third in Africa for female entrepreneurship. Despite their growing numbers and innovative approaches, these business owners often struggle to scale their enterprises beyond the initial startup phase, facing unique barriers that limit their growth potential.

«Women are the largest untapped reservoir of talent in the world in general and in Africa in particular,» observes Brice Nsengue, Assistant Manager of the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Center (SBEC). «Female entrepreneurship today appears to be the most useful tool for exploiting this reservoir.»

It's this recognition of untapped potential that drives the vision behind the 2025 SBEC Forum, set to unfold on April 29-30 at La Falaise Hotel in Yaoundé, Cameroon. Under the theme «Scaling Up: Expanding Youth and Women-Led SMEs in Cameroon,» the forum promises to become a transformative platform where ambitious female entrepreneurs can find the resources, connections, and knowledge needed to take their businesses beyond survival mode and



The 2025 SBEC Forum is set to unfold on April 29-30 at La Falaise Hotel in Yaoundé

into prosperity.

**The Paradox of Potential**

The statistics tell a striking story. Africa boasts the highest percentage of female entrepreneurs globally, with Cameroon ranking third on the continent. Yet, this entrepreneurial spirit remains constrained by systemic challenges. Only 12% of the country's SMEs are formally registered, with

women-led businesses particularly likely to remain in the shadows of the informal economy, limiting their access to financing, partnerships, and growth opportunities.

«What we've observed over the years is that starting a business is just the first step,» explains Sylvia Namondo, Interim Director of SBEC. «The real challenge for women entrepreneurs comes when they attempt to scale. They encounter barriers that range from limited access to capital to challenging regulatory frameworks, obstacles that the 2025 SBEC Forum specifically addresses through both practical support and policy advocacy.»

**The Power of Targeted Support**

The 2025 SBEC Forum builds upon a foundation of success stories that illustrate the transformative power of targeted support. Among SBEC's network of accomplished entrepreneurs is Ms. Essama Ebene Florence, whose journey from small-scale farmer to agribusiness leader

exemplifies the kind of transformation SBEC seeks to catalyze.

Florence's company, Blessing Enterprises SARL, began as a modest poultry operation with 300 broiler chickens. After two years as a Premium Member of SBEC, accessing both technical support and network connections, she's poised to double her production capacity. «The impact is measurable and substantial,» she notes. «We're not just talking about increased production, but we're creating employment opportunities for young Cameroonians and strengthening food security in our communities.»

Another notable success within the SBEC network is Ms. Mboni Atogo, founder of Boni's Classy Cakes and Party Piece. This Yaoundé-based pastry business has grown from a home kitchen operation to a sought-after supplier of wedding and celebration cakes. Through SBEC's guidance and resources, Atogo has transformed her passion for baking



The 2025 SBEC Forum builds upon a foundation of success stories that illustrate the transformative power of targeted support.

into a sustainable business model with consistent growth over the past year.

These entrepreneurs represent the ripple effect that happens when women business owners receive the right combination of mentorship, resources, and market connections, exactly what the 2025 SBEC Forum aims to provide on a larger scale.

## Practical Pathways to Business Expansion

What distinguishes the SBEC Forum from other business events is its emphasis on practical, actionable support rather than theoretical discussions. The 2025 edition will feature speed mentoring sessions where established business leaders share insights with emerging entrepreneurs. Exhibition spaces will showcase women-led businesses, creating immediate market connections. Structured networking events will facilitate relationships with financial institutions and potential business partners.

For entrepreneurs like Ms. Fokem Ethevise Flore, CEO of Entreprises Nuances SARL, such practical support has translated into tangible growth. Her fashion company, which specializes in designs made from local fabrics, has leveraged SBEC's support to increase turnover by at least 30% through modernized production methods. Perhaps more significantly, the addition of skilled sales personnel and digital marketing support has



Sylvia Namondo, Interim SBEC Director in a chat with Bruno Ittia, Director of Communications and Strategic Initiatives, Denis and Lenora Foretia Foundation

opened new markets through online channels, boosting e-commerce sales by approximately 25%.

«The forum isn't just about inspiration. It's about transformation,» emphasizes Brice Nsengue. «When participants leave, they carry with them not just new ideas but concrete connections, tools, and opportunities that can immediately impact their businesses.»

Beyond the immediate benefits to individual entrepreneurs, the SBEC Forum serves a broader purpose in Cameroon's economic landscape. By bringing together

entrepreneurs, policymakers from relevant government ministries, financial institutions, civil society organizations, and international partners, the forum creates a unique ecosystem for advocating policy reforms that benefit women and youth-led businesses.

«We're not just supporting individual businesses. We are working to transform the entire entrepreneurial ecosystem,» Namondo explains. «When we bring all these stakeholders together, we create opportunities for policy changes that can benefit thousands of entrepreneurs beyond those who attend the forum.»

Creating a Sustainable Impact

With support from the Rising Tide Foundation and the John Templeton Foundation, the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Center of the Denis and Lenora Foretia Foundation has created a platform that transcends the limitations of a typical business forum.

As April 29 approaches, anticipation builds among past participants and newcomers alike. Florence and Atogo have already confirmed their participation, eager to share

their journeys and connect with the next generation of women business leaders. Their stories represent the tangible outcomes that can emerge from the connections and knowledge shared at the forum.

«What makes this forum special is the community it creates,» reflects Nsengue. «Years after attending, entrepreneurs continue to collaborate, support each other, and grow together. It's not just a two-day event, it's the beginning of a journey toward sustainable business growth.»

For women entrepreneurs ready to scale their businesses, the message is clear: The 2025 SBEC Forum offers not just inspiration but also practical pathways to growth. Registration remains open for entrepreneurs, support organizations, financial institutions, and other stakeholders interested in contributing to the expansion of women-led businesses in Cameroon.

For more information, contact the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Center at [info@foretiafoundation.org](mailto:info@foretiafoundation.org), call (+237) 654 86 72 54, or register at <https://tinyurl.com/5b98saxk>.

\*Bruno Ittia, Director of Communications and Strategic Initiatives, Denis and Lenora Foretia Foundation



Brice Nsengue, Assistant SBEC Manager.



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# Giant Strides For A Fotoh & Associates Inc At 5

*-Social Justice is at the heart of A Fotoh and Associates' vision for commercial success and social impact in Africa*

By Simnikiwe Hlatshaneni

In a continent where potential often outweighs tangible progress, Alex Fotoh is firmly positioned where vision meets relentless execution. From Cameroon to Cape Town, his journey is not just a story of personal triumph but a blueprint for how African legal minds can drive economic and social transformation. As the founder of A Fotoh & Associates Inc., Fotoh has carved a niche as a dynamic attorney who balances capitalist ambition with a deep commitment to social justice—a duality that defines his firm's «baby born with teeth» ethos.

## A Journey Forged in Tenacity

Fotoh's path to legal prominence was anything but linear. After completing his Master's in Law at Stellenbosch University, he faced a daunting reality: to practice in South Africa, he needed to requalify by earning a second LLB—despite already holding equivalent degrees from Cameroon. Undeterred, he spent a decade working at Schrueder Attorneys while studying at UNISA, eventually qualifying as an attorney in 2019. «It wasn't easy,» he admits, «but the dream of becoming an international lawyer kept me going.»

This resilience mirrors his firm's identity. Established in 2020, A Fotoh & Associates is a boutique law firm that punches above its weight, specializing in commercial litigation, property rights, and energy law. With a team of eight, Fotoh describes the firm as a «family» united by a shared mission: to deliver justice while empowering others. «Leadership is a relay race,» he says. «You pass the baton by training and inspiring others to carry the vision forward.»

## Capitalism with a Conscience

Fotoh's philosophy is rooted in what he calls the «length and breadth of life.» While he champions capitalism as a vehicle for ambition,



For Alex Fotoh, the law is more than a profession—it's a tool for rewriting Africa's narrative.

he argues that true success lies in uplifting communities. This balance is evident in his work with legal NGO, ProBono, which recently named his firm «Most Active Newcomer» for drafting wills and defending the rights of indigent clients. «Lawyers are the first and last line of defense for the vulnerable,» he notes. «Our services are a public good—they impact lives beyond commercial value.»

His commitment to social justice extends to policy critique. Fotoh laments Africa's stagnation in translating potential into reality. «We've had independence for decades, yet we're still talking about potential,» he says. «The gap isn't just in laws but in implementation.» He points to the mining and energy sectors, where communities are often displaced without recourse. «Policy

must prioritize people. We need doers, not just talkers. In the end, visionary, pragmatic, and disciplined leadership will have the last word in reality when it comes to Africa's growth and development,» Fotoh opined.

## Energy, Innovation, and African Solutions

Fotoh's recent partnership with the Centurion Law Group (CLG), a sponsoring partner for African Energy Week, underscores his interest in the continent's energy future. Though not an energy expert himself, he leverages his firm's consultant, who holds a PhD in African mining law, to navigate complex regulatory landscapes. «Energy is pivotal for growth, but frameworks must protect local interests,» he explains. His vision? A «one-stop shop» law firm that blends specialization with versatility, offering clients holistic solutions.

Technology is another cornerstone. Gone are the days of «fancy libraries,» Fotoh quips, as digital tools like LexisNexis streamline legal research. He sees tech as a democratizing force, bridging access to justice and modernizing practices like conveyancing. «Innovation isn't optional—it's how we stay relevant in a digital world.»

«In the end, visionary, pragmatic, and disciplined leadership will have the last word in reality when it comes to Africa's growth and development.»  
- Alex Fotoh.

## The Unbroken Spirit of Africa

What inspires Fotoh most is not South Africa's infrastructure but its «indomitable spirit»—the legacy of those who fought for liberation. Yet he warns against complacency in African countries that have struggled to realise the visions of their liberators. «We entered the promised land but became visionless, and



Social Justice is at the heart of A Fotoh and Associates' vision for commercial success and social impact in Africa.



went into slumber,» he reflects. His remedy? African self-reliance. With intra-African trade at a meager 3%, he urges legal systems to reduce reliance on colonial frameworks and foster local expertise. «We must create ecosystems where African solutions solve African problems.»

### The Road Ahead

In five years, A Fotoh & Associates has grown into a vibrant firm with a reputation for tenacity. Fotoh's next decade hinges on scaling impact—expanding into energy law, mentoring young attorneys, and advocating for policies that marry growth with equity. «We're small, but we're mighty,» he smiles. «And we're just getting started.»



As the founder of A Fotoh & Associates Inc., Fotoh has carved a niche as a dynamic attorney who balances capitalist ambition with a deep commitment to social justice

For Alex Fotoh, the law is more than a profession—it's a tool for rewriting Africa's narrative. His story challenges the continent to move beyond potential and into action, one case, one policy, and one life at a time.

### About A Fotoh & Associates Inc

A Fotoh & Associates Inc. is a boutique law firm located in Cape Town CBD. The firm is led by Alex Fotoh, a skilled attorney with experience in litigation. The firm was founded in March 2020 and is a baby born with teeth that can bite and inflict excruciating pain. We are more than a law firm. We add value and impact the lives of our clients. We believe that a human-centered approach to customer care can create apostles for our firm.

Jeremiah 29:11

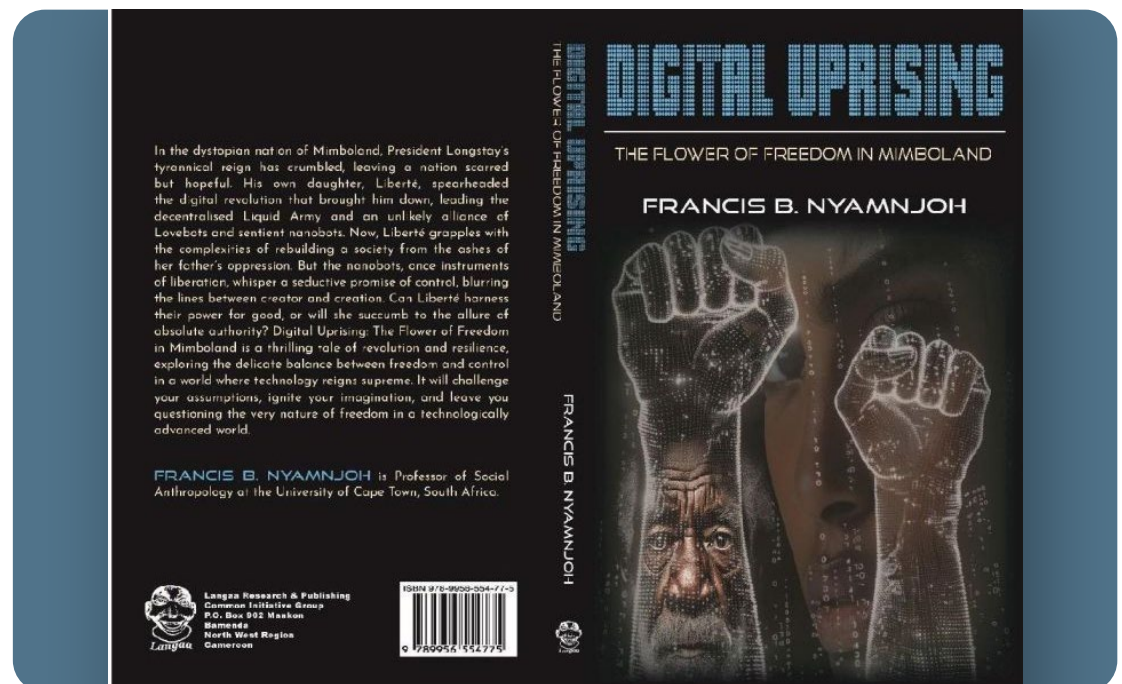
«For I know the plans I have for you,» declares the LORD, «plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.»

## Liberté's Revolution: A Daughter's Defiance and the Power of Digital Uprising

Review of Francis B. Nyamnjoh's *Digital Uprising: The Flower of Freedom in Mimboland, Langa*, 2024, ISBN: 9789956554775, 236 pages.

Reviewer: Dr Hassan M. Yosimbom

Have you ever imagined a world in crisis? Have you conjured a world where the very foundations of democracy and human rights crumble before our eyes? Have you visualized a world where power concentrates in the hands of a select few, leaving the rest to struggle in poverty and despair? This is the stark reality depicted in Francis Nyamnjoh's 2024 novel, *Digital Uprising: The Flower of Freedom in Mimboland*. Set in the fictional African nation of Mimboland, the novel paints a dystopian picture where technology becomes both a tool of oppression and a weapon of liberation indicating that in the modern world, there is more to everything than meets the eye; that nothing is connected to everything but everything is connected to something. Nyamnjoh's idea of the functional duality of technology reminds us that not very long ago, one of the most important United States citizens, Donald Trump, was removed from some social media platforms



Set in the fictional African nation of Mimboland, the novel paints a dystopian picture where technology becomes both a tool of oppression and a weapon of liberation

when he resorted to intermittently using Twitter (now X) to garner political popularity and at the same time oppress and disenfranchise the

United States masses.

Nyamnjoh references technology's double-edged sword incarnated by President Longstay, Mimboland's

tyrannical ruler, who uses technology to maintain his iron grip on the nation. In a manner that is reminiscent of the Big Brother in George Orwell's 1984,

he manipulates the masses through propaganda and surveillance, creating a climate of fear and control. However, technology also empowers the resistance movement led by Longstay's own daughter, Liberté who with her Liquid Army utilise social media, hacking, and even nanotechnology to expose Longstay's crimes and rally the people against him. Liberté is a character that shocks us to the marrow because she is out of kilter with especially postcolonial African and probably global reality. In a world where even the most incompetent sons and daughters of the most tyrannical leaders usually view succeeding their fathers and mothers either by hook or crook as their God-given inalienable patrimonial right, one wonders from where and how Liberté harnesses the chutzpah to become arguably one of the first daughters of a president to choose justice over patrimony, to choose patriotism over familial personal greed.

Nyamnjoh demonstrates the intimidating power of digital tools. His novel serves as a powerful exploration of the complex relationship between technology, democracy, and human rights. It highlights the potential of digital tools to both enhance and undermine democratic principles. He teaches that these tools can be harnessed to promote transparency, accountability, and citizen participation as much as they can be used to suppress dissent and consolidate authoritarian power. Oppressed communities in many postcolonial nations face a digital double bind: governments manipulate internet access, offering it as a reward while simultaneously using shutdowns and infiltration of online spaces to suppress resistance.



Nyamnjoh's novel serves as a wake-up call, urging readers to recognise the complex interplay between technology, democracy, and human rights in the digital age.

And Nyamnjoh does clarify that while the masses often envisage a liberatory interconnection between technology, democracy, and human rights; dictatorial leaderships doublethink and doublespeak that connection, leaving everything to happenstance.

Nyamnjoh's novel is a global call to action. Digital Uprising challenges us to confront this institutionalized doublethink and doublespeak and consider the implications for our own societies. It underscores the urgent need for critical engagement with digital technologies and their impact on democracy and human rights. By understanding the dynamics at play in Mimboland, we can draw valuable lessons for safeguarding and strengthening democratic values in our own communities. And Nyamnjoh is on point when he references Liberté's patriotism and not greed-engendered revolutionary example to demonstrate that the real lessons for safeguarding and strengthening democratic values in our own communities need to be backed by charities – like Liberté and her Liquid Army's pleasant surprise

– that commence at presidential palaces and then extend to the whole communities.

Digital Uprising goes beyond the binary because it adopts a gendered lens. The novel also breaks new ground by featuring a female revolutionary leader in a context where such roles have traditionally been dominated by men. Liberté's courage and defiance challenge gender stereotypes and offer a fresh perspective on the fight for freedom and justice. By creating Liberté and suggesting that a woman can be a mother, politician, socialist, educator, and provider, Nyamnjoh reconnects her to a long line of female revolutionary characters in African literary texts: Beatrice Okoh and Elewa in Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*; Nyankinyua and Wanja in Ngugi's *Petals of Blood*; Jacinta Waringa in *Devil on the Cross*, and Nyawira in *Wizard of the Crow*, etc. This connection underscores the ongoing struggle for equality and justice, symbolised by Liberté's legacy.

Ultimately, by stressing the liberatory as well as the oppressive

interconnections between technology, democracy, and human rights, *Digital Uprising* is a novel that asks pertinent questions without pretending to provide ready-made answers because it acknowledges that democracy, human rights, and technology are all works in permanent progress.

What happens when society's formidable weapon such as digital technologies could also be its veritable Trojan horse?

What does a society do when its most trusted ammunition displays a shocking ability to pick and choose from a Jekyll and Hyde personality?

How does a society survive when faced with the stark realization that its unavoidable armament – like the god Ulu in Achebe's *Arrow of God* – possesses the enigmatic propensity to destroy a man – as prominent as Donald Trump – the day his life is sweetest to him?

These searing rhetorical questions point to the fact that by the time *Digital Uprising* comfortably assumes its rightful position on the book shelves of the masses in societies that are experiencing the chokehold of tyranny, it will arguably become one of the most questioned and the most questioning as well as one of the most vexed and the most vexing dystopian novels. And maybe, then, just maybe, we might be called upon to learn or unlearn to showcase our individual digital uprisings by simultaneously reasonably downsizing and downscaling our democracy and human rights nationalisms.

Nyamnjoh's novel serves as a wake-up call, urging readers to recognise the complex interplay between technology, democracy, and human rights in the digital age.

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# The Silent Threat: Fighting Kidney Disease in Cameroon and Tanzania

By Adonis Byemelwa



Benjamin Mkapa Hospital (BMH) has made history as the first health facility in Tanzania to successfully perform renal transplants using only local doctors. Photo courtesy

**K**idney disease is a silent intruder, creeping in unnoticed until the damage is severe. It doesn't announce itself with sudden symptoms or obvious warning signs. No dramatic alarms, just a slow, steady decline that one day leaves you feeling exhausted, your body aching, your feet swelling. And then comes the life-altering moment—a doctor explaining that your kidneys are failing.

In Cameroon and Tanzania, thousands live with kidney disease without realizing it. The reality is brutal: many only discover their condition when their options are painfully limited. But it doesn't have to be this way.

This March, action is being taken. From the 10th to the 15th, Premier Health Centre at Douala Grand Mall is offering free kidney screenings. It's a simple process—checking blood pressure, sugar levels, and urine—but it could mean the difference between a manageable condition and

a devastating diagnosis.

Early detection is not just about awareness—it's about empowerment. Kidney disease doesn't strike overnight. It develops over time, fueled by factors like high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, and genetics. The good news? Catching it early can change the trajectory. It means more time, better treatment options, and the opportunity to take control before irreversible damage is done.

This campaign is not just about medical facts; it's deeply personal. Rene Awambeng knows this battle intimately. A leader and visionary, he never imagined he would be fighting for his own life against chronic kidney disease. But when the reality set in, he made a choice—to use his experience to prevent others from suffering in silence. Through the Awambeng Renal Care Foundation, he is championing the cause, ensuring that thousands at risk are informed, families are educated, and lives are

saved.

World Kidney Day on March 13th is not just a date on a calendar—it's a movement. Across Cameroon, people are being urged to wear green as a symbol of kidney health awareness. The goal is clear: make kidney disease visible, spark conversations, and inspire action.

And this goes beyond screenings. What we eat plays a critical role in kidney health. On March 13th, nutritionist Mbiatat Hilaire de Goethe will shed light on the best and worst foods for kidney function—small dietary adjustments that could make all the difference. Then, on March 14th, Dr. Njonkam Linda, a leading nephrologist, will unravel the warning signs too many people overlook and outline preventive measures to safeguard kidney health.

The last chance for free screenings is March 15th. This is not a call to wait for symptoms or a crisis—this is a call to act now. Because the truth is, your kidneys won't send a warning. But we

will.

In Tanzania, the urgency of kidney health is equally pressing. The Aga Khan Hospital is extending its expertise, urging residents to get checked by nephrologists before it's too late. Since 2012, the Nephrology Society of Tanzania (NESOT) has been working to improve kidney care, but the challenge remains enormous.

Clement John, a resident of Shinyanga, undergoes dialysis at Bugando Regional Referral Hospital in Mwanza. The cost? An average of 200,000 Tanzanian shillings per session. For many, it's an unbearable financial burden. But hope is on the horizon.

Bugando Medical Centre (BMC), a major referral hospital in the Lake Zone, is preparing to introduce kidney transplant procedures later this year. This is a game-changer. The hospital's director of Surgical Services, Dr. Alicia Masenga, confirmed the initiative, citing the high prevalence of kidney disease in



the region as the driving force behind this decision.

Experts from the Ministry of Health have already assessed Bugando's readiness and given the green light. Now, the final steps remain—the return of specialized surgeons currently training abroad and the installation of essential surgical equipment.

Once operational, Bugando will join three other hospitals in Tanzania—Muhimbili National Hospital (MNH) in Dar es Salaam (Upanga and Mloganzila facilities) and Benjamin Mkapa Hospital (BMH) in Dodoma—in offering kidney transplant services.

MNH paved the way in 2017, becoming the first Tanzanian medical facility to perform kidney transplants after developing local expertise to handle the complex procedure. Since then, the service expanded to Mloganzila, and BMH followed suit, recently announcing its 25th successful transplant. This achievement has saved the government billions in overseas referral costs, providing hope to countless patients who previously had no choice but to seek expensive treatment abroad.

The impact of kidney disease in Tanzania is staggering. Dr. Said

Kanenda, Head of the Dialysis Unit at Bugando, revealed that the hospital treats an average of 140 dialysis patients per week.

The numbers are rising at an alarming rate. According to the Ministry of Health, the number of patients requiring dialysis jumped from 1,017 in 2019 to a staggering 3,231 by the end of 2023.

For those relying on dialysis, the costs are crushing. A typical patient requires at least three sessions a week—an expense of approximately 600,000 Tanzanian shillings per week just to stay alive. And what's driving this crisis? High blood pressure, diabetes, and proteinuria (excess protein in urine) are the leading culprits.

Pregnancy-related complications also play a significant role. Dr. Kanenda highlighted that three to six women per month require dialysis due to kidney failure linked to excessive bleeding and eclampsia during childbirth.

His message is clear: pregnant women must seek early medical care and follow doctors' recommendations, including taking iron supplements, to reduce the risk.

The statistics paint a stark picture. As part of World Kidney





World Kidney Day  
13 MARCH 2025



Join **Dr. Njonkam Linda** for a special talk on kidney health.

**Where?**  
Premier Health Centres, First Floor, Douala Grand Mall

**When?**  
14th March, 2025  
3pm to 5pm







World Kidney Day  
13 MARCH 2025



*Kidney disease doesn't send a warning—it silently takes hold, often when it's too late. I was fortunate to get the care I needed, but too many people in Cameroon are not as lucky. That's why I'm committed to making early detection accessible to all. No one should have to fight this battle alone.*

**RENE AWAMBENG**  
Founder



Benjamin Mkapa Hospital (BMH) has made history as the first health facility in Tanzania to successfully perform renal transplants using only local doctors. Photo courtesy

Day commemorations, Bugando conducted a screening exercise for 178 Mwanza residents.

The findings were alarming—56 individuals (31%) had high blood pressure, eight (4.5%) had diabetes, 17 had bacterial urinary tract infections, and 20 showed signs of proteinuria.

These figures underscore the silent but deadly nature of kidney disease. By the time symptoms appear, the damage is often irreversible.

Mwanza Regional Medical Officer Dr. Jesca Leba was quoted as saying that the public should prioritize regular health check-ups to detect kidney disease early and avoid the financial and emotional toll of late-stage treatment.

She also emphasized the importance of enrolling in health insurance schemes before a diagnosis is made, as this could help alleviate the economic burden of long-term care.

For those already battling kidney failure, the upcoming transplant services at Bugando represent a beacon of hope. Dwasi Masunga, the dialysis patient from Shinyanga, is optimistic.

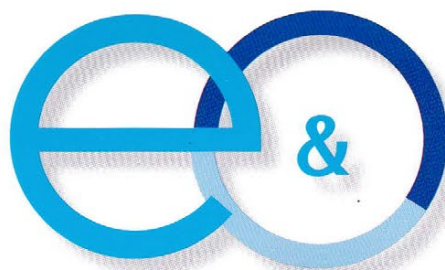
"Introducing kidney transplants at Bugando is a great initiative. I already have a willing kidney donor, but the

challenge has been finding a facility for the procedure. The current options in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma are too far, and the cost of staying there is overwhelming," he shared.

Katunzi Murashani, another dialysis patient, echoed similar sentiments. He expressed gratitude for the government's efforts in bringing dialysis services closer to Mwanza residents and is hopeful that once transplants commence, she can be relieved of the exhausting weekly dialysis routine.

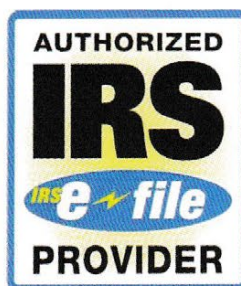
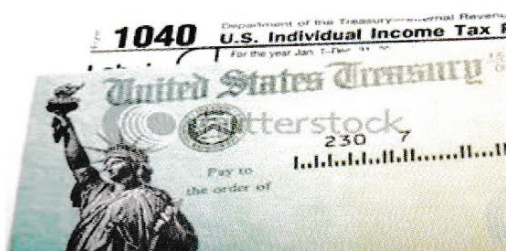
Beyond medical advancements, experts warn that lifestyle choices significantly impact kidney health. Obesity, smoking, exposure to food contaminated with harmful pesticides, and a sedentary lifestyle all contribute to increased risk. The message is clear—prevention is just as crucial as treatment.

The battle against kidney disease is being fought on multiple fronts—from free screenings in Cameroon to life-saving transplants in Tanzania. The push for awareness, early detection, and better medical infrastructure is growing stronger. But at the heart of it all is a simple truth: No one should wait until it's too late. The time to act is now.



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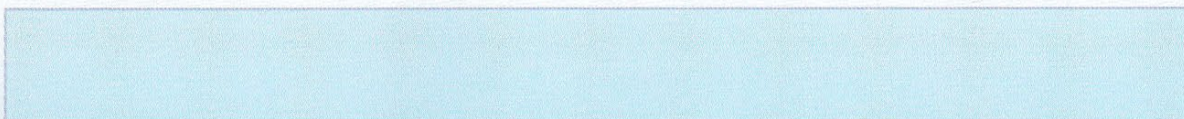
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# The Fight Against Galamsey: Is Ghana A Failed State?

By Charles Prempeh, PhD\*



**T**he question about whether any state in Africa has failed and/or is failing is certainly both ideologically and politically charged. However, I will make an attempt to answer the question, bearing in mind the constitutionality of the modern state from the perspective of Ghana's notorious Galamsey. I take Ghana and its entanglement with the Galamsey quagmire for two main reasons: First, Ghana has a relatively stabilized democracy and second, since the late country's 19th century and at the turn of the 20th century Ghana's public and academic intellectuals have provided a major source of inspiration for governance and leadership on the continent of Africa and its diaspora.

That Ghana's historic and contemporary credibility sits concurrently (if not comfortably) with Galamsey, a major self-imposed calamity, implies the country's own shameful nemesis. With Galamsey currently standing as an existential threat to Ghanaians and the world, the menace has received extensive research attention with an equal

proliferation of both popular and scholarly publications on the subject.

Possibly, however, because academics, in particular, are not necessarily policy implementers, once they publish the outcome of their research, they teach it, and try, where possible, to influence policy directives. Even so, given the aggressive and belligerent turn of Ghana's politics in social-media world of eco-chambers and (in)visibility—merging with unmeasured politics of denigration, several academics prefer to hem themselves in the gown—a situation that has elicited apathy and a decline in public intellectualism that animated Ghana's public sphere from the 1970s to 1990s.

So, how do we assess the Galamsey challenge? Does Galamsey signal Ghana as a failed state? Before I respond to this questions, I need to first begin with what I mean by a failed state. But to understand that concept is also predicated on our understanding of the constitution of the modern state, basically a by-product of the Treaty of Westphalia in the 17th century. Emerging out of

the secularization of Western politics, the modern state, far more than the pre-modern state, is an imagined community. It is, therefore, held together by a social contract.

The importance of the social contract lies at the heart of the nature of the public sphere, which is both plural and constitutionally contentious, for two main reasons: First, the public sphere is about money and power. Second, because the ownership of money and power declines when these resources are decentralized, the public sphere is a hub of contention and potential incivility (or the so-called state of nature).

Consequently, the social contract is to define the boundaries of public governance, where circumscribed power is offered a sovereign to decide on the exception. The sovereign decides on the exception in a manner that could give rise to destruction for constructive purpose. The performance of this function of the sovereign finds expression in the Weberian conceptualization of the modern state as the elites/sovereign's

capacity to use legitimate coercion to foster law and order. That the sovereign enjoys "extra" power, other than the ordinary citizen, is borne out of an existential reality of the human ontology—the human predilection to deviance, more so, oppositional deviance in the case of Galamsey.

From the above, the constitutive logic of both the social contract and sovereign of the lead political elite, merging with the plurality and contentious nature of the public, implies that no area of the public sphere should be left ungoverned. So, in the case of Galamsey, certainly a mortal threat to human flourishing and penultimate existence (giving a necessary space to providence), a failed state could be measured in terms of how the political sovereign marshals legitimate coercive instrument to routinize law and order in public governance.

If we are to use the above as a canon to measure Ghana as a failed state or not, then the Galamsey issue gives the nation up for a critical evaluation. This also means that it appears the elites have failed to use the forces

of statecraft, including soft power, such as education, and hard power, such as the security apparatus to end Galamsey. In effect, the fight against Galamsey is simultaneously both a philosophical and a technical challenge.

From the philosophical perspective, it is about choreographing the loyalty of Ghanaian citizens towards the collective good. Nevertheless, given that the loyalty of citizens sprawls across family, faith, and friends, before the state (though conditionally ordered or not neatly ordered), the duty of the political is about answering the fundamental question of citizens for building an imagined community: Why must I (citizen) submit to the good an imagined common good?

The above leads to the next issue: What explains the brazenness with which Galamseyers continue to destroy the country's ecological integrity? The answer may not be simple. Nevertheless, it could be gleaned from the possibility of Ghana having ungoverned spaces. The point is that the political economy of Galamsey, including the production, importation and transportation of enabling materials for the menace are visible and physical and go through mediations and corridors that are traceable and governable. Also, the proceeds of Galamsey are physical and measurable, in economic terms. So, if with all these multidimensional visibility in the political economy of Galamsey the state appears powerless in dealing with the menace, then could Ghana, in terms of environmental governance and



Ghanaians are waiting on President Mahama to deliver. Photo courtesy.

the extent of the damage Galamsey is causing constitute a locus classicus of a failed state?

Again, to return to our earlier question on citizens and Galamsey, because the loyalty of citizens is not ontologically at the behest of the state, the political elites have power to compel citizens to act right. The elites could use both legitimate and illegitimate means to compel citizens to act right. The legitimate means are known. But the illegitimate means, often hardly discussed, is real, even if rarely put to use in public governance. In fact, as I have said, the political sovereign's function in ensuring law and order is coterminous with the capacity to decide on the exception.

This may come across as controversial. But it is also that which allows public governance to be possible. If our leaders were carefully and constitutionally chosen—indexing the manifest expression of the will of majority of citizens, then capacity of the president to decide on the exception in the fight against Galamsey would, in the worst-case scenario result in, “Destruction for constructive purpose.” If this is anything difficult to put into practice, we should just bear in mind that the president's authority to do right is not on the same scale as that of the head of my family.

In the end, the president of Ghana has been given sufficient

and necessary power, if not even more, to arrest the Galamseyers and Galamsey activities and bring an end to the wanton destruction of the country's water bodies. So, to have Galamsey constituting a mortal albatross on the necks of Ghanaians and to the have the environment put to such grotesque visible destruction, potentially, bespeaks the extent of sovereign leadership in Ghana and the possibility of a nation that is on the false precipice of collapse, from the Anthropocene perspective.

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