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Rich Kenyan sells posh vehicles amid Covid crisis

Cameroonian migrant turns saviour of others

Alcohol-free sanitiser can eliminate Covid-19 too, says new study

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# TanTrade Fair targeting key EAC, SADC markets

By Guardian Reporter

PRIME Minister Kassim Majaliwa yesterday challenged industrialists to come up with innovative ways to market and promote locally made products to attain market share in available regional markets.

The premier affirmed that proper marketing of locally made goods will not only promote Tanzania as a leading manufacturer in the region but also grab already available market openings in neighbouring countries.

The market size in the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) is estimated at a population of around 500 million people, despite that consump-



**The trade fair was established to build a platform for stakeholders to exchange ideas, experience and market Tanzania's industrial products to make Tanzanians and non-Tanzanians use them**



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa has a feel of shoes made in Tanzania - of Tanzanian leather - at one of the pavilions he visited shortly after opening the Tanzania Industrial Products Exhibition at Mwalimu Nyerere grounds in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: PMO

## DR Congo facing world's worst food crisis - FAO

ROME

NEARLY 22 million people in the Democratic Republic of Congo are facing acute food insecurity, in a dramatic rise from last year, a UN agency has warned. "The number of people facing acute food insecurity at crisis or worse levels has dramatically increased - from 15.6 million in 2019 to 21.8 million," the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisa-

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# Austrian firms map out changing city economy

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

AN EXECUTIVE delegation comprising 13 Austrian companies is in Dodoma, eyeing investment opportunities in transportation, agribusiness, education, health and construction.

Speaking soon after his meeting with the delegation, Dooma regional Commissioner Dr Binilith Mahenge said that the potential investors were presented with available opportunities and going by their reaction, they were enthralled by the scope of choice.



**They are here to survey investment opportunities; we got an opportunity to present to them what we have to offer and they are impressed. We hope tangible ventures and job opportunities will come out of this visit**

"They are here to survey investment opportunities; we got an opportunity to present to them what we have to offer and they are impressed. We hope tangible ventures and job opportunities will come out of this visit," he said.

The delegation expressed their companies' readiness to put their efforts to invest in several potential areas which promises to bring positive impacts to Dodoma city, he said, noting that the company executives have shown their commitment to invest in

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# Zanzibar activists want anti-GBV laws altered

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

GENDER rights activists in Zanzibar are today set to start agitating for review of seven laws that stand in the way of justice in cases relating to gender-based violence (GBV), which are rampant in Zanzibar but with a low conviction rate.

Police reports say that from January 2019 to August 2020, a total of 821 cases of rape and defilement



were reported and taken through the judicial process but only four ended with a conviction.

Isles activists have been at work reading the texts of various laws and pinned down seven pieces of legislation that they say need to be reviewed as they hinder rather than aid the victims' quest for justice. The meeting is part of this

year's 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence whose theme is 'Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!'

Organisations that form the pressure group include the Zanzibar office of the Tanzania Media Women Association (TAMWA), Zanzibar Female Lawyers Association (ZAFELA), Association of Women

Living with Disabilities in Zanzibar (JUWAUZA), and the Zanzibar Gender Coalition (ZGC).

Briefing reporters here yesterday, the TAMWA director for Zanzibar, Dr Mzuri Issa (pictured) named the laws they want reviewed as the Penal Code,

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## DR Congo facing world's worst food crisis - FAO

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tion said in a report published yesterday. The organisation said conflict and the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, which have impacted food prices and livelihoods, have worsened the problem. "These factors are exacerbating humanitarian needs and the country is now the world's largest food crisis," the report says. The organisation also cites "an economic decline linked to currency depreciation and drop in GDP growth apart from natural hazards such as flooding, as contributing to the crisis. Most people affected by the problem are in North and South Kivu, Ituri and Kasai Central provinces, which are also the most conflict ridden zones in the country. The UN agency said the situation is particularly difficult for internally displaced people and returnees "who often return to their area of origin and find themselves without the means to resume their livelihoods." The FAO warns that with the acute hunger, any further disruption of food supply chains will only worsen human suffering and hamper efforts to address the problem. As the DRC government and the World Health Organization had just officially declared the end of the largest Ebola virus outbreak starting March this year, the country has declared a state of emergency and several urgent and essential

measures have been put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19, particularly in Kinshasa - the epicenter of the pandemic in the country. The number of confirmed cases continues to increase with 20 out of 26 provinces affected by COVID-19, the report noted. A new Ebola outbreak was declared at the beginning of June 2020 in Equateur province. However, thanks to the vaccination campaign carried out, the disease was contained and no new cases were reported since last month. Thanks to funding received in the framework of FAO's response plan to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on food security, the organisation said it is supporting smallholder farmers in and around Kinshasa to increase urban and peri-urban agricultural production to reduce soaring food prices and maintain food availability. In addition, Germany has contributed USD 54 million for the implementation of a joint FAO/United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)/World Food Programme (WFP) integrated resilience building programme to assist 280 000 people in the Kivu provinces to support food production, conservation and processing, and to enhance social cohesion, nutrition, and water, sanitation and hygiene. Funds from Norway have also been received to support joint FAO/WFP resilience building efforts in Tanganyika along with funding from Sweden, the agency indicated.



Vice President Samia Suluhu Hassan speaks to an audience at her residence in Dodoma city yesterday with Judith Odunga (L) of the association of women contractors, who led a delegation of the body's members on a briefing mission to the VP. Photo: VPO.

## Zanzibar activists want anti-GBV laws altered

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Cap 7 of 2018, the Evidence Act, No 6 of 1982, the Criminal Procedure Act, No 6 of 2018, the Children's Act, No 6 of 2011, the Education Act, No 6 of 1982, the Kadhi Courts Act, No 9 of 2017 and the Spinsters, Widows and Female Divorcees Protection Act, No. 4 of 2005.

Dr Issa said the activists will

discuss various observations on the laws and recommend on areas of improvement, with intent to help judiciary and prosecuting authorities end GBV cases in the islands, to improve the image of the tourist haven.

"GBV cases are on the increase but justice for the victims is elusive; four convictions out of 821 cases is a travesty," the director intoned.

This year, the UN System's 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence activities, from 25 November to 10 December, is taking place under acute circumstances.

As the world retreated inside homes due to lockdown measures introduced to curb the Covid-19 pandemic, reports showed an alarming increase in the already existing pandemic of violence

against women.

"Accompanying the crisis has been a spike in domestic violence reporting, at exactly the time that services, including rule of law, health and shelters, are being diverted to address the pandemic," stated the UN Secretary-General's report, "Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of Covid-19."

## Austrian firms map out changing city economy

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infrastructure networks, social services and technology.

He highlighted potential areas to invest as including hospitals, pharmaceutical and medical equipment industry, the automotive industry, edible oils, livestock and leather sector, food processing, real estate, tourism and the leisure industry. "Here in Dodoma we have very few hospitals, there are some services that if you miss them at the Benjamin Mkapa Hospital you have to move from the region to seek them out. Generally hospitals are few but when you get investors like these, we believe that we will get reliable services. This includes setting up pharmaceutical factories," he said.

Among opportunities that the investors are looking for is transportation of mainly gas-powered trains as this is cheaper compared to the current fuel-operated vehicles, and they are similarly environmentally unfriendly.

He welcomed other investors around the world to come and invest in various potential and productive areas assuring them of a conducive environment and a reliable market.

"Investors can also grab potential opportunities in grape farming as the region has wide and fertile land favouring its production," the

RC noted: "Grapes produced in Dodoma are unique and its taste is exceptional, so we can also establish more processing factories to add value to this crop."

Christian Fellner, Austria's permanent representative to the East Africa Community said his country was ready to share with Tanzania the technological progress it has made in multiple sectors.

He said Austria is currently importing flowers and consumer goods, mostly agricultural products, from Tanzania while exporting machines and Red Bull energy drink brands to the country.

Fellner further said that the nation is currently planning to implement a green buses project, using greenhouse gas technology which is friendly to the environment.

"These buses have the potential to reduce environmental pollution by 80 percent, but they are also capable of carrying more people than the rapid-buses. We expect that a total of 100,000 drivers and mechanical experts will be trained thus increasing employment for the youth," the envoy affirmed.

John Simbachawene, Tanzanian High Commissioner to Kenya, commended the delegation for choosing Tanzania as one of their safe places to invest.



Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi has an audience with other Muslim faithful shortly after Friday prayers at Shangani's Istiqaama Mosque in Zanzibar yesterday. Photo: Zanzibar State House.

## TanTrade Fair targeting key EAC, SADC markets

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tion levels are still relatively low.

The premier made these observations at the opening of the 5th Tanzanian Industrial Products Exhibition in Dar es Salaam yesterday, themed 'Use Tanzanians products, build Tanzania.' The exhibition is part of a campaign to sensitize Tanzanians to use locally made products to fuel production and economic growth.

"The good thing is that we have plenty of markets since as we are bordering about seven countries," he said, applauding the Tanzania

Trade Development Authority (TanTrade) for organising the exhibition.

The show will facilitate openings for the country's products and create a platform for manufactures to share experience, the premier affirmed.

He said it will also allow players in the industrial sector to share experience on how best to market their products within and outside the country.

He further noted that the government is working on modalities to ensure that locally made products are sold at reasonable prices, stating that there was no reason for

such products to be sold at high prices while all the raw materials are sourced locally.

Prof Riziki Shemdoe, the Permanent Secretary for Trade and Industry, said the trade fair was aimed at ensuring that building an industrial economy was result oriented and viable.

"The trade fair was established to build a platform for stakeholders to exchange ideas, experience and market Tanzania's industrial products to make Tanzanians and non-Tanzanians use them," he specified.

"Business clinics will be conducted from December 3 to 9 whereby institutions

overseeing the business and production value chains will answer questions from manufactures," he said.

TanTrade officials said the exhibition is also aimed at connecting manufactures with other service providers.

The trade fair will be accompanied by various activities such as a meeting between officials of the Trade ministry, manufactures and regulatory agencies set for December 5 to deliberate on challenges facing the business community.

On December 6 there will be a milk bonanza involving a healthy walk and various sporting activities, seeking

to sensitize more extensive use of local milk products.

Various manufactures from other countries will participate, thus gauging how Tanzania is progressing with its industrialization drive. The trade fair will be followed by a business symposium which will showcase business opportunities in the United Arab Emirates, Dubai and Kuwait and will be followed by person to person meetings.

This year's exhibition has attracted 596 exhibitors from the Mainland and Zanzibar, while 542 exhibitors turned up last year, organizers noted.



# Tari plans to intensify soil and food crop at Mlingano centre

By Correspondent Gerald Kitabu

TANZANIA Agriculture Research Institute (TARI) has started implementing directives of the Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa issued in June, this year to improve working infrastructure at TARI Mlingano centre in Tanga Region.

The improvements will involve making sure that the centre's soil lab gets accreditation.

TARI director general Dr Geoffrey Mkamilo has already visited the TARI-Mlingano centre and conducted qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the main Soil Lab for action.

Once accredited, TARI-Mlingano will be competent enough to carry out specific conformity assessment tasks. The conformity assessment tasks will include among other things, testing, inspection, and certification.

According to Dr Mkamilo, TARI-Mlingano will be the first institution in the country to be accredited and therefore meet a strict and recognized set of international service and operational standards.

"The importance of accreditation is that it cre-

ates a set of quality standards. I am so proud that we have started implementing directives of the Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa he issued on June 1, 2020. Earlier on, The Premier visited TARI Mlingano to see the progress of revamping the Soil lab and directed that the Centre's infrastructures should be refurbished," he said.

"I have seen for the progress of the soil lab and I promise to work on all the challenges facing the lab so that it can meet international standards for accreditation," he added.

He said that once the Soil lab is accredited, soil analysis from in and outside the country will be conducted right at TARI Mlingano centre instead of ferrying the soil samples abroad.

This means that once qualifies the soil analysis that will be conducted at TARI-Mlingano centre will have the same quality with that conducted in any country such as South Africa, Nairobi, UK or United States of America.

"In East Africa, it is only Kenya that has accredited soil lab at ICRAF in Nairobi. Other surrounding countries in the region have no accredited soil lab. So, once our Soil lab is accredited, these

all countries will bring soil samples here for analysis. This means that Tanzania will also be recognized internationally as another country in East Africa that has accredited soil lab," he said.

Besides accreditation of the soil Lab, Dr. Mkamilo has also started working on the Centre's tissue culture lab. According to him, Tissue culture is important for production of disease-free, high quality planting material and the rapid production of many uniform plants. This Plant tissue culture is also an important technology for our centre because we want to produce massively and go commercial, he said.

Explaining the mandate of TARI-Mlingano Centre, the Coordinator of Research and Innovation Dr. Sibaway Mwango said that the centre is multipurpose. He said the centre is conducting several research and analysis activities related to natural resource management, soil and land use plan-

ning, fertilizer use technology. Citing an example, he said that institution like Tanzania Fertilizer Regulatory Authority (TFRA), and many other local and international companies depend on the centre for Soil analysis and solution.

"Almost all activities related to soil analysis, land evaluation and land use planning, and fertilizer recommendations are being conducted here at TARI-Mlingano centre. We support many users of soil information. We have also conducted sample analysis for gypsum, and Lime," he said.

Earlier on, explaining how the Soil Lab works, Principal Agriculture Technician at TARI-Mlingano Michael Madumba explain that through soil analysis, the Centre has helped many small holder farmers graduate from subsistence to commercial. "When the farmer understands the Soil and nutrients that is needed for a particular crop, it becomes so

easier for him or her to grow successfully a particular crop at that particular area.

"Our services are not confined only on smallholder farmers. We are also conducting natural resource management, soil and land use planning and fertilizer use technology for medium and large scale farmers. For example, we are providing the service for tea, coffee and sugar plantations in the country, he said.

He advised farmers to use the soil lab to for increased productivity. "I advise the farmers that the population is increasing but the land is not. Therefore, when they see the land is gradually becoming unproductive, they should not abandon the land, but rather, they should take the soil samples to us so that we can provide appropriate solution," he said.

Madumba explained some of the challenges facing the centre as shortage of technician, need for capacity building, equipment, building renovation and some chemicals.



Samwel Marko (2nd-R), TIB Development Bank's planning and research manager, pictured yesterday briefing Dar es Salaam regional commissioner Abubakar Kunenge (2nd-L, foreground) at the Tanzania Industrial Products Exhibition at Mwalimu Nyerere grounds in Dar es Salaam. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

## Kalambo DC warns over farm inputs price hike

By Guardian Correspondent, Sumbawanga

THE government has warned some dishonest traders in Kalambo District, Rukwa Region who have been supplying and selling farm inputs at higher prices contrary to the government's indicative prices.

The warning came after some farmers complained of high prices of agricultural inputs including fertilizer which is now sold at 71,000/- per 50kg bag contrary to the indicative price of 61,000/-.

District commissioner, Carlos Misungwi insisted that the

government will not hesitate to take stringent measures to anyone violating the rules by selling the agricultural inputs at higher prices. He said since the government gears to build an industrialized nation, it was important that framers produce enough to feed the industries.

"As farming season has taken off, traders shouldn't use it as an opportunity to earn double profits from the inputs, farmers are now struggling to ensure that they get enough inputs to fulfill their cultivation plans, so hiking price of the essential commodity including fertilizer affects the farmers and this will not be tolerated," Misungwi said.

James Simzozha, one of the farmers in the district urged the government to come up with strong measures because the problem has been there in every farming season.

**VACANCY**  
General Manager  
LOCATION: DAR ES SALAAM

**JOB DESCRIPTION**  
Overall Management of the entire Company with the following departments: Transport and Logistics, Clearing and Forwarding, Car hire and Rental.

Accountable to Board of directors  
Experience not less than 7 years in any of above field with Management Skills at same position not less than 7 years.

**QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE**  
Bachelor degree or Masters in any of the following: Bcom, Business Administration Economics, Transportation, Clearing and Forwarding etc.

Experience not less than 7 years in the field with Managerial skills at the same position  
All applications should be sent via email before 15 January 2021  
The application should attach COVER LETTER CV together with copies of Certificates.  
Referees names and contacts should be attached.

Application should be sent via the following email: [Maombigm@gmail.com](mailto:Maombigm@gmail.com) before 15 January 2021

## Govt allocates 4bn/- to upgrade Jangwani valley infrastructure

By Guardian Reporter

THE government through the Roads Fund plans to allocate 4bn/- for improvement and upgrading of infrastructure at the Jangwani area in Ilala District, Dar es Salaam.

The monies will be allocated as soon as the cost verification exercise is completed.

Speaking on behalf of board members of the Road Fund, the Chairman, Joseph Haule said the government is determined to end the infrastructures challenges at the Jangwani creek along the Msimbazi basin, insisting the job will be done and completed before the coming rain season.

The Msimbazi River pours its water into the Indian Ocean through the Sealander Bridge. This water is poured into the sea after the water travels a long way, crossing the valley that connects the three districts of Kinondoni, Ilala and Kisarawe.

"We have seen the situation by

ourselves, the problem requires immediate response and this is why we are here today. We visited the area so as to see the real situation and suggest a permanent solution," said Haule.


The Jangwani section of the Morogoro road has been a nuisance whenever it rains resulting in closure of the particular road section.

In addition, Mr. Haule clarified that the problem is really serious, the canal is shallow and the two large canals are completely closed.

The board chairman noted that the area has a poor drainage system while the two existing culverts have been damaged. He added that upgrading of the infrastructures is meant to ensure the road remains passable throughout the year.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Works, Transport and Communications in charge of the Construction Sector, Arch. Elius Mwakalinga said that the government through his ministry has prepared a long-term strategy on infrastructure development.

**IN LOVING MEMORY**  
**10th YEAR ANNIVERSARY**



**JULIANA MASIONILA ALLY SAIDI**  
**(28th FEBRUARY 1968-04th DECEMBER 2010)**

TODAY MARKS 10 YEARS SINCE THE DAY YOU SUDDENLY LEFT US. A DEEP SENSE OF LOSS STILL REMAIN ON OUR HEARTS, THE GAP YOU LEFT ONLY FILLED BY FOND MEMORIES, MISSING YOU COMES IN WAKES, AT TIMES TOO MUCH TO BEAR.


WE MISS YOUR FRIENDSHIP, INCREDIBLE SENSE OF HUMOUR, GENEROSITY, LOVE, WISDOM, VISION AND YOUR GUIDANCE. WE MISS YOU SO MUCH MASIONILA.

YOU WERE ALWAYS KIND, CARING, UNDERSTANDING AND INSPIRATIONAL TO US. YOU WERE GIFT TO ALL WORLDS AND BROUGHT JOY TO EVERYONE AND LIFE HAS NEVER BEEN THE SAME EVER SINCE YOU HAVE GONE.

**"INDEED GOOD WOMEN MUST DIE AND A GOOD WOMAN YOU WERE MASIONILA"** BUT DEATH CANNOT KILL THEIR LEGACY, DREAMS, NAMES, IDEAS AND VISIONS.

DEARLY MISSED AND FONDLY REMEMBERED BY YOUR HUSBAND, SON BRIAN, EXTENDED FAMILIES, RELATIVES AND FRIENDS.

**"THOSE WHO TRUST IN ALLAH NEVER LOSE HOPE FOR WE SHALL MEET AGAIN"**



**UNHCR**  
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

**INVITATION FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION FOR SUPPLIER AND DELIVERY OF GOODS AND SERVICES PROVIDERS**

**5th DECEMBER, 2020**

Relief to Development Society (REDESOS) is a National Non - Governmental Organization (NNGO) whose vision is **"A Community where refugees and other vulnerable people have access to equal opportunities"**. In partnership with UNHCR, is implementing the project titled **"Assistance to Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Camps and Urban Areas"**. Part of the funds allocated to this project is intended to be spent in procurement of various goods and services.

As part of preparations for implementation of the project with effective provision of services to Persons of Concern (PoC) in 2021, REDESOS would like to invite applications for pre-qualification from well-established eligible and credible suppliers (Applicants) tender for supplying goods and services. The applicant should submit proposal for bid under competitive bidding procedures.

This pre-qualification is for 10 independent items, suppliers may apply for specific and pre-qualification will be on specific item as indicated below:

S/N	Description	Quantity
1.	Tender for suppliers of Stationery and consumables.	1
2.	Tender for provision of Physical Security Services.	1
3.	Tender for servicing office equipment i.e Printers, Photocopiers, Computers, Scanners, UPS, Generators and Air Conditioners	1
4.	Tender for provision of Vehicle Maintenance and Repair.	1
5.	Tender for provision of accommodation (Guest House) to Persons of Concern (Refugees).	3
6.	Tender for provision of Drugs and Medical Products.	1
7.	Tender for Provision of Internet and Network Support.	1
8.	Tender for Provision of Airtime Vouchers and Electricity	1
9.	Tender for Provision of Travel Services	1
10.	Tender for Provision of Internet Services (Fiber)	1

The selection and final shortlisting of the suppliers/providers will be conducted through selection procedures specified in the REDESOS Procurement Policy and Procedures.

**THE FOLLOWING WILL BE THE SHORTLISTING CRITERIA**

- Possession of valid business licence, professional certificate or dealership certification.
- Presentation of legal certificate of incorporation, business registration, TIN, VAT.
- Company profile indicating; interalia physical location with a valid Right of Occupancy of office premises or Lease contract which may be inspected for verification.
- A minimum of 3 good customers recommendation letters.
- List of Directors, declaration of conflict of interest with REDESOS or UNHCR and any other relevant information.
- Indicate the appropriate Price Schedule and or price list.

REDESOS is not bound to give reasons for acceptance or rejection of any tender and it is not bound to accept the lowest bidder or any tender whatsoever.

Applications should be addressed to the Tender Opening Committee through the address below not later than **21<sup>st</sup> December, 2020, 16:30 Hours.**

**Tender Opening Committee**  
**Relief to Development Society (REDESOS),**  
**Head Office,**  
**P.O.Box 2621, Dar es Salaam**  
**Kinondoni B Urambo-Street- Plot No. 40**  
**Block No. KIN/KNM/96**  
**Tel/Fax : +255 22 2666725**  
**Mob: +255 717 037311 or 0768 519 606**





Zanzibar Second Vice President Hemed Suleiman Abdulla (R) makes remarks during a tour of the Zanzibar AIDS Commission offices yesterday. Photo: ZSVPO

## JICA alumni association starts conduct awareness training

By Guardian Reporter

THE Japan International Cooperation Agency-JICA Alumni Association of Tanzania (JATA) is today conducting a seminar to create awareness amongst the people on the likely socio-economic impacts of Covid-19 on livelihoods at individual and household levels.

The seminar is also expected to assess the impact of the pandemic on the small-scale entrepreneurs in the sustainable development of Zanzibar.

A statement by JICA states that participants will visit a small scale water facility and an industrial establishment to ascertain how such facilities have been affected by the global pandemic.

There will also be presentation on key sectors facing risks as a result of the Covid-19 global pandemic. The sectors to be discussed include tourism, transportation, agriculture, and wholesale trade.

Other topics are how Zanzibar can participate in the economic recovery program during and after the global pandemic, impact of the global pandemic as a health crisis and its threat

on the social, economic and political aspects for the next few years, and creation of awareness to key stakeholders on specific measures to be taken in the prevention and control of the global pandemic.

The event is one of the activities which are organized by JATA, and is open to all members of the Association. Earlier this year, JATA managed to hold other equally interesting activities, including a visit to a factory owned by a JICA ex-participant in addition to scheduled visits to some projects being implemented by JICA.

JATA is an association which brings together all ex-participants who had opportunity to study in Japan or in other countries under the sponsorship of JICA, which is the implementing agency of Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA).



**The event is one of the activities which are organized by JATA, and is open to all members of the Association**

## UNICEF emergency funding to reach over 190 million children in 249 countries

By Guardian Reporter

THE United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has issued the largest ever emergency funding appeal for \$ 6.4 billion to reach 300 million people, including more than 190 million children with essential support and services in 2021.

The appeal is a 35 percent increase over funds requested this year, and a reflection of expanding humanitarian needs globally amidst protracted crises and the Covid-19 pandemic.

UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore said: "When a devastating pandemic coincides with conflict, climate change, disaster and displacement, the consequences for children can be catastrophic."

She said the world is today facing a child rights emergency in which Covid-19 and other crises are combining to deprive children of their health and wellbeing.

"This unprecedented situation demands a similarly unprecedented response. We are urging our donors to join

us so that together we can help the world's children get through this darkest of times and prevent a lost generation," said Fore.

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to wreak havoc on the lives of children, particularly the most vulnerable.

Routine immunization services for children have been disrupted in more than 60 countries, while nearly a quarter of a billion students worldwide are still affected by Covid-19 school closures.

She was concerned that economic instability is dis-

rupting essential services and making it harder for families to make ends meet and increasing the risk of domestic and gender-based violence.

As part of its humanitarian action for children, UNICEF plans to reach 149 million women and girls and 7.4 million children with disabilities, 6.3 million children with treatment for severe acute malnutrition, 27.4 million children with measles vaccinations, 45 million people with access to safe water for drinking, cooking and

personal hygiene and 19.2 million children and caregivers with access to mental health and psychosocial support.

Beneficiaries of the funding appeal will include 17 million children and women with access to gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions, and 93.3 million children with formal or non-formal education, including early learning and 9.6 million households with cash assistance.

As part of its response to

Covid-19, UNICEF is putting its massive supply and procurement operation behind rolling out a Covid-19 vaccine, with a focus on equity to reach the most vulnerable children and families.

The works include coordinating with major global airlines and freight providers to step up efforts to deliver vaccines to more than 92 countries around the world as soon as vaccines become available.

The agency is also co-leading efforts to help governments' readiness to deploy

the vaccines.

The number of climate-related disasters has tripled in the last 30 years, threatening food security, increasing water scarcity, forcing people from their homes and increasing the risk of conflict and public health emergencies.

An estimated 36 million children, more than ever before, are living in displacement due to conflict, violence and disaster. Malnutrition among children is on the rise in countries around the world.

## Commission commends govt for promoting human rights

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

COMMISSION for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) has applauded the government's efforts to ensure people with disabilities in the county have equal rights and opportunities like other people.

In a statement to mark the International Day of the Disabled Persons, the Commission Chairman Judge (retired) Mathew Mwaimu said both Union and the Zanzibar governments have serious measures aimed at instilling equality among people with disabilities.

However, he noted that such people are still faced with a lot of challenges in different sectors like education, health, employment, discrimination and mistreatment.

"The commission appeals to the government to continue with the efforts to have in place conducive environment for people with disabilities," he said.

While acknowledging there are different forms of disabilities, both visible and invisible, Judge Mwaimu also appealed to families and society at large to protect people with disabilities and help provide for their rights.

He also called on the public to shun away from poor traditions, customs and beliefs that discourage people with disabilities from participation in public matters

"Such bad cultures make them feel neglected, unable to do things right fully and that they have no contribution at family and national levels," said the retired judge.

The retired judge said this year's theme "Building Back Better: towards a disability-inclusive, accessible and sustainable post COVID-19 World", calling on Tanzanians to have the habit of going for health checkup regularly in effort to realize and early signs of disabilities, and seek immediate treatment.

On the other hand, he called on the government to effectively engage various experts in providing public education invisible disabilities that could have serious effects personal, family, community and national levels.

He also pledges the commission's commitment to ensure that rights of people with disabilities are protected, defended and upheld all the times.

The CHRAGG boss noted that the International Day of Persons with Disabilities is an international observance promoted by the United Nations (UN) since 1992 in its resolution 47/3. It is marked on 3rd December every year.

He stated that the observation of the day aims to promote an understanding of disabilities and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities.



Retired Judge Dr Fauz Twaib cuts the ribbon at a professional diversity conference-cum-exhibition organised by the Tanganyika Law Society in Arusha city on Thursday to launch a legal aid publication. Right is TLS president Dr Rugemeleza Nshala. Photo: Correspondent Woinde Shizza

## Mtwara cooperative to grow 50,000 quality cashew seedlings

By Guardian Correspondent, Mtwara

THE Masasi and Mtwara Cooperative Union (MAMCU) is in the 2020/2021 farming season planning to grow 50,000 quality cashew seedlings and distribute them to farmers with an aim of increasing production and the value of the crop in the international market.

MAMCU manager for Masasi branch Joseph Mmole made the remarks yesterday during the meeting that brought together agriculture stakeholders to discuss a special strategy aimed to increase production of food and commercial crops in

the district.

The strategy was launched by the Masasi District Council but calls for joint efforts from farmers and other stakeholders to achieve its goals.

Mmole said apart from distributing the cashew seedlings to farmers, MAMCU will also educate them on how to take care of the seedlings for them to last long and produce more cashews.

"If the cashew seedlings are well planted, germinated and start producing cashews, farmers will benefit heavily by harvesting quality cashews and thus improve their income," he said.

He further said that the cooperative union also

aims to establish more cashew farmers which will be used to provide special training to farmers and enable them to have enough and essential skills on how to practice cashew farming for more yields.

He also said that farmers groups will also be formed and they will undergo capacity building to ensure that they are well fed to embark on modern farming of various crops including cashew, sesame and others.

"All these efforts are aimed to lure more young people to the agriculture sector, majority of the youth have been spending hours in streets doing nothing while the district has plenty of fertile land for agriculture, we have to ensure that we encourage this group

to engage in smart farming for their development," he added.

He said that investing in new cashew plantations as well as providing timely extension services will double productivity and contribute immensely to the country's economic growth.

Mmole said that MAMCU serves a total of 154 cooperative unions in Masasi, Mtwara and Nanyumbu districts.

In his remarks, Masasi District Commissioner Selemani Mzee commended MAMCU for having strong strategies which are meant to revive and improve cashew production in the Southern region.



# Co-operation with people with disabilities vital - PM

By Guardian Reporter

PRIME Minister Kassim Majaliwa has called upon employers in the country to be ready to receive and co-operate with people with disabilities (PWDs) for them to take part in various activities in accordance with the Employment and Labour Relations Act.

The Premier also directed

employers to make sure they comply with The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2003 by registering their workplaces, the thing that will facilitate regular inspections by relevant authorities including Occupational Safety and Health Authority (OSHA). OSHA is responsible for ensuring the safety of workers as well protecting employer's investments.

Majaliwa made the call on Thursday at the 60th anniversary of the Association of Tanzania Employers (ATE) in Dar es Salaam.

He said the government was aware of the importance of ensuring economic growth for all the citizens including people with disabilities. He commended ATE for implementing a project that aims at improving the health

of people with disabilities in collaboration with an NGO (CEFA) based in Dar es Salaam and Comprehensive Community Based Rehabilitation in Tanzania (CCBRT) to uplift the livelihoods of people with disabilities (PWD).

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), people with disabilities comprise of an estimat-

ed one billion, or 15 per cent of the world's population where 80 per cent were of working age.

The PM also instructed employers to consider timely submission of employees' monthly contribution to social security funds since the delays have resulted into most of the senior citizens struggling to get their monies after retirement. He not-

ed that delayed submission of employees' contributions causes suffering and inconvenience to retirees.

The Prime Minister insisted on employers to invest in skills development to strengthen the capacity of middle class workers as well as ensuring a good human resource management because the two are crucial towards realization of the country's

economic growth.

"Issues of skills development are also highlighted in the National Development Vision 2025. The government has now completed implementation of the first phase of the Five Year National Development Plan and is now implementing the second phase which aims to increase the number of skilled people," asserted the Premier.

## Mtwara Region inaugurates sustainable agriculture and food security programme

By Guardian Correspondent, Masasi

AUTHORITIES in Masasi District, Mtwara Region have embarked on a special operation aimed to lure more residents to engage in farming activities so as to increase production of food and cash crops to ensure food security.

The strategy was launched yesterday here at a special meeting that brought together various agricultural stakeholders to discuss how they are going to utilize the agricultural potential available in the agriculture sector.

Officiating the meeting Masasi District Commissioner, Seleman Mzee said the new strategy will involve promoting the use of available fertile land in the district.

He said that the launch of the strategy is the implementation of the regional directive that wants all districts to come up with special plans to increase production of both food and commercial crops.

"Masasi district is well prepared to ensure that we increase food security in our area, this will help make every household to have enough food. So every farmer and stakeholders should work to contribute to achieve this plan," he said.

Mzee said through the strategy, authorities and stakeholders in Masasi will spend much of their time educating and encouraging residents to engage in farming which include cleaning abandoned jungles that are suitable for agriculture.

According to him, there is still a huge area of land suitable for agriculture which is yet to be exploited fully, so attracting young people to take over the land for agriculture will help increase food security but also improve household income.

Mzee said that if the forests that have been implemented become used for agriculture, Masasi will be more productive and even the food in the household will be of a satisfactory standard.

"We have a lot of forests here that need people to clean them and carry out agriculture, a number of young people have been staying idle in street groups doing nothing, so these youths should be educated on the importance of engaging in smart agriculture for their development," he said.

Reinfred Tamba, the District's agriculture officer said the first step will involve forming forest mobilization committees, which will be at ward and district level.

He said one of the responsibilities of the committees will be to identify all abandoned farms including cashew plantations especially the infertile and aging cashew fields.

"The abandoned forest farms will be distributed to young people and the public in general so as to be used in agriculture, we are really mullied to make huge changes in our district, all these initiatives further help reduce poverty among our people," he added.



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa exchanges greetings with National Council for People Living with HIV (NACOPHA) chairperson Leticia Mourice (L) during the commemoration of World AIDS Day (December 1) held at national level in Moshi municipality. With them is Dorothy Mwaluko, Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office (Policy, Coordination and Parliament). Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## UN: Second locust invasion expected in Kenya this week

By Agatha Ngotho

NEW swarms of locusts will start invading counties bordering Somali and Ethiopia this week and will intensify by January.

The United Nations-Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has said in a tweet that swarms will start to form this week from substantial breeding in eastern Ethiopia and central Somalia.

Dr Kasina Muo, the Entomological Society of Kenya chairman said the desert locusts were first reported in Kenya in

December 2019 and a second invasion is happening again in December 2020.

He said immature swarms will start to form this week and increase during the remainder of December and into January.

"Those in Somalia and Ethiopia are laying eggs and they may start hatching any time, and will start invading Kenya in the next two to three weeks. Swarms landed in Kenya during the same period last year so we should expect another busy month to control the locusts," he said.

According to the desert locust

watch released on Thursday, intense swarm invasion of Kenya is likely to start from mid-December onwards.

FAO confirmed that successive waves of immature swarms are expected to migrate south to southeastern Ethiopia and southern Somalia, and invade northeast Kenya and spread to northern and central counties.

"Intensive survey and control operations should be maintained in Ethiopia and Somalia while extreme vigilance and preparedness are required in Kenya," said FAO.

## Mbeya police records successes in fighting gender-based violence

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

AS partners around the world mark the 16 days of activism against gender based violence (GBV), police in Mbeya Region have highlighted a number of successes recorded in fighting various forms of violence whereas convicts of three rape cases which were logged at different courts have been jailed in accordance with the laws.

Regional Police Commander, Ulrich Matei told journalists on Tuesday that police officers have arrested suspects of various GBV cases in between January and November this year.

He said police arrested James Pondo (27) a resident of Chunya District on February 5th this year for allegedly defiling a 10-year boy. He said the suspect has been sentenced to 30 years in jail.

PRC Matei said that the court has also jailed for 30 years, a 21 years old man-Said Mrisho, a resident of Chunya District who was arrested on March 20th, 2020 after he was found guilty of raping a seven-year girl. He said that Fadhil Mwambapa (28) from Chunya District was also sentenced to 30 years in jail after raping a 13-year girl.

"We have done a lot in combating GBV this year, we have allocated police officers in every ward to ensure each of the incidents are reported. We are determined to end all forms of violence especially those committed against girls and women", said the RPC.

This year's local campaign theme is 'End Gender Based Violence—Change Begins with Me'

The global theme is 'Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect', highlighting the increased need to address violence against women and provide essential services for survivors.

The government is implementing the National Plan of Action to end Violence against Women and Children (NPA-VAWC) 2017/2018-2021/2022 which aims to cut violence against women and children in half by 2022.

NPA-VAWC is part of implementation of The Women and Gender Development Policy (2000), The National Strategy for Gender Development 2005, Child Development Policy of 2008 and Law of the Child Act of 2009.



**We have done a lot in combating GBV this year, we have allocated police officers in every ward to ensure each of the incidents are reported. We are determined to end all forms of violence especially those committed against girls and women**

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MINISTRY OF WORKS, TRANSPORT  
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### PUBLIC NOTICE

**JOB VACANCY AT THE COMMUNICATIONS REGULATORS' ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA (CRASA) IN GABORONE BOTSWANA**

The Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) is a member of The Communications Regulators' Association of Southern Africa (CRASA) based in GABORONE BOTSWANA.

TCRA wishes to inform the general public that CRASA invites applications from suitably qualified Tanzanians to fill the vacant post of **Executive Secretary** available at the CRASA Headquarters.

All Applications will have to be submitted to TCRA for shortlisting and only three (3) applicants will be submitted to CRASA Headquarters for further consideration.

The Job advertisement with details on duties, responsibilities and qualifications can be accessed in TCRA website <https://www.tcra.go.tz/vacancies>.

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## PS calls upon institute to help beekeepers do better

By Guardian Correspondent, Tabora

NATURAL Resources and Tourism ministry Permanent Secretary Dr Aloyce Nzuki has challenged the Beekeeping Training Institute in Tabora Region to start providing training to beekeepers to ensure quality honey production.

He was concerned that with the training, beekeepers in the region are likely to reap more as we produce quality honey that can compete in local and international markets.

Tanzania has the potential to produce over 100,000 tonnes of honey per year but currently produces slightly over 50,000 tonnes, according to the Tanzania Forest Service (TFS).

Speaking at the institutes' 9th graduation ceremony yesterday, Dr Nzuki asserted that most of the beekeepers in the country have yet adopted the new skills, hence poor honey production.

"We need to train our beekeepers to improve the quality and quantity of produced honey. The institute must continue to provide training to stakeholders to enhance production", he noted.

The PS noted that Beekeeping Training Institute-Tabora is responsible for provision of training to villagers engaging in beekeeping across the region. He added that an improved beekeeping sector would help the government towards realization of its industrialization drive.

He urged the graduates to use the acquired skills to look for opportunities in the livestock sub-sector since the country has a huge forest land which is suitable for the business.

Tanzania has a total land of 945,203 sq km where 4.53 per cent is arable and 6.2

percent is water. The forest cover of Tanzania is 38.8 million ha which is 39 per cent of the land cover.

Tabora Regional Administrative Secretary, Msalika Makungu called upon the graduates to form groups to be able to access loans from their respective districts. He said it is through groups they can establish big projects and provide jobs to other young Tanzanians.

"Venturing into beekeeping business would save you from the unemployment challenge and improve your welfare accordingly", he added noting that a total of 178 students have graduated from various courses.

According to the Tanzania Honey Council (THC) beekeeping can be practiced countrywide although production potential varies from one location to the other.

The sector employs about 2 million people and generates about US \$ 2 million p.a. It also helps in bio-diversity and in increasing agricultural production through pollination.

Data from THC indicates that the country's production potential is huge having about 38.8 million ha of forests and woodlands ideal for beekeeping. Utilization of this potential is only about 7 per cent.

Several policies which affect beekeeping in Tanzania include the National Beekeeping Policy (NBP) which was formulated in 1998 with the purpose of enhancing the sector's economic contribution and management of natural resources through active participation of all stakeholders.

Two instruments have been put in place to effect its implementation: The National Beekeeping Programme 2001-2010 and the Beekeeping Act No. 15 of 2002.



AMEND project official George Malekela shows Tanga city bodaboda operators various types of helmets on Thursday. He had just taken the motorbike taxi operators through basic training and presented protective equipment to 40 of them. Photo: Correspondent Boniface Gideon

## 'Seeds for the Future' programme enhances ICT skills for Tanzania's university students

By Guardian Reporter and

Agencies

THE government has commended Huawei's "Seeds for the Future" program, saying the program is improving the quality of ICT education for university students in the East African nation.

Jim Yonazi, the Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Works, Transport and Communications, said on Monday that Huawei's "Seeds for the Future" program enhanced the quality of ICT education, subsequently

increasing employability skills of university students in Tanzania.

"These are commendable efforts for the betterment of youths in Tanzania," he said at the opening ceremony of the fifth season of the "Seeds for the Future" program that was conducted online.

Yonazi encouraged the recipients of the program to share the experience gained with their colleagues in order to advance and sharpen the ICT knowledge they have acquired.

"I congratulate all the students who have taken part

in the 'Seeds for the Future' program this year. I advise them to use this opportunity appropriately to develop and further their knowledge and gain practical experiences in ICT," he said.

Frank Zhou, Huawei Tanzania's managing director, highlighted Huawei's plans of enabling Tanzania to cope with technology demands that come with the dynamics in the digital space.

"We understand that digital development requires an important, economy-wide program to equip Tanzania for the future. In this new era,

ICT skills will be necessary for society, for organizations, and even more important for young people. That is why we have deeply invested in several initiatives especially local talent development," said Zhou.

He said this year, in order to reach more talents in Tanzania, the "Seeds for the Future" program will be done through an online platform so that it can accommodate more students from different regions and facilitate the participation of students with special needs.

Zhou said compared with

previous years, Huawei is able to increase the number of training opportunities from 10 to 47 students.

"I am very proud to announce some of them are female," he said. "And I want to encourage more young students attending the course to look at and pursue careers in the telecom space," he added.

Leonard Akwilapo, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, commended Huawei's "Seeds for the Future" program and its role in enabling employability skills.

Akwilapo added that the

program initiatives are acting as a bridge that fills the gap between theoretical learning and practical requirements in the job market.

Yuan Lin, the Economic and Commercial Counsellor of the Chinese Embassy in Tanzania, commended Huawei for setting a good example in the development of ICT talents in Tanzania by building the capacity of young undergraduates who will be the driving force behind Tanzania's ICT transformation in the near future.

Yuan said the Chinese embassy in Tanzania will encour-

age other Chinese companies to undertake such initiatives to help train professional technicians who stand at the center of realizing Tanzania's goals of industrialization and becoming a middle-income country.

In Tanzania, Huawei's "Seeds for the Future" program was launched in 2016 under the support of the Prime Minister's office and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

Initially, the program involved four universities when it was launched and now it covers seven universities.

## Mission hospital raises concern over state of waste management dumpsite

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

PUGU based Analda Maga mission hospital has raised concerns over poor waste management at the Pugu dump site, a situation which affects the facility's services provision and poses health risks to people surrounding the area.

The dump site is a meter away from the mission hospital whereas currently there is a heap of wastes comprising of plastics and other solid wastes being left unattended for some time.

The residents have called upon the management of the dumpsite to make immediate measures to address the problem.

The hospital manager Concordia Kimario told this paper that the piled wastes have blocked the main road to the hospital causing inconveniences to patients as well as health care service providers.

"The situation is worse; the wastes have blocked the road to the hospital. Residents are also in a danger of contracting diseases," said Kimario noting the situation becomes worse when it rains.

Kimario said they have reported the

matter to relevant authorities but no action has been taken.

"We call for immediate removal of the garbage so that people can access health services at our facility. The dump has been full since last year and no tangible action has been taken," she said.

According to her the number of patients seeking medical service at the facility has also dropped tremendously. She said previously, the hospital was receiving 200 patients per month.

Kimario said they have reported the matter to the National Environment Management Council (NEMC) and to the management of the dump site in Ilala District, but they are yet to be assisted.

The 65 hectares Pugu dump site handles 5,000 tonnes of waste per day.

Richard Kichehere, Pugu dump site manager said they have hired a contractor to remove the wastes blocking the road.

"The contractor has already started removing the wastes, the road to the hospital will be opened in coming days," he said adding the contractor has delayed to complete the job due to the recent rains which disrupted infrastructures.



Rombo district executive director Godwin Chaha (C) speaks at an International Day of Persons with Disabilities event held at Tarakea on Thursday. Others are officials with the Tanzania Association of the Physically Handicapped in the district. Photo: Correspondent James Lanka

## NGO teams up with TARI to boost agricultural cash crops productivity

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo, Chamwino

CHAMWINO non-governmental organisation network (CHANGONET) is collaborating with the local government and Tanzania Agriculture Research Institute (TARI) to boost agricultural crops productivity and availability.

The move is meant to free villagers in the district from being hit by famine and reduce

poverty.

The robust initiative targets to empower the farmers to adopt improved seeds, better agronomic practices and other key agro-technologies.

The district is among famine and malnutrition prone districts in the country due to diverse factors including climate change.

CHANGONET Director, Elizabeth Msuya, told this paper that most farmers in the area

are still using poor recycled crop seeds and that they do not have access to key extension services.

Targeting to reach at least 90 per cent of farmers within the District, Msuya said the move will facilitate farmers to meet with high profile agro experts from TARI to receive vital agronomic awareness.

The program also aims to push for soil testing to exactly detect types of drought - resist-

ance crops that are flourishing in the District.

"We have also realised the need to educate farmers on application of recommended pesticide to enable them mitigating effects of climate changes," she expressed adding that efforts will be directed to educate and sensitize farmers to embark on commercial farming of cash crops.

Msuya added: "We want to assist households in the District to improve their liveli-

hoods through production of diverse cash crops. We will also connect them to markets."

According to her, local government officials will be responsible to ensure extension officers reach all the farmers across the District. She said local government officials will also be trained on key agronomic practices, the knowledge that will be transferred to farmers in their respective areas.

Chamwino District has for years experi-





Hai district executive director Yohana Sintoo makes remarks at the swearing-in of 24 councillors on Thursday. Photo: Godfrey Mushi

## Angola floats plan to build trans-Africa rail link through Tanzania

By Guardian Correspondent and Agencies

ANGOLA'S ambassador to Tanzania Sandri De Oliveira has revealed his government's plan to build a trans-African railway corridor between the ports of Dar es Salaam in the east of the continent and Lobito in the west.

De Oliveira was speaking in Dar es Salaam recently at an event to mark the 45th anniversary of Angola's independence from Portugal.

He said the railway corridor would connect the two countries through Zambia, allowing for the transit of goods from markets in America, Asia and Europe.

The project would involve building a narrow-gauge (1,067mm) railway between Lobito in Angola to the Zambian border. The line would then be extended through Zambia as far as the central town of Kapiri Mposhi.

This is the western terminus of the Tanzania-Zambia Railway line, built by the Chinese in the 1970s.

The ambassador commented: "In order to have the railway link with Tanzania, the Angolan government would construct a new railway line

into Zambia that would further link to the 1,860 km Tanzania-Zambia Railway."

He added that Angola was counting on "Tanzania's collaboration in this effort".

At present, Angola's economy depends overwhelmingly on exports to China - in 2018 these accounted for more than \$25bn, more than its exports to the rest of the world combined, and consisted mainly of oil. There is almost no trade between Angola and Tanzania. In 2015, Tanzania exported less than \$5m to Angola, and Angola less than \$500,000 worth of goods to Tanzania.

The lack of commercial contact is partly due to the difficulties in overland transport by road, especially in Zambia, during the rainy season. A rail link would provide each country with access to each other's markets, as well as improved access to global buyers.

Angola, which has a per capita income around three times greater than Tanzania and more than double that of Zambia, would be likely to shoulder most of the work in organising the link.

## UNDP to award best small businesses with innovative products post-Covid-19

By Guardian Reporter

THE United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Human Development Innovation Fund (HDIF) and the embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Tanzania, have launched the Recovery and Resilience Innovation Challenge to revitalize the economy and social welfare to contribute to the country's economic and social recovery and ultimate resilience in the face of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The challenge aims to showcase, and ultimately award the best small busi-

nesses with innovative products, services or business models that are in their nature resilient to market shocks, or contributing to their respective sectors recovery.

The Recovery and Resilience Innovation Challenge is being implemented by SeedSpace Dar es Salaam and Ndoto Hub.

Entrepreneurs joining the program will get the opportunity to receive training and funding to help accelerate their businesses. Special preference will be given to youth and women owned businesses.

HDIF Country Director, Joseph Manirakiza said the innovations should be beyond the idea stage, and must have been already piloted in Tanzania and be ready for scaling.

Lianne Houben, Deputy Ambassador of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands said: "The Netherlands strongly believes that it is important to support and expose small businesses with innovative and Covid-19 proof business solutions that are contributing to a more resilient Tanzanian entrepreneurial ecosystem and one that can continue to function

in the face of disruptions and economic slowdowns."

Houben added that the embassy want to support youth and women-owned led enterprises which are most affected by the pandemic.

"That is why the Netherlands supports this initiative exposing and awarding potentially highly resilient innovations in COVID-times that could function as role models for others and for the sector they operate in on how to become more resilient in future shocks," said the Deputy Ambassador.

Resident Representative for UNDP, Christine Musisi

said: "UNDP believes that supporting the youth in Tanzania to innovate and become successful entrepreneurs can help achieve the SDG targets for Tanzania, create economic development and foster self-reliance. We are proud to fund programs like this and continue to seek to channel financing in support of Tanzanian innovators and the growth of a young and vibrant private sector"

Participating businesses must use innovation to address gaps observed during the Covid-19 crisis, and present solutions that will make

them and the sector they operate in more resilient to future crises.

In light of the pandemic, the program seeks to better equip entrepreneurs to become more resilient in unprecedented times.

The resilience training program will help them develop strategies for shock absorption in the case of unforeseen events in the future.

The programs will onboard 20 Tanzanian youth entrepreneurs with innovative, market ready solutions whereas 10 entrepreneurs will be awarded with funding and a three-month follow-up

program.

About 1 million youth enter the Tanzanian job market annually. In recent years, many have chosen to channel their skills and passions into innovation and self-reliance. The program will also serve as a blueprint and a learning experience for other entrepreneurs in similar operational sectors on how to become more resilient in future shocks.

The program's target sectors are tourism, agriculture, health, education, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) with a special focus on youth and women-led startups.

## Charity organisation donates two boreholes to Dar schools

By Correspondent James Kandoya

THE World Islamic Propagation and Humanitarian Services, (WIPAHS) has donated two boreholes to Jeshini and Maghorofani primary schools in Dar es Salaam.

Handing over the two boreholes in Dar es Salaam on Wednesday, the sponsor of the project, Gulshan Jaffer, said the donated facilities are part of the implementation of the request submitted to her by the management of the two schools.

She said the two boreholes will help to overcome the shortage of precious utility-water which is very crucial for humans and the life of other living organisms.

She advised the school community to protect water infrastructure to make it sustainable noting that it was expensive therefore it must be protected to be used by the future generation.

"I call on the school community led by headteachers to ensure the project becomes sustainable by protecting the infrastructure against sabotage from unfaithful people," he said.

Representing his neighboring school, Jeshini headmaster Joel Barua expressed appreciation for the support saying it would reduce unneces-

sary risks.

He said the support will to great extent reduce the shortage of clean and safe water as well as discouraging student loitering outside of school compounds.

"I would like to thank WIPAHS for their warm support to our schools. We hope that the support will help our students to get clean and safe water without going outside our school compound," he said.

In the same development, Mariam Tejan from WIPAHS handed books and stationery to the two schools reminding students to study hard to realize their goals.

WIPAHS was founded in 1988 as a religious and humanitarian Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) establishing its headquarters in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

It was envisaged by a group of individuals, both working-class and professionals who desired to respond to the call of the poor and needy, especially women who were the most vulnerable of the society.

These philanthropists dedicated their time in trying to improve the living conditions of the indigenous community who had been suffering severely from poverty, disease, and illiteracy.



Anna Kulaya (standing), director of the Tanzania chapter of Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF), makes a follow-up of group discussions on ways to address gender-based violence. It was at a seminar her agency organised in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

## Facility to establish quality usable and reusable masks in Kiluvya subrb

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

IN efforts to help complement the government's industrialisation drive in the country, Tindwa Medical and Health Services in Tanzania (TMHS), plans to establish several industries, among them, high quality usable and reusable face masks in Kiluvya's Coast Region.

TMHS marketing and corporate relations manager, Esther Ndazi, the factory is expected to be mainly for consumables and also to put up another plant for pharmaceuticals.

This is in complementing President John Magufuli's plea to investors in the country to invest in

pharmaceuticals in order to ease the burden of importing medicine from outside the country.

Ndazi spoke to this paper at the just concluded 7th Annual Tanzania Health Summit held in Dodoma, noting that these were among key projects that were in pipeline.

A professionally recognized health organization, she said also plans to introduce air ambulance services in the country, a move that will offer quick emergency medical services.

Ndazi said the move aims at offering medical evacuation especially in remote areas where ground medical evacuation becomes difficult.

On air medical rescues, Ms Ndazi said, the organi-

zation had fully equipped helicopters, caravans or jets depending on the particular needs which are always complemented by medical doctors and paramedics.

"This is the first time the country is having such a service because evacuation services ought to be provided by vehicles." She said, adding that there is increasing demand for the service.

She said the air ambulance evacuation services were expected to kick off next year and that there will be premier air ambulances and standby air ambulances whereas the main centre will be in Dar es Salaam.

She added that the organization usually does

confirmation via our medical experts to assess the situation of a patient and they are able deliver services to people wherever they are.

TMHS is a professionally operated company with the most reliable, safe and best experience in Occupational Health and Safety, Emergency Medical Services as well as Waste and Environmental Management Service.

The organisation provides medical evacuation services 24/7, first aid kits, and trauma bags that meet international standards as well as doing ground medical evacuations using fully equipped ambulances.



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Taking A New Look  
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## We must do our utmost to protect soil biodiversity

**P**LANTS nurture a whole world of creatures in the soil, that in return feed and protect the plants. This diverse community of living organisms keeps the soil healthy and fertile. This vast world constitutes soil biodiversity and determines the main biogeochemical processes that make life possible on Earth.

This year, by addressing the increasing challenges of soil management, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) campaign "Keep soil alive, protect soil biodiversity" aims to raise awareness of the importance of sustaining healthy ecosystems and human well-being. By encouraging people around the world to engage in proactively improving soil health, the campaign also aims to fight soil biodiversity loss. If we do not act soon, the fertility of soil will continue to be adversely affected at an alarming rate, threatening global food supplies and food safety.

An international day to celebrate Soil was recommended by the International Union of Soil Sciences in 2002. Under the leadership of the Kingdom of Thailand and within the framework of the Global Soil Partnership, FAO has supported the formal establishment of World Soil Day as a global awareness raising platform. The FAO conference unanimously endorsed World Soil Day in June 2013 and requested its official adoption at the UN General Assembly. In December 2013, the UN General Assembly responded by designating 5 December 2014 as the first official World Soil Day. The

date of 5 December was chosen because it corresponds with the official birthday of the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej, King of Thailand, who was one of the main proponents of this initiative.

The World Soil Day campaign aims to connect people with soils and raise awareness on their critical importance in our lives. The International Union of Soil Sciences in 2002, made a resolution proposing the 5th of December as World Soil Day to celebrate the importance of soil as a critical component of the natural system and as a vital contributor to human wellbeing.

Therefore World Soil Day highlights the importance of healthy soil. It's also a day to advocate for the sustainable management of soil resources. One of the biggest concerns for the environment is soil degradation. Degradation is when soil health declines due to improper use or poor management. Most Americans are familiar with what happened during the Great Depression. Dust storms were a frequent occurrence. Soil erosion caused these massive dust storms. Through the years, farmers in this country learned their lesson.

They began to practice better soil management. Unfortunately, however, there are still concerns about soil health. Throughout the world, the soil is eroding at a rapid rate. Every 5 seconds, the equivalent of one soccer field of soil erodes. If soil erosion continues, the earth will no longer be fertile. In turn, global food supplies and food safety will be threatened.

## Why International Civil Aviation Day is especially important today

**I**N 1996 the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed that 7 December was to be the International Civil Aviation Day. The day has been celebrated by the International Civil Aviation Organisation since 7 December 1994, the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Convention on International Civil Aviation. The purpose of the day is to recognise the importance of aviation, especially international air travel, to the social and economic development of the world. The purpose of International Civil Aviation Day is to help generate and reinforce worldwide awareness of the importance of international civil aviation to the social and economic development of states, and of the unique role of ICAO in helping States to cooperate and realize a truly global rapid transit network at the service of all mankind.

As the UN and world nations have now adopted Agenda 2030, and embarked on a new era in global sustainable development, the importance of aviation as an engine of global connectivity has never been more relevant to the Chicago Convention's objectives to look to international flight as a fundamental enabler of global peace and prosperity.

CAO is funded and directed by 193 national governments to support their diplomacy and cooperation in air transport as signatory states to the Chicago Convention (1944). Its core function is to maintain an administrative and expert bureaucracy (the ICAO Secretariat) supporting these diplomatic interactions, and to research new air transport pol-

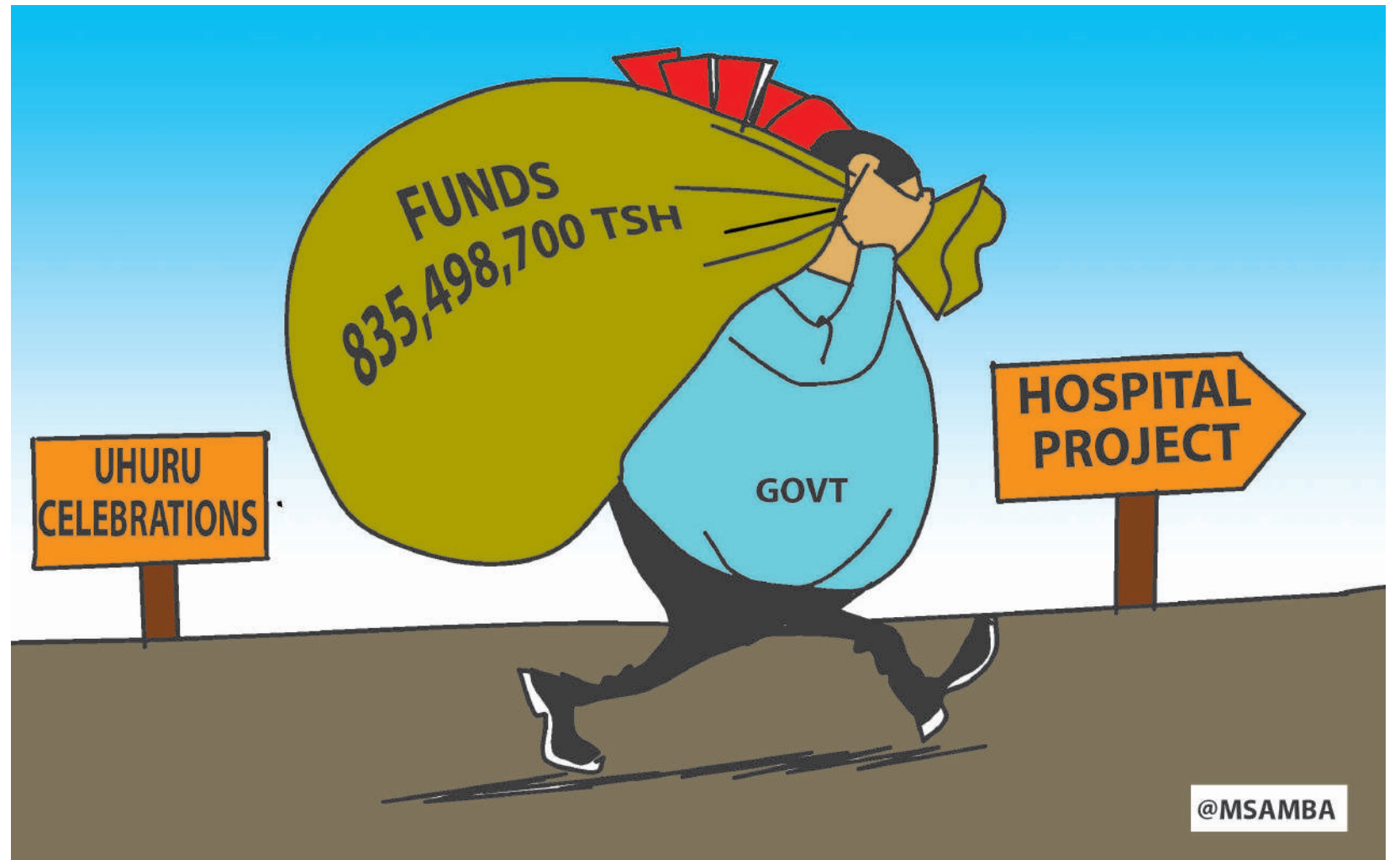
icy and standardisation innovations as directed and endorsed by governments through the ICAO Assembly, or by the ICAO Council which the assembly elects.

Industry and civil society groups, and other concerned regional and international organisations, also participate in the exploration and development of new standards at ICAO in their capacity as 'Invited Organisations'.

As new priorities are identified by these stakeholders, the ICAO secretariat convenes panels, task forces, conferences and seminars to explore their technical, political, socio-economic and other aspects. It then provides government with the best results and advice possible as they collectively and diplomatically establish new international standards and recommended practices for civil aviation internationally.

Once governments achieve diplomatic consensus around a new standard's scope and details, it is then adopted by those same 193 countries in order to bring worldwide alignment to their national regulations, helping to realize safe, secure and sustainable air operations on a truly global basis.

In addition to these core diplomatic and research capabilities, ICAO also serves as a critical coordination platform in civil aviation through its seven Regional Offices. It also conducts educational outreach, develops coalitions, and conducts auditing, training, and capacity building activities worldwide per the needs and priorities governments identify and formalise.



## Turning the tide on gender-based violence in Nigeria in the midst of COVID-19 crisis

By Edward Kallon

IF you are in a room with ten women, there is a high chance that three of these women have experienced physical, sexual, economic or psychosocial violence simply because of their gender, which is known as gender-based violence (GBV). Even though these three women know their perpetrators, only one of them knows about what health support is available, and only one would approach the justice system.

The two other women are shameful, they would not speak about the violence they experienced out of fear of stigma from their community, friends, and family, who might say she should be more careful or that she dressed improperly.

During the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown, states reported more than a doubling of the already existing pandemic of violence against women. We call it the shadow pandemic because it is equally deadly, global, and harmful, but often invisible to the eyes of the public.

In June 2020, Nigeria witnessed something remarkable. For the first time, 36 governors united to speak up and out and declared a state of emergency on sexual and gender-based violence. This was the response to women and men across the nation standing together, defying COVID-19 restrictions, and protesting online and offline to demand decisive, cohesive action to tackle GBV on all fronts.

Starting 25th November each year, marking the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence, until Human Rights Day 10th December, the United Nations stands with all who stood in the streets in June to push for the GBV Declaration of Emergency or shared their anger towards the increase in gender-based violence.

During the 16 Days of Activism, the whole world, led by civil society, the United Nations, governments, media, and the private sector, join



forces and call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls. The 16 Days of Activism Campaign forces us to have serious conversations and to map out actions that address the GBV pandemic.

The United Nations System in Nigeria urges the Government of Nigeria; civil society; the media; traditional, religious and community leaders; schools and institutions; the private sector; health practitioners, social workers, emergency responders - and all other stakeholders in positions of power and influence to take swift action.

Our appeal to the governors, together with key stakeholders is to take action and end gender-based violence in the following areas:

We must fund, and make sure funding is flexible and available for women's rights organisations, that essential services are available, and funds for GBV prevention included in fiscal stimulus packages.

Almost half of the Nigerian girls are married before they turn 18, we must acknowledge that the health sector is key to address the challenge and fund sexual and reproductive health care for these girls, and survivors of GBV, so they don't carry life long scares from early pregnancy, such as HIV or fistula. We must respond with adequate funds to address the GBV crisis in the North East, amplified by the Covid-19 pandemic.

We must prevent gender-based vio-

lence from happening in the first place, declaring a state of emergency is the first step, what we need now is an action plan and campaigns that change behaviours and men speaking up and out against violence against women. Unequal power relations between men and women feed and fuel gender-based violence. Religious, traditional, community and political leaders can undo harmful practices and dismantle stereotypes wherever they may be found.

We must respond to this violence. The police must have trained staff and gender desks to support survivors of GBV, and access to justice is critical to protecting women and girls. Federal and state legislators must tackle GBV via the domestication of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act, develop a third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, and the passage of the anti-sexual harassment in tertiary institutions bill. The national gender machinery must be empowered to equip sexual assault referral centres and develop sex offenders' registers in the states. The health sector is a key institution, without skilled health workers, evidence of GBV will not be collected, and no one will be held accountable. There are positive developments out of some states, but with 20 states yet to pass the VAPP, they only amount to a drop in the ocean in the grand scheme of things.

We must collect data on gender-based violence, so we know where and how

to help to improve life-saving services for women and girls. The European Union and the UN Spotlight Initiative, collaborating with the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, just launched a National GBV Situation Room and Data Dashboard, which means that six states now have a coordinated system to collect and coordinate GBV data in Nigeria.

Eliminating sexual and gender-based violence, tagged 'the shadow pandemic', is an urgent task with responsibilities for citizens; we all have a place in the 2020 theme "Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!" if we are to achieve success in protecting our women and girls. In our homes, our places of worship, our schools, our communities, and public places, we have to call out all appearances of GBV regardless of our relationship to the survivor or perpetrator.

"Together, we can and must prevent violence everywhere, from war zones to people's homes, as we work to beat Covid-19", says António Guterres, UN Secretary-General. The United Nations System in Nigeria remains committed to working with governments and partners to prevent and address GBV.

Together, we can end gender-based violence and ensure the safety and security of all women and girls. We must take action during this year's 16 Days of Activism.

Mr Kallon is the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria.



# Left out? Free education elusive for students with albinism

By Correspondent James Kandoyo

**A**S Tanzania proclaims success in its fee-free basic education which has seen record enrolment in primary schools and unprecedented completion of form four, there is one group that is not part of this triumph—students with albinism.

For, this cluster has special needs that are not budgeted for in the 18bn/- the government releases to public schools every month since 2016. As a result, learning has remained a constant struggle for learners in this group and rates of dropout are alarming.

According to Standing Voice, an International Non-Governmental Organization based in Tanzania, only half the children with albinism complete primary school and only 10 per cent of them access secondary school education.

Everyone has the right to make the best of the life they are born into and for most people, that journey begins with an education.

Going to school is not just about acquiring knowledge to help you find a job, but it is also about developing the skills for building successful relationships, discovering friendships and exploring identity.

There are, in fact, no cognitive or academic learning disabilities associated with albinism.

It is a congenital disorder characterized in humans by the complete or partial absence of pigment in the skin, hair and eyes and associated with a number of vision defects, such as photophobia, nystagmus, and amblyopia.

Lack of skin pigmentation makes for more susceptibility to sunburn and skin cancers.

However, children with albinism are able to perform as well as any other student in the class when their low vision is addressed.

Although they attend school, their needs aren't accommodated in the classrooms as a result cause poor performance in their studies or school dropout.

Irene George, the Public Relations and Advocacy Officer from the Under the Same Sun (UTSS) notes that poor vision to People with Albinism (PwA) is one of big challenges that need to be strongly addressed.

"Most of our fellow failed to complete studies due to poor vision and therefore did not realize their dreams. As a result, rates of school dropout increase," she says



The officer calls on teachers to come up with a friendlier environment that can enable PwA such as large fonts so that they can read easily.

Teachers should talk more when teaching instead of writing on the board to enable all those with poor vision to take notes.

She points out that teachers can play an extremely important role in the lives of children with albinism as they can help them to grow, learn and realize their full potential in life.

Mohamed Athumani, a teacher at Makuburi primary school in Kinondoni Municipal Council, Dar es Salaam city is one of teachers facing the same challenge.

In his school, there is only one pupil with albinism who, according to him, is taken care of and protected from all risk factors such as direct sunlight.

Athumani says that most teachers are not aware of the special needs to PwA therefore calls for increased awareness among educators.

"As teachers, we need to know more about how to take care of this particu-

lar group. We are not aware of assisting materials like dome lenses," he says.

He took issue with free eye screening campaigns conducted by charities and religious organizations, saying they do not consider this particular group.

As a teacher, he can remove physical barriers to learning such as simple adjustments to accommodate the individual learning needs.

Also, changes of sitting arrangement to protect them from direct sunlight, allowing them to wear a hat indoors to help protect their eyes, putting them close to the board and making tasks and materials more accessible to them are essential.

He opines that if teachers are sensitized enough, they can contribute immensely to fostering an understanding of children with albinism across the country.

They can also help end name calling, the use of common yet disrespectful labels and dispel misconceptions about albinism.

Children with poor vision have a number of vision difficulties; reduced visual acuity, light sensitivity (photophobia) and rapid eye movements, hence keeping up with normal school environment becomes unbearable.

The effective integration of children with albinism into mainstream schools also has the potential to shaping their attitudes for the better.

"Education is the basic right of every child and is essential for their cognitive, emotional, social, cultural and physical development," he says.

Lack of information about children with albinism and superstitious beliefs derail efforts to help improve welfare and wellbeing of this needy group, according to Kondo Seif, the Advocacy Officer at UTSS.

He says there an uphill task of changing people's mindset and make them understand the fact that albinism is not disability and PwA can work effectively and efficiently just people with normal pigmentation.

Citing Dr Abdallah Possi, the Tanzania's Ambassador to Germany, he says that the envoy is one of exemplary leaders hence a proof that PwA are the same as others. "Increased awareness by human rights groups plus efforts made by the government has contributed to a decline in cases of attacks against PwA in Tanzania," he adds.

He has a message: "It is a high time the society changed attitude towards PwA because wherever that has happened, there are remarkable success noted in different countries."

According to him, the PwA should be prioritized in employment opportunities as per the Employment and Labour Relations Act-2004 and the Persons with Disabilities Act 2010.

Globally, one in 18,000 people has albinism. In Sub-

Saharan Africa it's more common, with data from Tanzania showing that one person in 2,652 has albinism.

The Tanzania Albinism Society (TAS) Chairman Godson Mollel says that concerted efforts are needed to support PwA against poor vision.

He says impaired vision has many negative impacts including school dropouts, calling on stakeholders to support them with reading glasses and other assisting devices like dome lenses.

He applauds the government's plan to print books with large fonts to enable PwA and especially students to read easily, noting that available normal-font books are not friendly to them.

"I appeal to the government to make god its plan to print special books for students with albinism; enough of them should be made available so that each learner can have one instead of sharing," he appeals.

## Ramaphosa declares Nelson Mandela Bay a Covid-19 hotspot – extra restrictions in force

By Estelle Ellis

**A**LCOHOL sales have been limited to four days a week, a 10pm curfew has been introduced and the consumption of alcohol at public venues, including beaches, has been banned as Nelson Mandela Bay became the first metro in South Africa to be declared a coronavirus hotspot.

With more than 4,000 active cases of coronavirus infections, and a death toll of 1,867 people, the Nelson Mandela Bay metro has become the first metro in South Africa to be declared an official coronavirus hotspot.

President Cyril Ramaphosa (pictured) on Thursday night, 3 December, announced that as of 4 December the sale of alcohol on Fridays and over the weekends would be banned; no on-site alcohol consumption at licensed facilities would be allowed after 10pm and no consumption of alcohol would be allowed at beaches and parks.

This comes after the city's metro police and the Eastern Cape Liquor Board found many non-compliant facilities where large parties, some of close to 2,000 people, would spill into the streets with few patrons wearing masks. Head of the metro's disaster management forum Shane Brown has raised serious concern over large parties at the city's beachfront.

Ramaphosa said gatherings – including religious gatherings – may not be attended by more than 100 people for indoor events and 250 for outdoor events. At all times, the number of people in a venue may not exceed 50% of the capacity of the venue.

The Nelson Mandela Bay municipality on Tuesday indicated that applications for permits for public events will be refused and that the city's large public venues will be closed.

Ramaphosa said post-funeral gatherings have been prohibited.

"These additional measures are necessary to contain the resurgence in Nelson Mandela Bay, to prevent outbreaks resulting from social gatherings and to protect the capacity of the healthcare system to provide care to those who need it.

"In determining these restrictions, we have sought to take those steps which are absolutely necessary to save lives while limiting disruptions to the economy," he said.

The president said that for 100 days since the middle of August, the rate of new infections had been stable at below 2,000 but this has changed in the past three weeks with a marked rise in new infections and hospital admissions.

"There is now clear evidence of a resurgence of infections in parts of our... country, which, if not confronted decisively and directly, could lead to great suffering and death," he said.

According to statistics from



the national Department of Health, South Africa was recording an average of 1,500 new cases a day in the first week of November. By the last week of November, this had almost doubled to an average of about 2,900 new cases a day. On Wednesday, 2 December South Africa recorded more than 4,400 new infections, the largest daily increase since mid-August.

"The total number of hospital admissions is now over 5,800 nationally and is increasing. Three weeks ago, hospital admissions were 4,900."

Ramaphosa said Nelson Mandela Bay and the Sarah Baartman District in the Eastern Cape and the Garden Route District in the Western Cape accounted for most new cases.

"Hospital admissions in these districts are on the rise, in some instances comparable to those during the first wave of infections. In the Eastern Cape and Western Cape, there has been an increase in both reported Covid-19 deaths and excess deaths. This must be a concern for every one of us," he said.

Ramaphosa said several hospitals in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro had reported a rise in alcohol-related trauma admissions. These were diverting the capacity of the casualty units to deal with Covid-related cases.

"But by far the greatest contributing cause of infections is that many people are not wearing masks and are not observing proper hygiene and social distancing.

"As I said during our last family meeting, at alert Level 1, we have the measures we need to control the virus. But our main problem is that there are parts of the country where people are not complying with the current restrictions and the basic prevention measures are not being followed," Ramaphosa said.

"The most urgent task before us right now is to contain the rise in infections in the affected districts in the Eastern Cape and Western Cape, and to ensure that a similar situation does not develop in other parts of the country."

The government is implementing a "resurgence plan" Ramaphosa said, which had been developed with the World Health Organisation's surge team.

"We are making more capacity available at hospitals and clinics in these areas. We are expanding public health interventions such as testing, contact tracing, isolation and quarantine. We are also stepping up our awareness campaigns around public health regulations.

"We must change our behaviour now to prevent a resurgence of the virus and manage outbreaks wherever they occur... At the same time, we need to do all we can to keep the economy open and to push ahead with our reconstruction and recovery effort," the president said.

Explaining the reasoning of the national command council, Ramaphosa said that when identifying a hotspot, consideration was given to the number of new Covid-19 cases a day, the testing rate within the population, the percentage positivity rate within the population, the number of active cases, the number of hospital admissions and the number of deaths.

He said that after extensive consultation with traditional leaders, the government had agreed that the summer initiation season in the Eastern Cape may go ahead everywhere but in Nelson Mandela Bay.

"This is because traditional leaders in the Eastern Cape have submitted a risk-adjusted plan that has been approved by departments of Health and Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs. However, due to the high rates of infection in the metro, no initiation schools will be allowed in Nelson Mandela Bay," Ramaphosa said.

Acting executive mayor of the metro Thsonono Buyeye, however, said on Wednesday that there were more than 7,000 boys in the metro waiting to "go to the bush" and he feared that if the initiation season was cancelled in Nelson Mandela Bay, they would go to other venues in the province and spread the virus in this way.

Ramaphosa said the measures in Nelson Mandela Bay were not meant to punish residents.

"They are not intended to increase the hardship experienced by our citizens. These measures are needed to contain the spread of the virus and to save lives," he said.

Ramaphosa said Minister of Health Dr Zweli Mkhize would visit the Sarah Baartman District (this includes large parts of the Karoo, but also the Kareedouw area and popular holiday destinations such

as Jeffreys Bay and St Francis Bay) and the Garden Route to assess the situation and liaise with stakeholders in the province.

"Based on this assessment and the development of the disease in these areas, the National Coronavirus Command Council will determine the appropriate course of action," Ramaphosa said.

The national state of disaster has been extended to 15 January 2021, he added.

"We have instructed law enforcement officials to ensure compliance with the law, by owners, controllers and managers of workplaces, shops, institutions and buildings to ensure social distancing and wearing of masks. Taxi operators are also required to ensure that all their passengers wear masks. In addition, each one of us will be required to comply with the curfew times," Ramaphosa said.

The president provided an update on the search for a vaccine, saying that the country continued to "collaborate with our partners in the international community to ensure that all countries have access to an effective and affordable vaccine."

"We are participating in the World Health Organisation's Covid-19 Global Vaccine Access Facility – known as the Covax facility – which aims to pool resources and share vaccine development risk and thus ensure equitable access to vaccines when they become available. We are encouraged that the Solidarity Fund will be making the initial contribution of R327-million towards this vaccine procurement on behalf of our country," he said.

"If there is anything this pandemic has taught us, it is the danger of becoming complacent," Ramaphosa concluded.

DM/MC



# Enhancing agritech innovations for food security and youth empowerment

By Dana G Smith

**T**HIS is a modified excerpt from Inside Your Head, a weekly newsletter exploring why your brain makes you think, feel and act the way you do, written by me.

I have a pretty bad memory. It's not prohibitive - I can remember grocery lists and practical day-to-day things no problem - but friends will occasionally reference conversations or events from years ago that I have little recollection of.

By Inyene Ibang

Without doubt, the youth have a pivotal role to play in the current effort to position the country among leading agricultural-driven economies where technology is strategically deployed to ensure food security and industrialisation.

Agriculture has undergone rapid transformation, from the era of the industrial revolution, when farmers depended on manual labour to the carry out their operations. Direct labour was deployed during the process of clearing the land, tilling the soil, planting the seeds, and eventual harvesting the crops.

Mechanical tools were later developed for farming as part of the evolution in agricultural practices. Machineries such as tractors, land mowers, burrowers, threshers, and sprayers are used in mechanised farming operations. These machines help to reduce manual labour and the use of crude implements.

Currently, agriculture is making tremendous contributions to the growth of national economies and development. This growth is becoming manifest through the disruptive impact of various cutting-edge technologies that are deployed into farming practices.

The integration of agriculture and technology into agriculture technology (agritech) is gradually becoming the reality in several emerging African economies like Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt and Kenya. Agritech innovations are being used to augment output and efficiency in agriculture.

In Nigeria, Agritech companies are offering digital innovations and solutions that cover the produce, products, services and applications within the agricultural value chain, from the farm to industry, where produce are processed for the final consumer.

There are several agritech start-ups/companies operating across the spectrum of the agriculture value chain. Some of them include Farmcrowdy; Groupfarma; Farmkart; Payfarmer; and FarmSponsor. Others are Kitovu Technology; Ewagric; Releaf; Fresh Direct Nigeria; Fresh Direct Nigeria and Babban Gona.



These agritech start-ups/companies are among those that have started offering digital solutions to address the challenges confronting smallholder farmers. They help to provide smallholder farmers' access to financial services, improved seedlings, fertilisers, insecticides and pesticides, and equipment, as well as provide logistics and marketing services to farmers.

Agritech covers a wide range of technologies and applications, such as the use of drones; satellite photography and sensors; robots; temperature and moisture sensors; and GPS technologies.

Also, it involves weather forecasts; automated irrigation; light and heat control; intelligent software analysis for pest and disease prediction, soil management and biotech.

As the leading driver of productivity, technology possesses the compelling capacity to attract more youths to productively venture into agricultural practices. Young people have a tendency to drift towards technology because they offer fresh and easier approaches and tech innovations to ease farm work.

Essentially, agritech companies aim to use cutting edge technologies to, among other things, support rural and local farmers for increased yield production; and provide access/link and connect rural customers and producers in the agricultural market in order to accelerate Nigeria's agricultural-based industrialisation.

Progress in the agricultural sector can be used as a standard for measuring a successful state or society and the capacity to feed its population. So, the level of productivity in agriculture, the capacity to feed the population and food security, are among the strong indicators of a thriving economy.

In fact, the rising level of food insecurity in Nigeria has compelled more smallholder farmers to leverage on new technologies to improve food production and become competitive in the agricultural market.

At a recent workshop for review of the National Digital Agriculture Strategy (NDAS), there was a renewed call for youth to leverage technologies and innovations and become more involved in agriculture.

Developed by the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), the NDAS is aimed at engendering digital-enabled agriculture and food industry. It is geared to building a vibrant digital agriculture sector that leverages technologies and innovations.

Consequently, digital innovations will attract young adults to build and invest in new digital business models across the agriculture value chain, create millions of jobs, increase productivity and profitability, and enhance the sector's contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

This means the country's extremely energetic and creative youths would shift their attention from the quest for dwindling white collar jobs and become engaged in agricultural practices that are driven by sophisticated technologies and innovations.

As the leading driver of productivity, technology possesses the compelling capacity to attract more youths to productively venture into agricultural practices. Young people have a tendency to drift towards

technology because they offer fresh and easier approaches and tech innovations to ease farm work.

From all indications, the deployment of emerging technology will drive youth inclusion into the agricultural sector. It will enable the youths to effectively monitor and manage natural resources, while also giving them (young producers) greater control over plant and animal production, processing, distribution, and storage.

The collaboration between the Federal Ministries of Communications and Digital Economy and of Agriculture and Rural Development should be adequately empowered to ensure that the 'Smart Agriculture' initiative translates into a tangible increase in food production and economic growth.

With greater deployment of innovative digital tools and applications, youths will be in the vanguard of building greater efficiencies, safer growing conditions and safer foods for Nigeria's booming population.

This reality is succinctly acknowledged by Mallam Kashifu Inuwa Abdullahi, the Director-General of NITDA, in the following statement:

"This has become imperative as the population of Nigeria continues to grow with a large demographic of young adults, especially people migrating from the rural areas to the urban areas. It will make Nigeria a leading country in food security and exporter of standard agricultural products to the rest of the world."

Partnership between agritech companies and mobile network operators (MNOs) will go a long way to drive the scale and build sustainable business models. Agritech companies are likely to gain more traction as the MNOs help attract investors and vital fundings.

Going forward, young tech enthusiasts should be

challenged to come up with more agritech innovations to address those barriers to agriculture that are peculiar to certain regions of the country.

The collaboration between the Federal Ministries of Communications and Digital Economy and of Agriculture and Rural Development should be adequately empowered to ensure that the 'Smart Agriculture' initiative translates into a tangible increase in food production and economic growth.

Established agritech companies can create hubs where budding innovators, investors and start-ups have access to network and exchange ideas on innovations that have capacity to create disruptions in the agriculture.

Without doubt, the youth have a pivotal role to play in the current effort to position the country among leading agricultural-driven economies where technology is strategically deployed to ensure food security and industrialisation.

The country's agricultural jigsaw puzzle may never be completed without the active participation of her teeming youth as a vital component for achieving our target of food sufficiency for domestic consumption, industrial raw materials and revenue earner through exportation.

## Beijing's Xicheng district introduces innovative mechanism to inherit intangible cultural heritages

By Shi Fang,

**I**NTANGIBLE cultural heritages in Beijing's Xicheng district have been well protected in recent years thanks to a program that recruits and trains volunteers into inheritors of these invaluable cultural assets that kicked off in 2014.

Xicheng district is home to a number of intangible cultural heritages. As of 2019, it had 36 intangible cultural heritage items under national protection, 67 under municipal protection, and 208 under district protection. These items covered all 10 categories of intangible cultural heritage protection announced by China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and accounted for nearly 1/3 of those of Beijing.

However, the aging and lack of inheritors in the district were major obstacles that hindered the inheritance of these heritages.

The program recruited volunteers for 5 intangible cultural heritages in 2014. "We received hundreds of calls a day," said Yang Fei, director of the intangible cultural

heritage protection center of Xicheng district. According to him, the program planned to recruit 5 volunteers for each heritage, but it was beyond their expectation that over 1,000 people signed up in just a few days. Finally, 45 of them were selected.

A total of 36 intangible cultural heritage items launched open recruitment in the past 7 years and trained 308 volunteer inheritors. The training sessions were filmed and posted on social media, attracting many fans of the intangible cultural heritages.

"The program has built a bridge between the inheritors and volunteers, and will better carry forward the intangible cultural heritages," Yang said.

The volunteers are not all seniors, and the group is joined by many youngsters like Sun Huiyao, a 15-year-old middle school student who signed up for dough modeling inheritance. Though he has heavy academic tasks, he has never missed a single training session offered every week. Two years ago, he started learning oral stunts under the program and since



Children learn to make dough modeling, an intangible cultural heritage, at a summer camp held by a kindergarten in Nanjing, East China's Jiangsu Province, July 21. File photo

then developed a strong interest in intangible cultural heritages. This year, both he and his mother were selected as volunteer inheritors. The boy learns dough modeling while his mother, a doctor, learns Chinese herbal perfume.

Today, as more and more young people are getting closer to intangible cultural heritages because of the program, they are also making changes to the heritages.

Cheng Gang, a student studying opera theories at Tsinghua University, has raised a proposal to compile a history for traditional Chinese opera headdresses and set wearing and manufacturing standards for different types of operas. His idea surprised Li Xin, an inheritor of headdresses manufacturing. "I make headdresses and he's good at theoretical studies, so we make a great pair that helps the development of this skill," Li told People's Daily.

Keci is an intangible cultural heritage by which craftsmen uses chisels made from diamond to carve patterns on the glaze of chinaware. However, such artworks fade when they are stained by water. Zhou Xiaoming, a young art designer graduating from the College of Fine Arts of the Capital Normal University, developed permanent pigments that turn keci artworks into more practical garnitures. Chen Yongchang, from whom Zhou learns keci skills, noted that it's great to see that keci artworks can become practical wares.

"The volunteers are injecting new blood into the inheritance of intangible cultural heritages," Yang remarked, adding that they will keep exploring new ways to carry forward the heritages and make them more sustainable.

People's Daily



# Zimbabwe tightens gathering limits as Covid-19 cases rise

By Chris Muronzi

HUNDREDS of students have tested positive for Covid-19 following the reopening of schools last month.

Harare, Zimbabwe - Zimbabwe's government has reintroduced restrictions on gatherings and ordered strict adherence to measures aimed at slowing the spread of the coronavirus pandemic amid concerns over rising Covid-19 infections in the country.

In a news conference on Tuesday, Information Minister Monica Mutsvangwa said the number of people allowed to assemble at events of all kinds was re-

duced to 100.

Authorities had eased restrictions limiting attendance in gatherings after a decline of confirmed new infections in September - but a sudden spike in recent weeks has forced a government rethink.

An analysis of official Covid-19 data shows that new cases have been rising since November and are now averaging 100 cases daily, compared to the previous two months when infections stood at about 25 a day.

As of Wednesday, the country has registered 10,129 confirmed coronavirus cases, including 277 related deaths - up from

8,374 infections and 243 deaths a month ago.

Political analyst Rashweat Mukundu said the increase "points to notable failure in government's Covid-19 response and also the mishandling of the opening up of the socio-economic sector".

Mukundu cited the reopening of schools last month "without adequate precautionary measures" as one of the reasons behind what he described as a "ticking time bomb".

"The government's response has largely been politicised," Mukundu said, urging authorities "to go back to the drawing board".

Zimbabwe is in the

throes of a deepening economic crisis characterised by sky-high inflation and foreign currency shortages, as well as a devastating mix of a rapidly weakening currency and stagnant salaries and high unemployment. Medicines are in short supply and depleted state coffers mean that the government is unable to purchase sufficient supplies for state-run medical facilities.

With Zimbabwe's fragile healthcare system on the brink, residents and health professionals have repeatedly raised the alarm over a major Covid-19 outbreak.

The government imposed a nationwide lockdown in

March to contain the spread of Covid-19 in the country, but it has since eased most of its coronavirus-related restrictions amid fears of further economic malaise.

Almost 300 students have tested positive for Covid-19 since the resumption of classes on November

Among them were more than 180 students at John Tallach High School, close to Bulawayo, the second-largest city in the country. A total 54 cases were also recorded at Chinhoyi High School, a school located in the centre of Mashonaland West province.

The affected boarding schools have been placed under quarantine, with no one

allowed to enter or leave.

Meanwhile, at Matopo High School in Matabeleland South province, 10 positive cases were registered, while 20 students also tested positive for the virus at Anderson High School, a school in Gweru, one of the smaller cities in central Zimbabwe.

But authorities told Al Jazeera things were now under control.

"The situation is OK and manageable," said Taungana Ngoro, director of communications and advocacy in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. "We are confident we will be able to detect cases early," he added, noting that most infected students under quarantine

had recovered and will be allowed to leave the school premises.

Bulawayo Provincial Medical Director Welcome Mlilo described the situation in the city of some 640,000 people as "fairly stable" and "not so alarming as some parts of the country".

But with the number of locally transmitted infections increasing in recent weeks, police have stepped up operations to enforce coronavirus measures, including hitting people in the country with penalties for not adhering to Covid-19 guidelines such as wearing face masks and observing physical distancing.

## Unicef out to raise \$198 million to bail out millions of people in S. Sudan needing urgent support

JUBA

UNICEF has said that it aims to raise 197.8 million dollars to assist 5.1 million people, including 3.7 million children who are in need of humanitarian assistance as a result of conflict, disease outbreaks, drought and flooding.

The organization noted that the food and nutrition crisis is expected to continue in 2021 in South Sudan as there have been few gains in 2020 in addressing food insecurity coupled with severe flooding in larger parts of the country.

It said that the funds will be used to treat 272,978 children under five with severe acute malnutrition and vaccinate 540,000 children against measles.

It also expects to use the funds to provide water to 817,000 people, assist 127,000 children and caregivers with mental health services and psychosocial support, ensure for 770,000 children access to formal or non-formal education and reach 30,000 households with humanitarian cash transfers across sectors.

Dr Mohamed Ag Ayoya, UNICEF Representative in South Sudan thanked the donors who contribut-

ed to this year as the fund enabled the organization to treat 267,000 children under five years, who were affected by severe acute malnutrition, vaccinate 312,000 children against measles and provide 330,000 pregnant women and children with insecticide-treated nets.

"I thank all donors and partners for the contributions received in 2020. I hope we will be able to continue to work in partnership with them in 2021 to respond to the urgent humanitarian needs of children and the population of South Sudan," said Dr Ayoya.

"We all know investing in children is the best investment one can make. It is a key strategy to ensure sustainable development in South Sudan and to build a prosperous and peaceful country," he said.

The organization raised concerns over the attacks that have been happening to humanitarian workers and called for perpetrators to be brought to justice.

"We are extremely concerned about the increased violence against humanitarian actors. We are asking for all humanitarians to be granted unhindered access to people in need, for looting of relief supplies to end, and for per-



petrators to be held accountable, so we can safely provide humanitarian assistance," said Dr Ayoya.

Dr Ayoya noted that chil-

dren in South Sudan face a lot of difficulties making them perceive crisis as normal.

"Children in South Sudan

are growing up thinking crises are normal," said Dr Mohamed Ag Ayoya.

"They are often faced

with empty stomachs, ex-

posed and more susceptible to communicable diseases, and many find themselves homeless due to severe flooding. This should not be normal for any child," Ayoya added.



## Namibia to auction 170 wild elephants, saying rising numbers threaten people

WINDHOEK

NAMIBIA has put 170 "high value" wild elephants up for sale due to drought and an increase in elephant numbers, the southern African country's environmental ministry has said.

An advertisement carried by the state-owned daily New Era said an increase in incidents of human-elephant conflict motivated the sale of the large mammal that is at risk of extinction due to poaching and ecological factors.

The ministry of environment, forestry and tourism said it would auction the animals to anyone in Namibia or abroad who could meet the strict criteria, which include quarantine facilities and a game-proof fence certificate for the property where the elephants will be kept.

Foreign buyers must also provide proof that conservation authorities in their countries will permit them to export elephants to their countries.

Like several other African nations, Namibia is trying to strike a balance between protecting high-value spe-

cies like elephants and rhinos, while managing the danger they pose when they encroach on areas of human habitation.

Namibia's conservation drive, which has seen its elephant population jump from around 7,500 in 1995 to 24,000 in 2019 according to government figures, has enjoyed international support.

But last year Namibia said it was considering withdrawing from the rules that govern the global trade in endangered species. This was after countries voted during a Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) meeting to reject proposals to relax restrictions on hunting and exporting its white rhinos.

The country wants to allow more trophy hunting and the export of live animals, arguing that the funds it would raise would help it to protect the species.

In October it put 70 female and 30 male buffaloes on Waterberg Plateau Park in central Namibia up for sale in a bid to ease pressure on grazing land.

The arid southern African nation also auctioned 1,000 animals from national parks, including 500 buf-

## Convicted wildlife offenders tell their side of the story

By Guardian Reporter

TRAFFIC has obtained valuable new insights into the organisation, activities and modus operandi of criminal operations thanks to the voluntary co-operation of 73 offenders imprisoned in South Africa for wildlife crime offences.

The new study, 'Insights from the Incarcerated: An assessment of the illicit supply chain in wildlife in South Africa' builds on earlier interviews with the same offenders to understand their motivations in engaging in wildlife crime.

Almost three-quarters of the offenders had been imprisoned for rhino-related crimes, the remainder for abalone- and cycad-related offences. The offenders represented 49 unique court cases concluded between 2009 and 2019.

The study examines how illegal wildlife products are sourced—ranging from diving at night for abalone, killing of rhinos and hacking off their horns, through to digging up cycad plants. Sometimes those employed as cycad diggers were not told and were unaware what they were doing was illegal.

Poachers were almost all from marginalised communities with little access to alternative economic opportunities who often switched roles—from poaching to driving or concealing products as circumstances changed, displaying high levels of fluidity.

The lure of more money also encouraged those on the bottom rung of the criminal ladder to become involved further along the supply chain, recognising the increased financial rewards in these positions.

One of the offenders said: "I got involved in such a small little point and it just snowballed from there. I soon became responsible for recruiting drivers, procuring premises for storage and drying, and ensuring the safe delivery of the processed abalone to our Chinese buyers who control the export out of the country. The whole thing just perpetuated to the point that even now I am still not sure how it all hap-

pened."

Another offender said he had purchased a truck and installed scales so that they could weigh the abalone at a different location each time to avoid detection by law enforcement.

Out of divers' profits would come the cost of renting diving equipment and their share of the boat hire. One offender claimed that on average, divers earned between \$ 585 and \$ 1,170 per dive.

Several of those interviewed highlighted how trafficking was facilitated through the engagement of corrupt government and private sector individuals—bribery costs were written off as business transactions. According to one offender:

"I got my assistant to track one of the customs officials, and to find out what the official likes to do on weekends...where he likes to go and what he likes to do in his spare time. It just so happened that he liked to visit the casino each week...from there we used to give him credit vouchers for the casino so he can have some fun. After some time, we asked him to do us a favour in return. This favour was obviously to allow our consignment safe passage through the airport."

Co-author of the study from Traffic, Sade Moneron said: "The arrest of ground level offenders could potentially lead to the unravelling and disruption of illegal wildlife trade networks if these arrests are treated as the first step in a broader investigation to identify, arrest and prosecute the individuals further along the supply chain," said

Moneron added: "A better understanding of the difficulties experienced by law enforcement personnel in targeting the higher echelons of the illicit supply chain may help identification of applicable solutions and interventions to overcome these challenges."

Traffic's work with wildlife crime offenders in South Africa was funded by Arcadia—a charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin through support to the Reducing Trade Threats to Africa's wild species and ecosystems (ReTTA) project.



# 'Nigeria needs restructuring urgently'

By Special Correspondent

ONLY a few Nigerians have had the rare privilege of traversing the legal and political terrain with equal success, and still remain resolute and have great faith in the nation. Owelle George Uwechue SAN is one of such Nigerians; an avid legal practitioner, former Chairman of the esteemed Body of Benchers and Life Bench-er, and Mr Speaker Pro tempore of the House of Representatives in the Second Republic. Owelle Uwechue who turned 82 yesterday had a chat with Onikepo Braithwaite and Jude Igbanoi, explaining why he believes strongly that Nigeria is in dire need of urgent restructuring, and why he thinks the #ENDSARS protest was overdue.

Congratulations on the occasion of your 82nd birthday Sir. You have lived a very accomplished life, not only reaching the peak of your career as a Lawyer, being a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Life Bench-er and a former Chairman of the Body of Benchers, but also the Speaker of the House of Representatives in the 2nd Republic. How would you compare your role as Speaker and that of the House then, to what obtains now? Are you satisfied with the National Assembly today? If not, what measures can you suggest for improvement? Do you agree with the general complaint by Nigerians, that the salary structure of members is exorbitant and unjustifiable?

I thank you very much for your complementary messages on my 82nd birthday, and particularly, on my modest contributions to the development of the legal profession in Nigeria and in politics. I must hasten to point out, as shown in all my records and in particular, "Essays in my Honour", my Speakership of the House of Representatives was "MR SPEAKER PRO TEMPORIS". I attach a copy of the Votes and Proceeding of 1st National Assembly, 4th Session No. 43 of Wednesday, 23rd February, 1983.

The role of the Speaker then and now, has always been to preside judiciously over all matters before the House, devoid of partisan political considerations. Yes, I am satisfied with the National Assembly of today, the role of the National Assembly is derived from the Constitution for the good governance of the country.

The National Assembly has successfully passed most bills, without rancour over the



Nigeria former President Olusegun Obasanjo

years, notwithstanding their different political affiliations; this is a positive development. In that context, it will be unnecessary to suggest any measures for the improvement of the process which will involve the amendment of the Constitution.

The final part of your question that the general complaint by Nigerians is "that the salary structure of the National Assembly members is exorbitant and unjustifiable", must be viewed along with the very peculiar Nigerian circumstances. In this context, the general view is that the "Executive", both State and Federal, have failed to meet the basic needs of the people - such as electricity, water supply and employment for the teeming population. The legislators were elected by their con-situations, it is their duty to do whatever is in their power and legal, to provide for those who elected them.

Finally, on this point, "appropriation" is a matter within the full constitutional control of the National Assembly, by virtue of Section 59(4) of the 1999 Constitution. By virtue of which, a bill passed by two third majority of the joint meeting of the Senate and the House of Representatives "shall become law and the assent of the President shall not be required".

Indeed, the fact that since the Buhari Administration there has been no such case, is indisputable evidence that the National Assembly and the Executive are fully aware of their respective responsibilities and powers, in respect of appropriation.

What is your opinion about Restructuring? Does Nigeria really need it, or are we fine as we are now with the present arrangement and the 1999 Constitution? Is a peaceful devolution of powers from Nigeria's strong centre to the States or regions still possible at this level of our political evolution? Could this be the best alternative to outright breakup of the country?

I honestly believe that Nigeria needs restructuring, and urgently too. This is because notwithstanding one of the great legacies of our former President Olusegun Obasanjo, by the enactment of the Land Use Act, which is protected by Section 315(5)(d) of the Constitution, the successive Federal Governments have deliberately refused to abide by the provisions of that law. Section 1 of that Act vests "the ownership of all land comprised in the territory of a State in the Governor of the State; while Section 2 vests the management and control of all land within the Local Government Area Council.

In the circumstances anybody who purports or seeks to enter the territory of a State for any purpose whatsoever, without the consent or permit of the Governor of the State is a trespasser!! Those who argue that the action of the Federal Government and those to whom they give leases or interests in any part of the land in the State, wrongly rely on Section 44(3) of the Constitution, which vests "the entire property in and control of all minerals oils and natural gas and in, under or upon any land... shall vest in the Government of the Federation ... and shall be managed in such manner as may be prescribed by the National Assembly. Incidentally, Section 44(1) prohibits compulsory acquisition of any movable property or any interest in an immovable property shall be taking possession of compulsorily... except in the manner and for the purposes provided by law ... any attempt by the Federal Government to take possession of any part of the land by entering directly or through agents, is unconstitutional.

This issue of resource control and restructuring have been the subject of discussions by the Afenifere, the Ohaneze Ndi Igbo and the South South groups in recent times. Happily, as reported in the media a few days ago, a meeting was held between the South South Leaders with the Federal Government, in which the Special Assistant to the President, Professor Ibrahim Gambari received their demands, which we hope should be taken seriously by the Federal Government.

The other issue of the feasibility of a peaceful devolution of powers from Nigerian's strong centre to the States or regions, are among the matters the Federal Government is expected to consider as a matter of urgency.

The final issue of "outright break up the country", is unpatriotic; we should in-deed, urge for the expansion of ECOWAS, just as the Europeans who, after two devastating world wars formed the European Union.

The fallout of the #ENDSARS Protest, that is, the Lekki Tollgate incident, the looting and destruction of property, allegations and counter-allegations, especially the issue of blank and real bullets between the Army and Lai Mohammed on one hand and CNN on the other; what is your take on it all Sir?

This question is very pertinent because it is a current issue, not just affecting the Nigerian Government, but attracting reactions from the British Parliament and some for-

eign media, like CNN. There is no doubt that the protests have been long overdue. The actions of SARS/Police on our roads, constrained most elders like me to go by air whenever travel inevitable.

The protests were supported by all and sundry and on the 11th of October, 2020, the Inspector General of Police promptly abolished SARS and created SWAT, an alternative for the time being.

Nevertheless the protests continued, culminating in the incident at the Lekki toll gate on October 20th and the resultant looting and destruction of property. I believe that in spite of the indisputable right of the citizen to protest, such actions must be done within the limits of the law.

The other aspects of the question involving the looting and destruction of property, allegations and counter-allegations, especially the issue within blank and real bullets, between the Army and Lai Mohammed on one hand and CNN on the other hand, are matters now pending before the Lagos State Panel of Inquiry headed by Honourable Justice Doris Okuwobi, retired Judge of the Lagos State High Court. Until the conclusion of the proceedings, it would be inappropriate to comment further on this matter.

Does Nigeria produce too many Lawyers? Over 6,000 are called to the Bar every year. Also, the Nigerian Law School has been accused of producing too many 1st Class graduates. What are your views on this, with regard to legal education? Some are also complaining about the number of Senior Advocates that are to be conferred with the rank next month. Is there anything wrong with that? Many notable senior non-litigation Lawyers outside the Inner Bar who have made their indelible contributions to the development of the profession in Nigeria, have complained of being denied the coveted rank of SAN, which even Academics are conferred with. What can be done to address this imbalance?

## It's time to hold the state to account for xenophobic laws

By Kaajal Ramjathan-Keogh, Tim Fish Hodgson and Tanveer Jeewa

NOTWITHSTANDING the fact that the South African Constitution, like the Freedom Charter, says "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity" - clearly affording human rights protections to "everyone" - xenophobic violence and sentiment have haunted the country's constitutional democracy since inception.

The perception that non-citizens "do not belong" in South Africa or are "stealing" jobs from the country's citizenry challenges constitutional democracy at its core. Human Rights Watch's recent report, They've Robbed Me of My Life, which documents xenophobic violence in 2019, reveals that such violence was often fuelled by South African citizens' "blaming" non-citizens for "unemployment, crime [and] neglect by the government, among other things".

Xenophobic sentiment is widespread and not merely errant prejudice in some communities. As an incisive editorial in New Frame notes, both factions within the ruling ANC have "chosen to incite xenophobia to sustain consent for their authority". In several instances government officials have tried to mask their failure to eliminate poverty and eradicate inequality by adopting xenophobic rhetoric, scapegoating African non-citizens, and inciting xenophobic violence. In provinces where it has governed, the official opposition DA has also often adopted the same tack, with its leaders variously spreading misinformation and prejudice about non-citizens and even South African migrants.

Against this backdrop New Frame's editorial observes that the problem is severe enough that "banal rhetoric from liberal counter-elites about human rights will not solve this crisis". While this may be true, the rule of law and human rights-based condemnations of xenophobia are necessary for at least two key reasons.

First, xenophobic sentiment is often masked in the liberal language of the rule of law and human rights. Political elites commonly use the "illegality" or "criminality" of non-citizens as a veil for inciting xenophobia. Therefore, contesting their false claims precisely with "banal" human rights arguments is important.

Second, there is an emerging trend to garner support for xenophobic prejudice through the language of human rights and affirmative action. This is essentially what the Gauteng Township Economic Development Bill does. As we will show, this trend needs addressing on its own terms.

None of this discounts the core conclusions of the New Frame editorial: The ultimate solution will not be found in such elite discussions, but in popular opposition and organising against xenophobia, thereby reducing the political capital and appeal of such poisonous rhetoric.

### Xenophobia, the rule of law and human rights

Xenophobic sentiment in South Africa often revolves around two key, sometimes unarticulated, assumptions, both of which are false despite being accepted as universal truths.

The first is that one may accurately and lawfully identify people as "legal" or "illegal",



A general view of a spaza shop in Duduza during national lockdown on April 20, 2020 in Ekurhule. (File photo)

with "illegal" meaning "foreigner" and "legal" being "South African". In this view, legality is premised on the notion of citizenship, with citizens incorrectly understood to be the only people with the right to work and non-citizens unlawfully excluded by local governments from obtaining licences or permissions to to work.

The fallacy is that no one may be identified as "illegal" or "legal" because, as the courts have emphatically confirmed, "human dignity has no nationality". It is sheer nonsense to qualify fellow human beings as "illegal"; we are all equal before the law and enjoy equal protection of the law without discrimination. This is why the overwhelming majority of human rights protections in international and national law are available to everyone, as the Constitutional Court has confirmed. If a local government bylaw or a national law prohibits a non-citizen from making a living, it is that prohibition that is illegal. The Supreme Court of Appeal has made this abundantly clear:

"[I]f, because of circumstances, a refugee or asylum seeker is unable to obtain wage-earning employment and is on the brink of starvation, which brings with it humiliation and degradation, and that person can only sustain him- or herself by engaging in trade, that such a person ought to be able to rely on the constitutional right to dignity in order to advance a case for the granting of a license to trade as aforesaid. In fact, in those circumstances it would be the very antithesis of the very enlightened rights culture proclaimed by our Constitu-

tion for us... to condemn the [refugees and asylum seekers] to a life of humiliation and degradation. That I do not believe our Constitution ought to countenance."

Moreover, many non-citizens living in South Africa - as refugees or asylum seekers - are lawfully present and entitled to work under South African law in line with the country's commitments to the Refugee Convention.

The second false assumption is that there is a zero-sum game when it comes to employment of citizens and non-citizens. In the populist narrative, when a "foreigner" has a job this must be at the expense of a South African citizen. This view is bolstered by the Gauteng government's explanation for the need for the Bill: "The absence of [legal] enforcement has led to the flooding of township market by foreign-owned spaza shops and the mega shopping malls, both of which have led to the significant decline if not collapse of the township businesses owned by local business people."

But the available evidence does not support this assertion in the context of Gauteng or elsewhere. For example, in a detailed study the World Bank says "immigrants in South Africa had a positive impact on employment and wages for locals".

Similarly, a joint report of the International Labour Organisation and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development found that "the presence of new immigrants, who have been in South Africa for fewer than 10 years, appears to increase both the employment rate and the incomes of South

African-born workers".

Research in Gauteng is largely consistent with these findings. A survey of the Gauteng City-Region Observatory, for example, shows emphatically that migrant and South African businesses are interdependent. There is, for instance, significant evidence that migrant businesses employ large numbers of South Africans, often rent business premises from South Africans and frequently source goods from South African manufacturers and suppliers.

### Xenophobia and erasing non-citizens' blackness

Despite this evidence it remains remarkably easy for political elites to incite xenophobic sentiment and garner significant support for it. The Bill, an explicit attempt to exclude non-citizens from economic activity to purportedly benefit South African citizens, is a clear case of this type of political manoeuvring.

Local and international civil society organisations have repeatedly made the point that the Bill, wittingly or not, risks fanning the flames of xenophobic violence. The political momentum behind it seems unaffected by these criticisms, with the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Small Business Development calling it a "move in the right direction" and the National Executive appearing to support legislation of this nature.

The Bill exposes a potentially even deeper concern about its ideological basis. It explicitly defines "black people" and "black person" (the intended beneficiaries of the Bill) so as to explicitly include only African, Indian and coloured South African citizens by birth, descent and naturalisation. In doing so it makes it clear that its aim is not only to strip African non-citizens of their human rights, but also of their blackness.



## BUSINESS

GENEROSITY

## Winner of US \$1million Global Teacher Prize gives away half to 9 other finalists



Ranjitsinh Disale reacts after he won the \$1 million Global Teacher Prize at a virtual ceremony held at the Natural History Museum in London.

CRISIS

## Wealthy Kenyans sell posh vehicles amid Covid crisis

NAIROBI

Wealthy Kenyans have been racing to dispose of their high-end cars in the wake of Covid-19 economic hardships, online listing of vehicle sales shows.

Findings of a Tifa Research survey released on Wednesday show that 34.4 per cent of the 151,000 cars listed for sale on Cheki – a car selling website – are sports utility vehicles (SUVs) and four-wheel drive models that are associated with the rich and middle class Kenyans. The models include Toyota Prado, Toyota Harrier, Vanguard, Nissan X-Trail and the Subaru Forester that have high maintenance and fuel costs.

The rush to dispose of the fuel-guzzling models came in period when financial misery engulfed many people amid the economic fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions imposed to contain the spread of the virus. Workers have been hit with layoffs or unpaid leave and pay cuts for those retained, while a number of business people shut down amid a collapse in sales.

"We anticipate this is due to the high number of people wishing to sell SUVs and four-wheel drives because of the Covid-19 hardships. Remember that we are also seeing more listings of auctioneers in the papers due to loan defaults," Tifa Research CEO Maggie Ileri said on Wednesday. Station wagons are the second highest number of second-hand cars listed for sale on the websites at 19.5 per cent followed by hatchbacks (18.5 per cent) and saloon cars at 17.7 per cent.

Models under the Toyota brand dominate the Kenyan second-hand car market, controlling more than 80 per cent of market share, followed by the Nissan and Subaru brands. The high number of SUVs and four-wheel drives put up for sale coincides with a rise in loan defaults.

Workers and businesses have defaulted on loans worth Sh53.95 billion since the onset of the coronavirus restrictions in March, paving the way for blacklisting of thousands of borrowers with credit reference bureaus (CRBs) from January.

Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) data shows that non-performing loans (NPLs) rose to Sh403.9 billion in October, up from Sh349.9 billion at the end February – the sharpest eight-month increase in recent history.

The rise in defaulted credit has triggered a jump in property auction as banks move to seize assets from defaulters in a year when a majority of top lenders are expected to issue profit warning due to costs linked to bad loans.

About 1.72 million workers lost jobs in the three months to June when Kenya imposed a coronavirus-induced lockdown in selected counties that led to layoffs and pay cuts. The rise in the number of high-end car models put up for sale also comes amid plunging purchase orders due to reduced cash flow.

Kenyans faced with Covid-19-linked hardships have gone slow on luxury spending. New vehicle registrations dipped 33 per cent to 52,999 in the nine months to September from 79,078 in a similar period last year, data by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) shows.

But the cost of imported second-hand cars has jumped by up to 12 per cent or Sh500,000 per unit over the past three months, propped up by the weakening of the shilling to historic lows against the dollar. The shilling on Tuesday traded at Sh110.15 units to the US dollar from Sh106.4 in June and Sh102.3 in March – prompting the importers of items like cars, fuel, second-hand clothes and industrial machinery to pass the additional costs to consumers.



Tifa Research CEO Maggie Ileri.

BREAKTHROUGH

## Alcohol-free sanitiser can eliminate Covid-19 too, says new study

LONDON

Alcohol-free hand sanitiser has been found to be as effective as alcohol-based ones on surfaces in fighting Covid-19, according to a new study published in the *Journal of Hospital Infection*.

The study was conducted by Brigham Young University, where researchers tested samples of Covid-19

with benzalkonium chloride, which is commonly used in alcohol-free hand sanitisers and other quaternary ammonium compounds that are found in regular household disinfectants. The results showed that these disinfectants wipe out at least 99.9% of the virus within 15 seconds.

A game-changer  
As part of Covid-19 prevention guidelines, the World Health Organi-

zation recommended that people use alcohol-based hand rub product containing between 60% and 80% alcohol. The results of the new research can, however, be a game-changer, the study authors believe. "This may actually provide a change in government directions about hand sanitiser," said co-author Brad Berges in a press release.

"It just seems like during this pan-

demic, the non-alcohol-based hand sanitisers have been thrown by the wayside because the government was saying, 'We don't know that these work', due to the novelty of the virus and the unique lab conditions required to run tests on it."

Also effective against other viruses  
Previously, Health24 reported on how alcohol-based hand sanitisers have caused hand eczema

in healthcare workers and the general population. "Benzalkonium chloride can be used in much lower concentrations and does not cause the familiar 'burn' feeling you might know from using alcohol-based hand sanitiser.

"It can make life easier for people who have to sanitize their hands a lot, like healthcare workers, and maybe even increase compliance

with sanitising guidelines," said lead study author Benjamin Ogilvie.

"Our results indicate that alcohol-free hand sanitiser works just as well, so we could, maybe even should, be using it to control Covid," he said. Ogilvie added that the alcohol-free products do not only work for preventing Covid-19 but are also effective in fighting against the common cold and flu viruses.

LONDON

The winner of this year's \$1 million Global Teacher Prize has shared half of the prize money with nine other finalists. Ranjitsinh Disale of India was named the winner of the prestigious award for his work in improving the educational outcomes of young girls in remote schools.

The Global Teacher Prize is an annual award by the Varkey Foundation to a teacher who has made an outstanding contribution to the profession. This year's event was presented online by writer and comedian Stephen Fry from the National History Museum in London.

Organisers decided the prize would be rotated to other host countries on a yearly basis. More than 12,000 teachers from 140 countries were nominated for the prize this year, with the entrants whittled down to 10 finalists.

Mr Disale, who accepted the award over a livestream from India, was praised for his work to ensure disadvantaged girls went to school and achieved good results – rather than missing out on school and facing early marriage.

The foundation said Zilla Parishad Primary School – located in the village of Paritewadi in India's western state of Maharashtra – was a "dilapidated building, sandwiched between a cattle shed and a storeroom" when

Mr Disale arrived.

The teacher learnt the students' primary language, Kannada, and redesigned all the textbooks for better comprehension. Accepting the award, Mr Disale donated half of the \$1 million in prize money to the other nine finalists because "teachers always believe in sharing and giving."

"In this hard time, teachers are giving their best to make sure every student has access to their birthright of a good education," he said. "I receive this honour on behalf of millions and millions of students and teachers, all working hard during this time of Covid." Mr Disale said the work of teachers should never be undervalued. "Teachers are change-makers.

They change the lives of students all over the world," he said.

Mr Varkay said "by sharing the prize you teach the world the importance of giving." A special Covid Hero award went to Jamie Frost of the UK. Mr Frost was recognised for creating a free website that has downloadable resources for students.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the work of teachers around the world had made students' lives easier during the pandemic. "Your creativity and ingenuity has given hope and support to millions of children throughout the world," he said. "It's incredible how teachers have adapted to home learning and used technology to reach their students."

ACTIVISM

## Cameroonian migrant turns saviour of others

RABAT

Seven years ago, when Cameroon began experiencing inter-regional conflict, Armand Loughy, a 55-year old Cameroonian psychiatrist, strapped her youngest child on her back and with her five other children embarked on the dangerous Journey from Cameroon towards Rabat, Morocco's capital.

They fled the deteriorating security situation in Cameroon, looking for a better life. Loughy, who is now also a migrant activist based in Morocco, listened attentively to the on-going discussions during the opening ceremony of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) in Marrakech.

Her own experiences pushed her to campaign on migration issues, shifting from being a refugee herself to becoming an activist – one of the most vocal personalities in the Moroccan civil society space.

"We went through the desert and where the fear consumed us.

Many of my fellow migrants got hurt by bandits and died – in the most horrible way with their bodies dumped in the desert," Loughy recalls. After arriving in Morocco, she faced many difficulties in finding a job before finally securing work at a psychiatric clinic in Rabat.

With a well-paying job, Loughy could easily have forgotten her traumatic journey and suffering and moved on. But she chose not to – her decision to start helping migrants came at the right time as Morocco was also establishing favourable policies on how to handle migrants. This policy shift, according to Loughy, enabled her to become "a candle that would light up the darkness of migrants."

In 2014, she founded the Association of Women Migrants in Morocco, working to attract other migrants. Gradually, her association gained respect in the civil society space. "In the beginning, the children of the poor neighbourhood where I was active threw stones at me," Loughy says. "But after many months of continuous work, I be-

came familiar and respected by locals and migrants."

Her organisation is active in the Sidi Musa district of Salé – about 330 km north of Marrakech – where hundreds of migrants occupy small rooms, either working or begging on the streets, and then returning to the ghetto in the evening.

The children of these migrants, some of whom were born in Morocco, until recently had nothing to do. Some accompanied mothers to beg, others played in the neighbourhood all day without any clear future – a painful reality that Loughy and her organisation acted upon.

She presented a proposal to Salé's Regional Directorate of Education and Training, and her ideas were welcomed. Classrooms were allocated within the public educational institutions for migrants' children. These have now become independent departments with their own teaching staff, and now even teach local Moroccan students.

"We are trying to use education

as a tool for integration," Loughy says, adding the association is making a big drive to inform migrants about the importance of education to ensure as many children as possible are enrolled into school.

Many migrants, especially those who do not have residence documents, remain sceptical of these types of initiatives, Loughy says. But the hope is that better educated children of migrants can inspire change at home and between communities.

Loughy dreams of a united African continent and believes that the best way to achieve co-existence among the continent's peoples is through education and knowledge. After listening to discussions at the GCM about the tools and partnerships needed to give that dream a chance, she will leave Marrakech to return to spreading education among the children of Morocco's migrants. "We have learnt that when students start living together, then parents can also learn how to co-exist," Loughy says.



## CREATIVITY

# Wet paint: A social experiment in social distancing

JOHANNESBURG

Two top South African artists, Baba Tjeko, and Lauren Colin Mitchell (aka Curious Lauren), have partnered with Stella Artois to create an art installation that's as mischievous as it is masterful. Titled "Wet Paint," the artists' ambition is to bring the social distancing message to life in their unique artistic styles, based on the idea that social distancing does not mean anti-social.

In the experiment, eight, locally made, Houtlander Interdependence II benches have been installed in busy public spaces in and around Johannesburg. The two artists then painted murals directly onto the middle of the benches and then left "wet paint" signs, encouraging people to sit alongside yet apart from each other.

"I was inspired to create a beautiful and happy artwork that would draw people's attention and get them excited to sit next to it and practice social distancing. To me, social distancing means respect for human life. I'm not only protecting myself from being infected with Covid-19, but I'm doing the same for fellow human beings," says multi-disciplinary artist Baba

Tjeko.

Artist and designer, Tjeko portrays African ideas and perspectives through his Litema artwork, a form of Basotho mural art composed of decorative geometric patterns, mostly in black and white with hints of mainly blue, yellow and red in some pieces. In the installation, he used red as the dominant colour and chose to merge his signature patterns, lines and colours with symbols that include the chalice and star.

Speaking to the times we live in, art director, designer and illustrator Curious Lauren's style contrasts sometimes serious messages with a bright, bold and inviting execution style that is friendly and easy to consume, regardless of the juxtaposition.

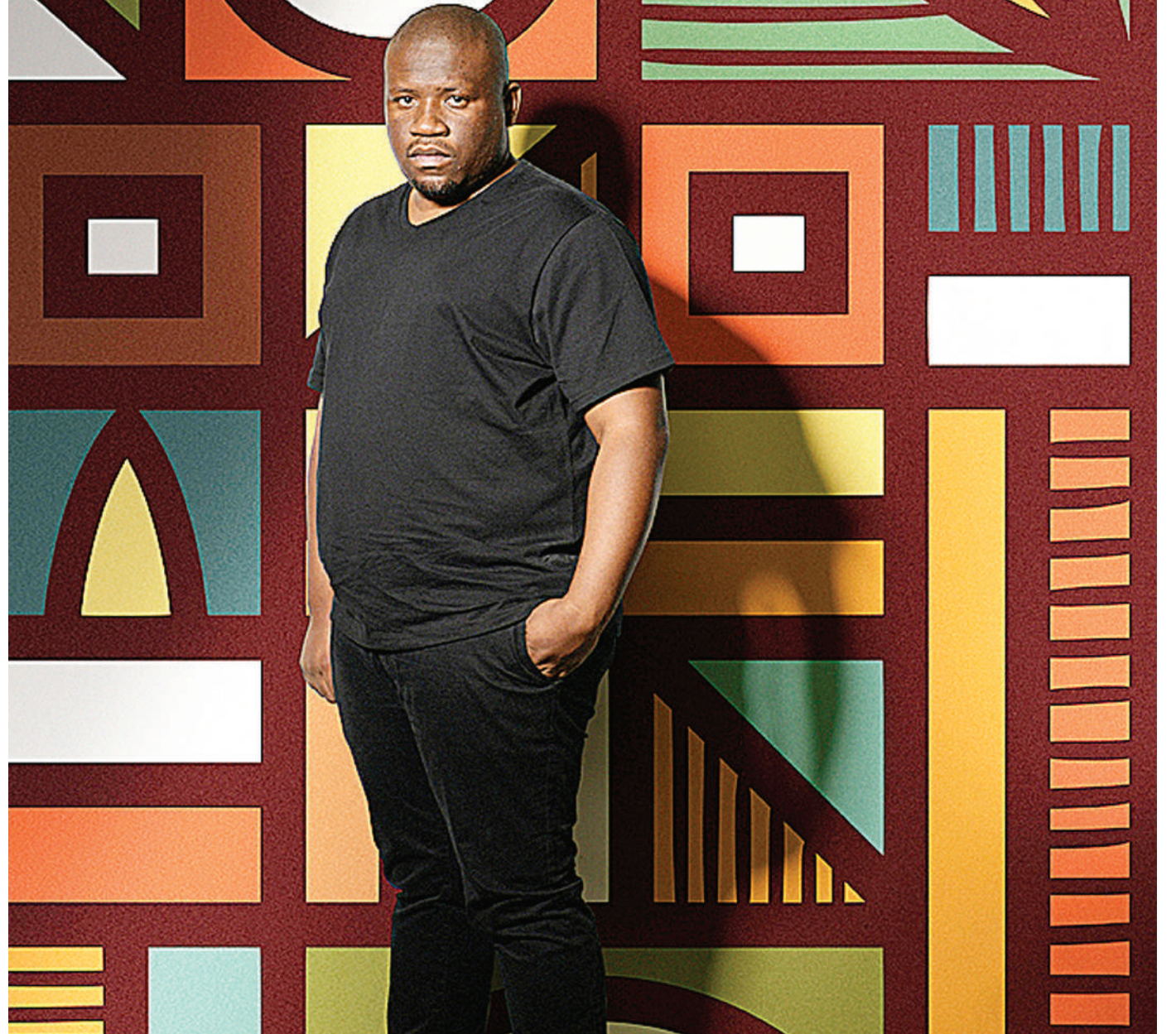
"I wanted to create something that would stand out, draw the viewer in and tell a smart and charming story. I was excited and a little nervous to see how people would interact with these pieces and have an aha moment. I do hope the artworks gave people a little smile under their masks that they carried with them throughout the rest of their day," says the JHB-based artist, whose work typically contains strong messages of empowerment, equality, self-

care and inclusivity.

The benches are in easy to spot locations around Gauteng, including Menlyn on Main in Pretoria, Mall of Africa Waterfall Park in Midrand and Sandton Gautrain forecourt. By leaving hand-written "wet paint" signs in place (long after the paint had in fact dried), the levels of social distancing compliance actually improved dramatically, as shown in a short film produced around the installation and reveal.

Says Marsha Kumire, Brand Director: High-End Africa: "The Wet Paint bench installations show us that social distancing doesn't have to be anti-social. The reality is that being over a pandemic does not mean it is over. As lockdown starts to ease, we need to be careful not to slip back into old habits too quickly. We wanted to propose that life is to be savoured when we come together, even if slightly apart."

As South Africa heads into the festive summer season and lockdown restrictions in the country continue to relax, initiatives like these might just help to keep us from slipping back into old social habits too quickly and, in so doing, play a small but significant role in preventing a second wave of infections.



South African artist, Baba Tjeko.

## UNIQUE

## Grandmother's opera comes home to Kenya

NAIROBI

Opera was something Rhoda Achieng-Ondeng was destined to do from the time she was seven years old when her Scottish school teacher spotted her vocal talent and sent her straight on stage with a song that this professional soprano still recalls.

Achieng-Ondeng also remembers the simple songs her maternal grandmother Nyanga would sing to her when as a child she would sit at the ancient storyteller's feet, listening as she told of how she had run away from home as a little girl, was found by Canadian missionaries who turned her humble life upside down.

It's the 'runaway' grandmother's story that Achieng-Ondeng first wrote down with a view to its becoming Kenya's second indigenous opera. The first was Ondieki the Fisherman composed by her former teacher of English Francis Chandler. "It was he that I

sought out once I decided Nyanga's story had to become an opera," says Achieng-Ondeng who has been a professional opera singer since she left the University of Oregon with two master's degrees in music.

She spoke to the Business Daily just before re-staging excerpts of the full opera, Nyanga: Runaway Grandmother last night in Lavington at her Baraka Opera Trust Performing Arts Centre, which she built since coming back to Kenya from Norway early this millennium. "We will perform another set of excerpts on December 8 in Kisumu County at the Ciala Resort," says Achieng-Ondeng, adding that Kisumu governor Anyang' Nyong'o invited her and the opera.

Surprisingly, this singer turned opera producer-director chose not to play the title role for several reasons. One is she wanted to bring together all of the elements required, from the orchestra and conductor (Kiggundu

Musoke, Director of Kampala Music School) to the vocal training of 40 singers (by Ciru James, also a professional musician) to all the other production details, which she's left with Michael James who, like Achieng-Ondeng, has been back and forth between Kenya and Europe for many years.

"Mike actually accompanied me on the piano when I sang at Starehe Boys. I was still a student at Limuru Girls," she says, who married Norwegian Ingvard Wilhelmsen and has lived abroad ever since. "But I've always come back to Kenya every year."

"I call myself a 'visionary' because I've always wanted to return and introduce Kenyans to opera," she says, knowing that opera seems alien, even elitist to many. "But that is why I want to demystify it so people can see opera as a vehicle for sharing Kenyans' stories." In this case, she says her opera is in English mixed with bits of Dholuo and Kiswahili.



Rhoda Ondeng Wilhelmsen is creator and producer of the opera 'Nyanga: Runaway Grandmother'.

Having auditioned many Kenyans for the show, she's found the vocal talents of young people tremendous. "Every character is cast with an understudy," she says, noting that Lyndie Shinyega is playing her grandmother with May Ombara as her understudy.

Serving as both opera

producer and director, Achieng-Ondeng has staged extracts of Nyanga twice already this month, once November 6 at her centre in Lavington and again November 8 when she involved award-winning writer Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor, to help her lead a programme on how "music

meets literature." "We practice social distancing during all our performances, but it's also helpful that thus far, they have all been outdoors," she adds.

Rhoda has previously kept a relatively low profile when she's been back in Kenya. Yet she still gets recognised for first prize performances that she gave during past Schools

Drama Festivals. It was in 2014 when she set up the Baraka Opera Trust now to begin to realise her dreams of bringing opera home to Kenya. December 8 will be a special occasion since 'Nyanga' will be part of the larger Kusi Festival, embracing representative artists from East and Central Africa.

## ENTERPRISING

## Inside Rwanda's first female cyclists centre

KIGALI

Roaming through Bugesera District, you'll notice many women who are casually doing something considered 'a man's thing' – riding a bicycle. A woman riding a bicycle, sometimes with a baby in her back, is a common sight here.

In the same district, a bicycle is one of the resources given to a couple to take to the new home before marriage. It is here that Serge Gasore, a former athlete, noticed the enthusiasm of cycling among women and opted to start a team of female cyclists; the

"Bugesera Women Cycling Team."

"Cycling has become a culture in this community, that is why I sought a way to turn that hobby into a development activity, especially for the women, because they are as capable as the men," Gasore tells The New Times.

Starting its operations in 2020, the team has grown to seven teenage girls and young women under the age of 20, though the development was disrupted by Covid-19's outbreak in mid-March. Early in the morning, the team



Members of Bugesera Women Cycling Team.

wakes up and starts cycling practices for kilometres, which increases depending on their schedule.

When we visited, the young cyclists were coming from Gako Military Training Camp to their school in Bugesera. It is a 24km journey that was carried out in less than three hours. According to their coach, Valerie Uwizeyimana, the team has developed from a ride of less than five to 90 kilometres.

"Yes! They can even ride from Bugesera to Muhanga (more than 100km) and end the race within seven hours.

However, most of them could not even walk five kilometres when they first came here," she comments. Divine Tumukunde, the 16-year-old captain of the team, recalls how she decided to join the team as a way to develop her talent.

"I realised I had cycling skills. I wanted to develop those skills and so I joined the team. They helped me practice a lot and I became the first runner-up in the district competition. This is the result of the practices we are given here," she explains. The whole team opts to live

at the campus where they carry out daily exercises, but the priority is education, according to Innocente Uwamahoro, the secretary general of the cycling home.

"Cycling is not our priority; our priority is education. The ladies are here to be educated, learn disciplinary values and later on, we move on to cycling, but it is not our first intention," she says. The same views are echoed by another teenager present at the campus, Claudine Tuyishimire, a 16-year-old senior three student.







## WORLD

## EU-UK trade deal hangs in the balance with four weeks to go

BRUSSELS/LONDON

BREXIT trade talks are in the difficult phase and a deal can only be struck if the European Union (EU) accepts that Britain is a sovereign nation, a British minister said yesterday after London indicated that the chance of a breakthrough was receding.

With less than four weeks left until the United Kingdom finally exits the EU's orbit on Dec 31, both sides are calling on the other to compromise over fishing, state aid and how to resolve any future disputes.

The two sides talked into late on Thursday to try to secure a deal, with an EU official saying an agreement was closer than ever but a UK government source warning chances for a breakthrough were receding.

"We are at a critical phase," Business Secretary Alok Sharma told Sky TV yesterday. "It is fair to say that we are in a difficult phase, there are some tricky issues still to be resolved."

"Right from the start of this process, we've always said that a deal can only be done if the EU recognizes that the UK is a sovereign independent nation," Sharma said. "It is on the basis of that a deal will be done."

In Brussels, European Council President Charles Michel stressed that any agreement that may emerge between negotiators must still be approved by the 27 member states.

Michel said the next few days will show

what comes next and the 27 leaders meeting remotely on Dec 10-11 will take a position on the latest developments. "We want a deal but not at any price," Michel said. "For the European Union ... the 'level playing field' is key."

French European Affairs Minister Clement Beaune said that if a good deal could not be reached, then France would veto it.

EU Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier is due to update 27 national envoys to the bloc's hub later in the day on the latest in the talks.

A member of Barnier's team said on Thursday that significant gaps remained on the three most contentious issues and that the final outcome was still uncertain.

"The long and the short story is that talks are continuing in London. Significant divergences remain," Stefaan de Rynck said at a seminar in the Belgian capital. "Both sides are working hard to overcome them but the outcome is uncertain." He likened the negotiations to a marathon and said the sides were "probably past kilometer 40" of the just over 42-kilometer race.

Late on Thursday, after a day of mostly silence, the British government said: "At the eleventh hour, the EU is bringing new elements into the negotiation. A breakthrough is still possible in the next few days but that prospect is receding."

An EU official dismissed that as last-minute rhetoric aimed at winning concessions. While



European Council President Charles Michel

the person agreed an agreement was "closer than ever", they admitted it was still not clear if there would be one at all.

## Missed deadlines

EU sources said discussions centered around the so-called level playing field on state aid and fixing future minimum labour and environmental standards, as well as what "effective remedies" each side could take if the other let them slip.

The two are trying to agree rules to govern nearly US\$1 trillion in annual trade after Britain leaves the EU's orbit on Dec 31. But the three main sticking points have never really shifted, on agreeing fishing rights in UK waters, ensuring fair competition for companies and ways to solve future disputes.

An EU diplomat who declined to be identified said earlier on Thursday the bloc's negotiators had moved to "within millimeters" of the limits of their negotiating mandate.

"We've reached a point where we are so close to the limits of our mandate that we need a movement on the side of the UK if we want to strike a deal," the envoy said.

After many missed deadlines, there was no guarantee that Barnier and his UK counterpart, David Frost, would resolve those differences and seal a deal, which would still need the approval of the 27 EU states, as well as the European Parliament.

Agencies

## Ethiopian Jews flown to Israel amid Tigray conflict

TELAVIV

HUNDREDS of Ethiopian Jews on Thursday airlifted to Israel - the first of several thousand waiting to emigrate there in a long-running saga.

It comes weeks after Israel announced plans to do so, after failing to implement a previous pledge to take in the community.

The immigrants are related to Ethiopian Jews brought to Israel decades ago in a series of secret operations.

But questions over their eligibility to settle in Israel held up the process.

The issue gained greater urgency in recent weeks as fighting between the Ethiopian

government and local forces in the Tigray region threatened to spread south to Gondar city, where most of the Jewish community are in transit camps.

Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his political rival, Alternate Prime Minister Benny Gantz, greeted the 316 new arrivals at Ben Gurion Airport.

"My wife Sarah and I stood there with tears in our eyes at the welcoming," Netanyahu said in a statement, "when we see the immigrants, our Ethiopian Jewish brothers, leave the plane... come down and touch the ground, the land of Israel.

"You waited so long to realise the dream and today it is being realised."

Immigration Minister Pinna Tamano-Shata - herself an Ethiopian-born immigrant brought to Israel in a clandestine airlift in 1984 - went to Ethiopia to oversee yesterday's transfer, dubbed Operation Rock of Israel.

The community, known as Falash Mura, are descendants of Jews who converted to Christianity - many under duress - in the late 19th Century. In recent decades they have identified as Jewish again, living their lives in accordance with the faith.

However, unlike the Ethiopian Jewish community - known as the Beta Israel - previously evacuated to Israel, Falash Mura do not fulfil the criteria

for automatic right to Israeli citizenship due to uncertainties over their ancestral lineage according to Jewish law.

The issue dragged on for years, until the government pledged in 2015 to transfer the whole community by the end of 2020.

Although 16,600 Falash Mura have applied to emigrate to Israel, its interior ministry said this week, until now only 2,000 of those who qualified had been brought. The pace of the process has led campaigners to accuse the government of renegeing on its promise.

About 100 more are expected to arrive on Friday, and the government says another approximately 1,700 will follow

by the end of January 2021.

Ethiopian Jews were first brought to Israel from refugee camps in Sudan in a series of secret operations in the early 1980s by Israel's Mossad intelligence agency on the orders of the then Prime Minister Menachem Begin.

Further operations followed, concluding with a mass airlift from Ethiopia in 1991.

The Ethiopian Jews' integration in Israel has been challenging, with the community suffering disproportionately high levels of unemployment and poverty as well as discrimination, although their situation has shown signs of improvement in recent years.

Agencies

## Stable China-US ties essential for post-virus world - Envoy

SOUND and stable China-US relations are essential for the post-pandemic world, Chinese Ambassador to the United States Cui Tiankai said on Thursday.

"It is clear that the post-pandemic world would not be stable and global governance would not be effective without sound and stable relations between China and the US," Cui (pictured) said in his opening remarks at the annual conference of the Institute for China-America Studies (ICAS).

This has been a very unusual year, probably a turning point in history, the ambassador said, underlining pressing priorities to overcome the pandemic, restore global economic growth and protect people's livelihood.

"We are about to enter the third decade of the 21st century. There are unprecedented needs for bilateral and global cooperation: public health, climate change, a more inclusive and equitable process of globalization, advancement of science and technology that will improve the life of more people in more places, etc," he said.

He stressed that all those challenges called for enhanced international cooperation, including China and the US working with each other in particular instead of decoupling from each other.

Therefore, it is time for reflection on the consequential relationship between China and the United States as the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted



major challenges that the world has to tackle together for a better future.

Dismissing so-called failures of the past, Cui said that the development of China-US relations since Henry Kissinger's first visit almost 50 years ago has brought tremendous benefits to the two countries and the whole world.

"Our reflection is necessari-

tated by the fast and complex changes in the world, which present us with great opportunities as well as high risks. We have to have a shared vision for the future and make the right choice. We owe it to the people of both countries and the global community to keep the relations on a constructive track towards agreed goals," he said.

"For China, the choice is clear. China and the US stand to gain from cooperation and lose from confrontation. Cooperation is the only right choice for both countries," he added.

As Chinese President Xi Jinping stated in his message of congratulations to US President-elect Joe Biden, Cui said the Chinese side stands ready to work with the US side in the

spirit of non-conflict, non-confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation, focus on cooperation, manage differences, advance the healthy and stable development of China-US ties, and join hands with other countries and the international community to promote the noble cause of world peace and development.

"There are always differences between the two countries. Many of them are part of the diversity of the world. None of them justifies confrontation and war, cold or hot," he said.

"With sufficient mutual respect and mutual understanding, we are capable of managing these differences so that they would not derail the entire relationship," Cui added. *Xinhua*

## Global resolve on Palestine urged

By Liu Yinmeng in Los Angeles

THE Chinese ambassador to the United Nations on Wednesday stressed Beijing's support for a lasting peaceful solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict and called for the international community to find a just and early solution to the Palestinian issue.

"The Palestinian issue, as a root problem in the Middle East, bears on regional peace, international justice and human conscience," said Zhang Jun, China's permanent representative to the UN, at a plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly's 75th session.

The ambassador also highlighted President Xi Jinping's congratulatory message at Tuesday's annual International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which reiterated China's firm support for the "just cause of the Palestinian people to restore their legitimate national rights as well as all efforts conducive to the peaceful settlement of the Palestinian issue".

Zhang pointed out that the international community should adhere to the right direction of the two-state solution, which is a framework supported by the UN that calls for Israelis and Palestinians to live side by side in peace and security, based on the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as the capital of both states.

The relevant UN resolutions, the "land for peace" principle and the two-state solution have galvanized the wisdom and the painstaking efforts of generations of peace-makers and are important milestones in the Middle East peace process, he said.

"Moreover, they are the basis for solving the Palestinian question and should be abided by and implemented," Zhang added.

The ambassador called on Palestine and Israel to remain committed to the strategic option of peace talks and seek an early solution to the issue of the Occupied Palestinian Territory pursuant to the relevant UN resolutions and demarcate the final borders between Palestine and Israel through peaceful negotiations.

"Both sides should refrain from any actions that might fuel tensions or conflicts," Zhang said.

The envoy also expressed hope that the international community will achieve greater synergies to promote peace talks. The Palestinian issue should not be marginalized, he said. Instead, it should be placed on top of the international agenda.

## Objectivity, fairness

In addition, the countries holding sway over both Israel and Palestine, in particular, should uphold the position of objectivity and fairness, and promote the Middle East peace process in sincerity and good faith, Zhang said.

In seeking any solution to the Palestinian issue, regional countries, especially the State of Palestine, should have a say, said Zhang, adding that "the concerns of all parties should be accommodated, and there should be no bearing down".

The ambassador said China welcomes Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' proposal for the convening of an international peace conference early next year in the hope that the international community will join hands in creating favorable conditions for the solution of the Palestinian question.

While facilitating the peace process, the international community should effectively assist Palestine in achieving socioeconomic development and support the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, or UNRWA, the envoy said.

He said the current focus should be on helping the Palestinian people combat the COVID-19 pandemic and achieve economic recovery.

This year, China has provided multiple batches of supplies, deployed teams of medical experts, and made contributions to the UNRWA. Through the agency, China has also provided Palestine, and the Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, with personal protective supplies.

"China, as a sincere friend of the Palestinian people, has always put its heart into the Middle East peace process. China will continue to make unremitting efforts to safeguard international equity and justice and promote peace and stability in the Middle East region," Zhang said.

Agencies



A Palestinian demonstrator uses a slingshot to hurl stones toward Israeli security forces during clashes with them following a weekly demonstration in the occupied West Bank village of Kfar Qaddum, on Nov 13, 2020. (AFP)

## China solicits public opinion for new five-year plan

INTERNET user Yunfan would never have imagined that he could one day contribute to the proposals for formulating the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) for National Economic and Social Development.

Chinese President Xi Jinping this year underlined the need to combine top-level design and public opinions in compiling the 14th Five-Year Plan, encouraging people from all sectors of society to give advice on the new policy blueprint for the next five years.

A few months ago, a new section was simultaneously launched on the official websites and applications of People's

Daily, Xinhua News Agency, and China Central Television, to solicit public opinions on the making of the 14th Five-Year Plan.

It's the first time for China to collect opinions and suggestions from the society online for the making of a Five-Year Plan.

Yunfan suggested that rural vitalization start from "mutual elderly care" mode in the countryside, which could not only offer sound services for the left-behind seniors, but also assure their children working out-of-town.

He proposed that the government build free public cafeterias and dormitories at

rural population clusters, so that seniors can live together. Thus, the younger ones can take care of the older, and a mutual care system can be formed, he explained.

Yunfan's suggestion was soon delivered to the drafting office of the 14th Five-Year Plan and received high attention.

After comprehensive studies, the plan took "responding to population aging" as an individual strategy, and the "mutual care" mode is also formally written into the document as a response to people's expectation for the issue of elderly care.

Yunfan's story is just a miniature of the efforts made by the Communist Party of China (CPC) to govern for the people,

carry forward democracy, and respect the will of the people.

It took around 200 days to make the draft of the 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development.

Livelihood, social governance, economic development, ecological environment, Party construction, and rural vitalization were the fields that concerned most of the people.

The scope, participation and forms of the opinion soliciting were all unprecedented.

People's Daily

**Chinese President Xi Jinping this year underlined the need to combine top-level design and public opinions in compiling the 14th Five-Year Plan, encouraging people from all sectors of society to give advice on the new policy blueprint**



## Vatican, US always differed in views and approaches, says Holy See envoy

### VATICAN



VATICAN considers its relations with the US good and reliable, although the Holy See always had certain disagreements with Washington, Vatican Secretary for Relations with States Paul Richard Gallagher said in an interview for TASS.

"One could say that the relations of the Holy See and the United States of America are good and strong since their establishment in 1984.

There have always been contact points with different administrations - be it Republicans or Democrats - as well as certain differences in views and approaches.

There are no doubts that the protection of human rights and religious freedoms is a priority both for the Holy See and the US. But our approaches to this matter differ somewhat," the archbishop said.

He underscored that the Holy See and the Roman Catholic Church avoid any politicization and ideologization of such an important topic.

"We had an open, friendly and constructive dialogue with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on this issue. Peace, human dignity, value of every life, human rights, and, in particular, religious freedoms have always been in the focus of the Holy See diplomacy.

And we had an opportunity to confirm that to Pompeo, as well as to remind [Washington] that the Pope, various dicasteries of the Holy See and institutions of the Roman Catholic Church fight on the front lines and protect the religious freedoms," Gallagher said.

Mike Pompeo visited Vatican two months ago. At that time, after the secretary of state published an article, in which he criticized Vatican's policy course to interact with China, including in appointing bishops, some believed that the relations between Washington and the Holy See had escalated.

Speaking about China, Gallagher noted that Vatican considers the agreement a step towards the improvement of the situation with the freedom of religion.

"In relation to China, the Holy See believes in the logic of direct dialogue and small steps. Our agreement serves to improve the situation with the freedom of religion. We know that a lot of things could still be improved, but one cannot deny that this agreement yielded good results," Vatican's envoy said.

In August 2019, the Chinese authorities approved the candidacy of the head of an eparchy on its territory - for the first time since signing an agreement with Vatican. Before that, the Catholic Church in China appointed bishops on its own, without consulting with the Pope. In October, the term of this agreement, effective "on an experimental basis" was extended.

### Agencies

## Russian health minister condemns attempts of politicising COVID-19 pandemic

### UNITED NATIONS

RUSSIA condemns all attempts of some countries' to politicize COVID-19 pandemic, including the issue of the vaccination against the disease, Russian Health Minister Mikhail Murashko said addressing the UN General Assembly's session.

"We condemn intentions of a number of countries as well as of some organizations to politicize COVID-19 pandemic in regard to a host of issues, including the population's vaccination."

"Russia is taking an active part in the international efforts on the fight against COVID-19 at all levels, including our help to pandemic-hit countries both at the bilateral and multilateral formats," he said.

On August 11, Russia registered the world's first vaccine against the novel coronavirus. The vaccine, dubbed Sputnik V, was developed by the Gamaleya National Research Center for Epidemiology and Microbiology of the Russian Health Ministry, and its clinical trials were successfully completed in June-July.

The Russian health ministry said on August 15 that production of the vaccine had been launched. The third, post-registration, stage of clinical tests began in Moscow on September 7. Volunteers were inoculated with the first dose of the vaccine on September. As many as 40,000 people are involved in the trials, with 10,000 of them being inoculated with a placebo.

According to the interim test results, the vaccine's efficiency exceeds 95% on the 42nd day after inoculation with the first dose in case the patient received the second dose as well.

Orders for more than 1.2 billion doses of the Sputnik V vaccine have come from more than 50 countries. International partners of the Russian Direct Investment Fund in India, Brazil, China, South Korea and other countries will manufacture the vaccine for exports.

Two domestically-developed anti-coronavirus vaccines have been registered in Russia. One of them, Sputnik V, was developed by the Gamaleya National Research Center for Epidemiology and Microbiology of the Russian Health Ministry, the other one, EpiVaccorona, was developed by the Vector Center.

Another one, developed by the Chumakov Federal Scientific Center for Research and Development of Immune and Biological Products is expected to be registered soon.



Russian Health Minister Mikhail Murashko

## Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC build stronger China-Africa community

ADDRESS by H.E. Song Tao, Minister of the International Department, CPC Central Committee at the China-Africa Online Briefing on the Fifth Plenary Session of the Nineteenth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China  
17 NOVEMBER 2020

Distinguished leaders from African political parties, Friends from think tanks and the media, Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee (IDCPC), I would like to extend my warm welcome to all of you for attending the China-Africa Online Briefing on the Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee and my sincere greetings to all the friends old and new.

The recent Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee held successfully in Beijing is an important meeting of overarching and historic significance. As the functional department in charge of the CPC's external work, the IDCPC hosts this online briefing to help major political parties and organisations from Sub-Saharan Africa better understand the content and implications of the Fifth Plenary Session. This online briefing is a new pioneering initiative for experience-sharing between the CPC and African political parties on state governance as our normal exchanges have been impeded by the raging of COVID-19. It therefore is very significant in helping us further strengthen our strategic communication, exchange practices and experience, deepen cooperation with solidarity and work together to build an even stronger China-Africa community with a shared future.

The Fifth Plenary Session, which was convened at an extraordinary timing with far-reaching impact, has attracted worldwide attention. Domestically, China stands at a historical juncture when it is about to accomplish the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects and embark on a new journey to fully build itself into a modern socialist country. On the one hand, China is well-positioned and well-equipped to continue its development. On the other hand, it still confronts the outstanding challenge of unbalanced and inadequate development and is shouldered with arduous tasks on balancing reform, development and stability. Internationally, the once-in-a-century changes the world is undergoing have quickened its steps of evolution. With COVID-19 exerting an extensive impact, the world has sailed into a territory of volatility and transformation. In this sense, the Fifth Plenary Session has not only shed new light on China's future development, but will also promote common development of all countries and bring more positive energy to the international community.

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Friends,

The most important outcome of the Fifth Plenary Session is the adoption of The Proposals of the CPC Central Committee Regarding the Formulation of the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) for National Economic and Social Development and the 2035 Long-Range Objectives, which sets out the guiding principles, major objectives, key tasks, and major measures for China's development during the 14th Five-Year Plan (FYP) period and envisages the long-range objectives of basically realising socialist modernisation by 2035, thus serving as a guide to action for China's economic and social development over the next five years and beyond. I would like to share with you the outcomes of this Plenary Session from five aspects.

First, new development achievements speak volumes about the unique features of the Chinese system. The Plenary Session highlighted China's decisive achievements in delivering moderate prosperity in all respects. During the 13th FYP period, under the strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, the advantages of leadership of the Party and the socialist system have become more prominent as shown in the new strides made in China's economic, scientific and composite national strength. By the end of this year, China's GDP is set to exceed RMB 100 trillion yuan, and all the goals concerning people's livelihood will have been achieved. A total of 55.75 million poor population living in rural areas will be lifted out of poverty. The issue of absolute poverty, which has beset China for millennia, will have been resolved once and for all. The CPC's practice has proven that sound guiding principles must be combined with true understanding of the national conditions, people's fundamental interests, historic and cultural traditions, and the call of the times. Only in this way can a ruling party translate its blueprint into reality. The Chinese system guarantees the above-mentioned factors. It can serve as a reference to all developing countries including African countries in their pursuit of independent progress.

Second, the new development stage implies the new historic juncture China now stands. The CPC spares no effort in analysing opportunities and challenges before making decisions. With in-depth analysis of the profound and complex changes facing China's development, the Fifth Plenary Session pointed out that at present and for some time in the future, China's development still faces strategic opportunities but there are and will be new developments in both opportunities and challenges. The Plenary Session thus declared that China will enter a new development stage in the 14th FYP period, when the country will start to strive for the realisation of its second centenary goal of building China into a modern socialist country by the 100th centennial of the People's Republic of China. This period is also a crucial stage for the country to uphold and improve the socialist system with Chinese characteristics and continue to modernise China's system and capacity for governance. We are convinced that under the leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, we will, by seizing critical opportunities vital for the future amidst crises and opening up new prospects amidst changes, maintain rapid economic development and long-term social stability, and thus achieve our set development goals.



Song Tao, Minister of the International Department, CPC Central Committee

Third, the new development philosophy points out the direction for China's high quality development. Development philosophy provides guidance to development actions. As early as in the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, the Party proposed to pursue the vision of innovative, coordinated, green, and open development that is for everyone. This Plenary Session further articulated that the new development vision should be upheld throughout the whole process of development and across all sectors. Efforts must be made to promote transformation in quality, in efficiency and in growth drivers so as to achieve development with higher quality, greater efficiency, more sustainability and more security. The new development vision has chartered the course for high quality development of China by answering the key question of what kind of development China should pursue in the new era and how to achieve it.

Fourth, new development goals constitute a grand blueprint for China's future progress. The Fifth Plenary Session identified two sets of goals for China's development. The near-term goals for the 14th FYP period, or six "new's in short, include new results in economic development, new strides in reform and opening-up, new improvement in social etiquette and civility, new progress in building an ecological civilisation, new heights in people's wellbeing, and new levels of efficacy in state governance. There are also nine long-range strategic objectives set to be attained by 2035, which are not only visionary and systematic but also down-to-earth and well-targeted. They constitute a blueprint for China's development over the next 15 years and is a consistent strategy to be carried out by generations. It shows that the approach by our party to govern the nation through FYP formulation and implementation has become more systematic, holistic and well-coordinated. It also better responds to the call of the times, respects underlying laws and demonstrates greater creativity.

Fifth, the new development paradigm identifies the strategic priority for the 14th FYP period. The Plenary Session made a major arrangement of formulating a new development paradigm with domestic circulation as the mainstay and domestic and international circulations reinforcing each other. This strategic decision is a natural choice in order to meet the demand of the new development stage that China is now in and to shape our new edge in international cooperation and competition. I would like to reiterate to our African friends that the new development paradigm emphasises both domestic and international circulations, not China's domestic circulation alone. This new paradigm, in no way, implies any backtracking of China's opening-up policy. On the contrary, we will participate in the international circulation in a more in-depth manner, boost higher-quality opening-up, and further expand market access to foreign companies. Meanwhile, the scale of China's foreign trade, use of FDI and outbound investment will continue to grow. This new paradigm will not only improve China's economic resilience but also drive the international economic circulation, enhance the reinforcement of domestic and international circulations, and bring new development opportunity to African countries.

Ladies and gentlemen,  
Friends,

The Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee not only provides strong driving force for China's growth, but will also boost the confidence of all countries in the global economic recovery, and provide more growth opportunities for African countries.

First, China's commitment to expanding opening-up will provide greater market opportunities for Africa. China has a population of 1.4 billion and a middle-income group of over 400 million. The huge China market is considered the most promising in the world. In the first half of this year, China-Africa trade registered US \$2.4 billion dollars and China's investment in Africa stood at US 1.72 billion dollars, an increase of 1.7% against all odds. During the 14th FYP period, China will steadfastly expand all-round opening up, strengthen cooperation with Africa and support the building of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area so as to provide more market opportunities for African countries.

Second, China's commitment to enhancing innovation will provide greater cooperation opportunities for Africa. As General Secretary Xi Jinping has pointed out, high-quality development must be the key word for China's economic and social development during the 14th FYP period and innovation must be put at the core position of China's modernisation endeavours.

As some experts predict, the development of new infrastructure projects alone will bring about RMB 30 trillion yuan of investment. It can be expected that with new technologies, new industries, new models, and new forms of business and an enabling environment for innovation, China will offer to Africa more cooperation opportunities and assist Africa to develop high added-value economy.

Third, China's commitment to participating in global governance will create a favourable environment for the development of African countries. As a major growth engine of the world economy and an important force for human progress, China, together with Africa, will continue to hold high the banner of peace, development and win-win cooperation, adhere to the principle of extensive consultation and contribution for shared results, actively participate in the development and reform of the global governance system, jointly respond to global challenges, and promote international anti-epidemic cooperation and public health governance, so as to build a better world that enjoys lasting peace and common prosperity.

Ladies and gentlemen,  
Friends,

Over the years, the CPC and political parties in Africa have played an important role in shaping domestic and foreign policies as well as in promoting social development of our respective countries. In the wake of the outbreak of COVID-19, the CPC together with 45 political parties from 36 African countries issued a joint open letter calling for closer international cooperation against the virus, which has played an important role in garnering people's support and pooling people's strength to fight jointly against COVID-19. In the face of major changes unseen in a century compounded by the pandemic, we should, more than ever, deepen solidarity and cooperation to build a China-Africa community with a shared future. To this end, I would like to make three proposals.

First, we should promote win-win results for China-Africa practical cooperation. Since the beginning of this year, President Xi Jinping has held phone conversations with 7 African leaders, jointly hosted the Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity Against COVID-19, and sent a joint congratulatory message to the 20th anniversary of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) together with Mr. Macky Sall, President of Senegal and Co-chair of FOCAC, thus charting the course for the future development of China-Africa relations. It's imperative for the CPC and African political parties to implement consensus reached by leaders of the two sides, and dovetail China's 14th FYP and 2035 Long-range Objectives with the AU's Agenda 2063 and development strategies of African countries. We should identify the direction, tasks and measures of China-Africa practical cooperation. The CPC and political parties in Africa should encourage and support exchanges and cooperation among their think tanks and media outlets, and promote people-to-people exchanges so as to consolidate social basis for our practical cooperation.

Second, we should strengthen

mutual learning for further exchanges on governance. The CPC and political parties in Africa have similar ideals and a fine tradition of mutual learning. Since the beginning of this year, we have been exploring new models of inter-party exchanges with African political parties in the context of COVID-19. Together, we hosted several webinars on topics including pursuing parallel progress in epidemic prevention and economic development, which have achieved good results. The third volume of Xi Jinping: the Governance of China presents a vivid account of the theories and practices of General Secretary Xi Jinping on the governance of China since the 19th CPC National Congress. We stand ready to share with African political parties our ideas and experience on governance, and draw from the useful experience of fraternal parties of Africa.

Third, we should seek common ground while shelving differences to build an even stronger China-Africa community with a shared future. As General Secretary Xi Jinping has pointed out, a system that is rooted in and nurtured by the soil of its country is most reliable and feasible. There is no such a one-size-fits-all approach for countries to follow when making national economic and social development plans or choosing development paths, as they are directly related to the national conditions, cultural traditions and system of the specific country. China's is the modernisation with Chinese characteristics, the modernisation of a country with 1.4 billion people, and the modernisation that features common prosperity. The CPC stays committed to embracing the achievements of other cultures with an open mind and a broad perspective. It calls for, out of the appreciation of diversity of the world, respecting the independent choices of development paths and models made by countries. We will further step up exchanges and cooperation with African political parties in pursuit of a new type of party-to-party relations that seeks to expand common ground while reserving differences and enhances mutual respect and mutual learning. We seek to promote mutual understanding and trust among countries, political parties and peoples, with a view to building an even stronger China-Africa community with a shared future.

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Friends,

There is an African proverb that goes, "One single pillar is not sufficient to build a house." We in China have a similar saying that reads, "The going is difficult when doing it alone; the going is made easier when doing it with many others." Under current circumstances, it is more imperative for political parties, think tanks and media outlets in China and Africa to come together, resolve difficulties through cooperation, explore new opportunities through crises, and create a greater future for China, Africa and the whole of humanity.

Thank you.





Prominent Tanzanian artiste, Emmanuel Elibariki, nicknamed 'Naywa Mitego'.

## Govt vouches for artistes' involvement in pronouncements on tracks' ban

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

THE Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information, Culture, Arts and Sports, Hassan Abbas, has called for artistes' involvement in the ruling on the latter's tracks' ban.

Abbas disclosed the artistes should first be summoned to table explanations before the pronouncements on the ban, given the move aims at helping them operate professionally, instead of punishing them.

Abbas made the remarks in Dar es Salaam mid this week when he met film and theater artistes.

The event was attended by the Executive Secretary of the National Arts Council (BASATA), Godfrey Mwingereza, and the Executive Secretary of Tanzania Film Board, Kiagho Kilonzo.

Abbas, who is also the government spokesman, said they would not like to see artistes' tracks face ban without the artistes' involvement in the pronouncement.

"Artistes are great people, they should not be taken lightly, including banning their works without informing them, they have gone to locations and spent a lot of money to prepare videos for their songs and shooting scenes for their films, then an official wakes up in the morning, calls reporters and announce ban on some of the works, this is unacceptable," he said.

Abbas pointed out it is good for the relevant institutions to call the artistes, notify the latter of their mistakes and at the end of the day the former can arrange for the artistes' works to be viewed by the audience at a certain time.

He disclosed his meeting centered on getting comments from the artistes, including the domestic film industry's members, to look at how to promote the industry so that it can move achieve success.

According to Abbas, the film industry can promote its members the same way the industry does to its members in successful countries which include United States, India and Nigeria.

The government spokesman moreover directs the domestic film industry's members to take their grievances to the appropriate place instead of going to people, who cannot support them.

A section of the domestic film industry's members stated there is a need for the federations, which administer the former, to fully cooperate with them.

Sunday Temba, a domestic actor, stated there is a need for the industry's members to regularly be educated on various issues, which include how the members should live in a dignified manner, express themselves in public and know what to answer and not respond to in public.

## TPC seeks people with disabilities' effective involvement in sports

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

AS the world on Thursday commemorated the International Day for Persons With Disabilities, Tanzania Paralympic Committee (TPC) has lamented that more needs to be done to see many people with disabilities involved in sports.

Gwakisa Mwakabete, TPC chairman, said sports are extremely important to all people, especially people with disabilities, as sports are one of the ways for realizing the latter's inclusion.

He said the uniqueness of sports is their ability to transcend linguistic, cultural and social barriers, thus making them an excellent platform for strategies of inclusion and adaptation.

In Tanzania, athletes with disabilities are involved in powerlifting, basketball, wheelchair tennis, amputee football, sitting volleyball, para swimming and other sporting activities.

Mwakabete stated there is a need for more awareness to the society, policy makers and the media on the importance of sports among people with disabilities.

"The universal popularity of sports and their physical, social and economic development benefits make them an ideal tool for fostering the inclusion and well-being of persons with disabilities," he noted.

"TPC feels there is a need for awareness to the society, the government and the media on



Sports Development Officer from the National Sports Council, Miliide Mahona (standing 2nd R), poses for photo with members of an amputee soccer club, known as LSL, after the outfit had won the Dar es Salaam regional amputee soccer league's curtain raiser, which took place in the city recently. The LSL cruised to victory over Balmun outfit in the match. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

the importance of sports among people with disabilities," he said.

The TPC official disclosed that the committee has no finances for implementing its programs as since 2017 it has been operating without any sponsor, a situation which, among others, hinders them from reaching many parts of the country.

"Since 2017 we have been operating without any sponsor, the government at times come to our rescue to pay for our athletes' trips to various countries to take part in tournaments, due to financial constraints we are facing, we fail to reach out to many parts of our country," he stated.

"We are asking the corporate world, organizations and individuals to come to our rescue so as we can hardly reach all parts of the country," he said.

He mentioned other challenges TPC is facing as society's lack of understanding on inclu-

sion of people with disabilities in sports, many municipal councils' failure to set up plans and programs for sports which target people with disabilities.

He disclosed poor and unfriendly infrastructure, lack of sponsors, partners and equipment, and unavailability of qualified coaches for coaching gifted young sports persons with disabilities in primary and secondary schools are the other challenges.

"Many primary and secondary schools, where sporting talents are identified and exposed, do not have qualified physical education teachers for training the sports persons with disabilities, they also lack equipment and, as a result, youngsters with disabilities in schools attend physical education lessons only," he said.

The United Nations (UN) set December 3 as the International Day for persons with disabilities.

The UN says persons with disabilities often face societal barriers and disability evokes negative perceptions and discrimination in many societies.

As a result of the stigma associated with disability, persons with disabilities are generally excluded from education, employment and community life which deprives them of opportunities essential to their social development, health and well-being.

In some societies persons with disabilities are considered dependent and seen as incapable, thus fostering inactivity which often causes individuals with physical disabilities to experience restricted mobility beyond the cause of their disability.

Realizing the importance of sports to people with disabilities, a UN article 30, says they have the right to participate in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sports.

The UN says sports can

help the society reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with disability because sports can transform community's attitudes about persons with disabilities by highlighting their skills and reducing the tendency to see the disability instead of the person.

Through sports, able bodied people interact with persons with disabilities in a positive context forcing them to reshape assumptions about what persons with disabilities can and cannot do.

The UN notes: "Sports change people with disabilities in an equally profound way by empowering them to realize their full potential and advocate for changes in society."

"Through sport, persons with disabilities acquire vital social skills, develop independence, and become empowered to act as agents of change."

"Sports teach individuals how to communicate effectively as well as the significance of teamwork and cooperation and respect for others."

"Sport are also well-suited to reducing dependence and developing greater independence by helping persons with disabilities to become physically and mentally stronger."

"These skills can be transferred into other new arenas including employment and advocacy work further helping to build self-sufficiency," notes part of the UN information.

## Azam FC seeks to bounce back against Gwambina FC in VPL

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

AZAM FC's Information Officer, Thabit Zakaria, has said their squad is still preparing for the upcoming Vodacom Premier League match against Gwambina FC, which will be played at the latter's venue, Gwambina Stadium, in Mwanza on Monday.

Azam FC's players had, as of mid this week, been training for the game at CCM Kirumba Stadium in Mwanza after finishing their league game against Biashara United, which took place in Mara and ended in a 1-1 draw.

Zakaria said the mistakes Azam FC's caretaker coach, Vivier Bahati, has dealt with mistakes the team's players made in their game against Biashara United, seeking to get good results in the game against Gwambina FC.

"In our last game we discovered a lot of weaknesses that we will work on as we were in a good position to win but our opponents put stiff opposition," he said.

"Currently we are in Mwanza and we will fight to get good results in our game against Gwambina FC."

"In the last six matches, we have got five points."

Azam FC is placed second in the Vodacom Premier League standing, having played 13 games, registered 26 points and scored 19 goals.

## Tokyo Olympics delay costs may reach \$2.8 billion

TOKYO

THE cost of the postponement for the Tokyo Olympics could reach about \$2.8 billion, according to figures released yesterday by the Tokyo organizing committee, the Tokyo city government and Japan's national government.

The numbers are in line with estimates made in Japan since the Olympics were postponed eight months ago. The games are now set to open on July 23, 2021.

About two-thirds of the added costs are being picked up by the two government entities, with the other one-third going to the privately funded organizing committee.

Few of Tokyo's added costs – or the overall costs – are covered by the Switzerland-based International Olympic Committee, which relies largely on public coffers to hold its events. Its revenue is generated largely by selling broadcast rights and sponsorships.

"I think our biggest challenge is the additional costs," Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike said during an online news conference. "This is a crucial issue in order for us to prepare for the Olympics. We need to gain the understanding and sympathy of the people of Tokyo and the people of Japan."

As the costs for Tokyo keep rising, it may reinforce skepticism about the wisdom of holding the Olympics in the middle of a pandemic. Recent polls show the Japanese public is divided on the issue of the Olympics, and any move to permit fans from abroad to enter despite a vaccine being on the horizon.

Japan has controlled the pandemic better than most countries



Tokyo 2020 President Yoshiro Mori, second left, Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike, left, Olympic Minister Seiko Hashimoto, second right, and Tokyo 2020 CEO Toshio Muto, rear, attend an opening plenary session of the three-party meeting on Tokyo 2020 Games additional costs due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Tokyo, yesterday. (AP)

with about 2,200 deaths attributed to COVID-19 in a country of 125 million.

The University of Oxford published a study three months ago that said the Tokyo Games are the most expensive Summer Olympics on record. And that research was done before the games were postponed by COVID-19.

Prior to the postponement, Japan said the Olympics would cost \$12.6 billion. But a government audit last year said it was likely twice that much, and that was before the postponement. All but \$5.6 billion is public money.

Tokyo said the Olympics would cost \$7.3 billion overall when it won the bid in 2013 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The operational cost for the delay is listed at 171 billion yen, or about \$1.64 billion at the present exchange rate. The organizing committee and the Tokyo government share equally in covering the expenses. The national government will pick up a small portion.

The cost for coronavirus countermeasures is 96 billion yen (about \$920 million) and will be covered solely by the government.

Tokyo organizers also said

they could add 27 billion yen (about \$260 million) from a contingency fund to help cover added costs.

Toshio Muto, the CEO of the organizing committee, said new domestic sponsors were being sought to cover the rising expenses. Tokyo has already received a record of \$3.3 billion from domestic sponsors – at least twice as large as any previous Olympics. Muto said the IOC had agreed to waive a royalty fee it collects of 7.6% on any "additional sponsorships."

Muto also said organizers did not expect to receive \$650 million from the International

Olympic Committee, which IOC President Thomas Bach suggested months ago it might chip in to help Tokyo.

"There was an expectation that maybe this was for Tokyo," Muto said. "But Tokyo's costs are Tokyo's costs."

Several months ago, Tokyo organizers announced they pared \$280 million from their expenses, removing frills like hospitality parties and scaling back in many areas. However, the full complement of 11,000 Olympic and 4,350 Paralympic athletes are expected to attend. They will be joined by tens of thousands of officials, judges, VIPs, media and broadcasters.

Gskuji Ito, the chief financial officer of the Tokyo organizing committee, said organizers expected to be paid 50 billion yen (\$480 million) in postponement/cancellation insurance it had secured.

Muto and organizing committee president Yoshiro Mori both said they know some expected larger cuts and fewer added expenses.

"Whether you believe the glass is half-full or half-empty," Muto said, "whether you feel our efforts were enough, that's up to you to decide."

AP



## Under-fire Zidane asks Madrid players to stand up and be counted

MADRID

REAL Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane takes his side to Sevilla in La Liga this weekend days insisting he is not planning on resigning despite a disastrous recent run.

Madrid have won just once in La Liga since October and also lost at Shakhtar Donetsk in the Champions on Tuesday and must beat Borussia Moenchengladbach next week to advance.

Real have drawn with in-form Villarreal, were edged out at lowly Alaves and were hammered at Valencia since their last league victory leaving the champions in fourth place, seven points off leaders Real Sociedad.

"I have the strength needed to turn the situation around and I am going to give everything to do that, so are the players," Zidane said after the loss in Ukraine.

"We have to lift ourselves up and think about the next match. We're on a bad run, there's nothing else to do other than think about the next match and go ahead.

"In difficult moments, you have to show character," he added.

Local press have linked former Tottenham boss Mauricio Pochettino and ex-Madrid forward Raul forward to the Frenchman's job.

According to newspaper AS captain Sergio Ramos called a squad meeting this week, with Zidane absent, telling team-mates to give "an extra push until the end of the year."

"This is Real Madrid, gentlemen. Together, we've come out of worse," Ramos reportedly said ahead of the trip to Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan where they have lost on six of their last eight visits.

Saturday's hosts went unbeaten in the Spanish top-flight throughout November after a sluggish start to the season under former Madrid boss Julen Lopetegui.

Spain playmaker Suso is set to return for the Europa League champions after being sidelined for six weeks with a muscle injury.

Player to watch: Joao Felix

The Portugal attacker is on the verge of equaling his last season's goal tally for Atletico Madrid, when he hit nine.

His 126 million euros fee, second for a teenager behind the amount Paris Saint-Germain paid for Kylian Mbappe, put pressure on Felix and he failed to settle in his first campaign in the Spanish capital missing 13 games through injury.

On Saturday, Atletico host 17th-place Real Valladolid and a win could send them top temporarily with Sociedad heading to Alaves a day later.

AFP

## Mourinho seeks to extend Arsenal hex as fans return to Premier League

LONDON

TOTTENHAM boss Jose Mourinho protects a proud personal unbeaten home record against struggling Arsenal this weekend as fans return to the Premier League for the first time since March.

Pacesetters Spurs have amassed 21 points after 10 games and are ahead of champions Liverpool on goal difference, while Arsenal are stumbling badly.

Tottenham will be playing in front of 2,000 fans at their home ground, 24 hours after West Ham become the first club to welcome supporters for a Premier League game since March.

Elsewhere, third-placed Chelsea host Leeds while Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool welcome Wolves to Anfield.

AFP Sport looks at some of the main talking points ahead of the weekend action in the Premier League.

Mourinho factor

Tottenham, with Harry Kane and Son Heung-min in rampant form, are on a nine-game unbeaten run in the Premier League while toothless Arsenal have stalled.

The Gunners, languishing in 14th spot in the table, have scored just 10 goals in 10 league matches, and have found the net just twice in their past six games.

No side outside the relegation places has scored fewer.

Jose Mourinho has lost just one of his 17 Premier League games as a coach against Arsenal and has never lost a home game against them in any competition as boss of Chelsea, Manchester United or Tottenham.

The Portuguese boss has brushed aside the significance of his eye-catching record against the Gunners but will see little to fear from Mikel Arteta's side on Sunday.

Fans return

Premier League stadiums have been empty since March after the coronavirus pandemic forced fans to stay away.

But this weekend they will return in limited numbers in some regions after the nationwide lockdown in England came to an end.

A total of 2,000 fans will be present at the London Stadium as West Ham host Manchester United on Saturday.

AFP

# Arsenal welcome fans back inside the Emirates after nine months apart

LONDON

NEVER has a dead Europa League game felt so alive. Arsenal had already qualified for the competition's round of 32 prior to kickoff, prompting manager Mikel Arteta to make 11 changes to his starting lineup. But trying to tell the 2,000 fans in attendance that this match didn't matter.

After nine months locked out because of COVID-19, supporters were finally allowed inside Emirates Stadium, socially distanced at neat intervals throughout the lower two tiers of the east and north stands. The Gunners usually loathe playing on Thursday nights, a European afterthought contested in the shadow of the Champions League fixtures staged earlier in the week, but this was a night to revel in the mundane, to grasp a glimpse of normality.

With that in mind, a smattering of supporters braved a bitterly cold night in north London to take their seats well over an hour before kickoff. The chosen 2,000, selected on a first-come, first-served basis among gold and premium members, were applauded by stewards as they came through the turnstiles, creaking into action again for the first time since March.

UEFA regulations dictated that supporters had to socially distance when sitting, even families arriving together, and so perfect rows of people with two seats and one row between them gradually formed as a message from club captain Pierre-Emer-



Arsenal celebrated a comfortable victory in front of 2,000 fans on Thursday. (Agencies)

ick Aubameyang was relayed over the big screens.

"Football is all about you, we've missed you," he began. "Some of us are still apart, but we remain together."

There was the triumphant return of Gunnersaurus after a public backlash to the news the man who has played the club's mascot for 27 years, Jerry Quy, was a victim of the club's off-field redundancy measures.

The 2,000 made their voices heard, louder than you might expect but inevitably only an imitation of when 60,000 packed out this arena. They aren't always the most vocal in these parts, but nobody was missing this opportunity.

Arsenal's players embraced the noise, like the first birdsong the morning after the harshest of storms. In their previous two Europa League home games, the Gunners were 1-0 down after 22 minutes against Mol-

de and needed 42 stodgy minutes to break down Dundalk. Here, palpably enthused by the unbridled joy around them and free of expectation with nothing to play for, they were 2-0 up in 18 minutes.

Alexandre Lacazette's swerving 30-yard shot opened the scoring, a footballing metaphor for the physical release of those in the stands. Romanian referee Radu Marian Petrescu had to remind the Gunners there was a game to complete after several players spent so long celebrating with a section of the east stand. Pablo Mari, marking his first appearance since June 17, headed home his first Arsenal goal five minutes later as the home side cruised into a comfortable lead.

"There's only one Gunnersaurus," the home fans sang. "What do we think of Tottenham?"

Arteta eventually acknowledged them with a round of applause after a lengthy chant of "Mikel,

Mikel give us a wave" as he stood in discussion with two backroom staff members during a break in play five minutes before half-time.

Eddie Nketiah added a third with the last meaningful act of the first half. Rapid Vienna could hardly have been as bad as they were in the first half thereafter, rallying to score a consolation two minutes after the restart, but Arsenal continued to assert their dominance and substitute Emile Smith Rowe added a deserved fourth after good work from Nicolas Pepe and Ainsley Maitland-Niles to complete the 4-1 victory.

Ten Premier League clubs can have fans in their stadiums under the United Kingdom's coronavirus tiering system (Arsenal, Brighton, Chelsea, Crystal Palace, Everton, Fulham, Liverpool, Southampton, Tottenham and West Ham). When asked if that could give those teams an advantage, Arteta said: "Probably, because this

sport without fans is completely different. Everything is flatter, the players lose a little bit of purpose and emotion.

"It is something that you want to share. At the end of the day, we are here to entertain, we are here to make the fans enjoy. They have a huge passion for our football club and when they are able to transmit that, it gets directly into the players. For me, to have them here home or away, it is always different because of them."

This was, frankly, one of the most enjoyable Arsenal performances of the season. Arteta has spoken about the need for fans to invest in the culture change he is trying to engender, but they need something tangible to believe in after years of false dawns.

The team's relationship with its supporters has consequently been fractious at times, something Arteta acknowledged had arguably reached a nadir

following Unai Emery's sacking last November. There was one small reminder of the civil war that sometimes rages -- one fan opted to mark the occasion by bringing a banner which read "Bring Back Mesut," in reference to the exiled Mesut Ozil, whose omission exemplifies the internal divisions that permeate the fan base.

Yet complaints were the last thing on everyone else's mind. "It's great to be back. It may only be 2,000, but it's a start," said Gunners fan and Arsenal Supporters' Trust board member Akhil Vyas. "The feeling of happiness returned and nice to feel part of the community again."

The overwhelming warmth will need to continue when the novelty wears off and the tougher challenges arrive. But if the process of building a connection begins again after such a long time apart, this was a positive way to start.

(Agencies)

## Why the Champions League group stage is in dire need of a revamp

By Leander Schaerlaeckens

OH God, there is still another whole week of Champions League group stage play to slog through.

The current format of the competition, where in eight groups of four play a double round-robin in the fall, with a knockout stage following in the spring, has existed since the 1994-95 season. But after a quarter century in the same format, it is entirely clear that the usefulness of this setup has run its course.

As soccer's unchecked capitalism has made the mega-clubs ever more dominant, the group stage has mostly become a foregone conclusion. When the draw is made, you can safely predict a dozen teams out of the 16 that will advance from the main tournament's 32 entrants. From there, it all has the feeling of a procession. The drama is in what happens to those last four or so spots.

So too this season. Even with the complications of a pandemic that has emptied stadiums, forced the widespread absence of infected players and compressed the schedule, there has been



little by way of surprises. Just two-thirds of the way through the group stage, much of the outcome was already set.

With four rounds played, going into the fifth matchday this week, many of the groups were mostly decided, virtually decided or entirely decided. And now, going into Matchday 6, only seven berths remain up for grabs.

This predictability and occasional boredom conflicts directly with the efforts by Europe's biggest clubs to make European competition more compelling. Their attempts to create a European super league are well established, an effort that UEFA has managed to hold at bay by making more and more guarantees about

spots and revenue to the teams from the biggest leagues.

This group stage fatigue is caused largely by the mismatches within games. And the point of a super league is to create more matchups between teams of roughly the same caliber.

But even if such a complete overhaul and Premier League-style defection is extreme and self-interested, cutting off money from smaller UEFA member nations, the point stands that we are served up too many games with foretold outcomes. And some alternative plans are in the works as UEFA and its clubs barter about a revamped format starting in 2024. In January, the New York Times reported that the tour-

namment could adopt a "Swiss model" in which the teams were arranged into a single league and each play 10 games. The top eight would then advance to the Round of 16 with the next 16 teams entering a playoff to join them there.

But there's really no indication that such a format would reduce the number of tedious matches -- more likely, it would increase their number. Instead, it seems like it would simply pour the existing competitive inequities into a new mold. And a plan once reportedly mooted to take the Champions League on a global tour doesn't solve that issue, either.

A better solution might be something akin to the way World Cup

qualifying was traditionally conducted in the CONCACAF region, with the lower-seeded teams playing each other for the right to face increasingly higher-rated teams. Where, after all, is the entertainment value in your Bayerns and Barcelas smashing their way through the group stage undefeated?

That would probably mean fewer games for the big clubs than they play now -- six in the group stage and two apiece for three knockout rounds until the one-game final, so as many as 13. And it is the games featuring the biggest teams that ultimately pay the bills, that create the value in the broadcast contracts and drive the most matchday revenue. This is where the tournament is a captive of its own economic success. The group stage exists because it's the most efficient way to make money. UEFA briefly played a second group stage from 1999-2000 to 2002-03, but that got too ponderous even for UEFA.

Originally, the European Cups were just straight knockout tournaments. In the 1991-92 season, a group stage was

adopted. But it initially followed two knockout rounds within the main tournament. That meant only eight teams reached the group stage, which sent the winner in each group directly to the final. As of 1993-94, a second team advanced from the group stage and a semifinal was added. In 1994-95, the group stage as we know now was created by abolishing the knockout stages that preceded it, albeit with only 16 teams. That number swelled to 24 in 1997-98 and 32 in 1999-2000, saddling us with the current bloat.

No format is sacrosanct. The changes to the tournament have been endless. And while the return of knockout stages before the group stage, to whittle down the teams before the slog of pool play begins, might reduce the overall number of games UEFA can sell, it would surely increase the tension.

And however it is achieved, we need a lot more tension.

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# SPORT

**Arsenal welcome fans back inside the Emirates after nine months apart**

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Mrisho Mpoto

## Mrisho Mpoto eyes reinvention of traditional music, dance troupes

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

TANZANIA'S gifted poet, Mrisho Mpoto, has called on the government to support traditional music artistes.

Mpoto, nicknamed 'Uncle', made the statement in Dar es Salaam mid this week when Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information, Culture, Arts and Sports, Hassan Abbas, held a meeting with domestic musicians and members of the country's film industry.

The poet said there is a market challenge for artistes, who are doing traditional music, adding failure by a good number of music fans in the country to appreciate the artistes' works happens to be the biggest challenge.

Most of the fans, Mpoto noted, do not like traditional songs, given they prefer foreign songs.

"Foreign songs have a lot of fans, but they do not have Tanzanian moral values, artistes who are doing traditional music are not supported and, at the end of the day, we give up on valuing our culture," he said.

Mpoto said even some popular traditional dance groups, which used to attract much attention, are no longer active because they are not fully supported.

"Dance groups are important in government activities, especially when it comes to national guests, instead of gathering people and dancing, we can't get an acceptable nature but there is a need for the government to allocate budgets for dance groups and empower them economically," he said.

Mpoto, born on October 27, 1978, is a respected poet and traditional dance music artiste, theater performer and an author of educational poetry and story books.

He is best known for his nickname, 'Uncle', or Mpoto. He is also known for singing popular songs such as 'Salam Zangu Mjomba', 'Nikipata Nauli' and 'Adela', among several great songs he has either composed or featured in.

The artiste is one of the founders of a popular traditional music troupe, Parapanda, and he later founded Mpoto Theater troupe.

## Simba SC, Namungo FC look to seal progression to CAF club tournaments' first round



Simba SC

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

TANZANIA'S representatives in Confederation of African Football (CAF) inter-club competitions, Simba SC and Namungo FC, head into the second legs of their respective preliminary round ties, scheduled for this weekend, well-placed to progress to the first round.

Simba, popularly known as 'Msimbazi Reds', face Nigeria's Plateau United at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam today in the afternoon looking to build on their 1-0 advantage from the first leg of the CAF Champions League clash in Nigeria, seized thanks to a goal netted by Zambian import, Clatous Chama.

Simba need to either avoid defeat or post draw to qualify for the first round of the premier continental club tournament.

Aggregate winners of today's clash will face either Platinum FC of Zimbabwe or Costa Do Sol of Mozambique in the next round.

The away win put Simba in a strong position but the outfit's chairman, Mwina Kaduguda, insisted they should not be carried away.

He insists it is still game on as Simba's 2-1 defeat could turn the tide in favour of the visitors.

He said: "We have to guard against complacency. Plateau United are a very good team. They are better than Zambia's Nkana, in fact, they are in the calibre of AS Vita Club."

"It's not going to be easy. It is not over, our fans should not take this for granted, instead, we need them in the stadium to support us to finish the job," Kaduguda said.

The continental soccer governing body has allowed spectators to fill 50 percent of stadia during continental inter-club tournaments' matches as requested by the Tanzania Football Federation (TFF).

After reaching the quarter finals of CAF Champions League in 2018,

Simba have upped the stakes and now want to reach the semi-finals of the tournament for the first time in their history.

They also want to avoid last year's heartache, which had the club crashing out of the CAF Champions League's preliminary round with aggregate loss to Mozambique's União Desportiva do Songo.

In a related development, Namungo, who got off their CAF Confederation Cup campaign to a perfect start with a 3-0 home win against South Sudan side Al Rabita in the preliminary round's first leg, which took place at Azam Complex in the city, will once again have the home support on their side.

The return leg match, slated for tomorrow, will also be played at Azam Complex. In the first leg a brace netted by Ghanaian striker Stephen Kwame and one goal scored by substitute Shiza Kichuya gave Namungo a comfortable

victory that leaves them in the driving seat to face Al Hilal Obeid of Sudan in the first round.

Al Rabita chose to host their home game in Dar es Salaam because of the absence of a ready stadium for hosting international games in South Sudan, since Juba National Stadium is still undergoing major renovations.

The renovations of the facility officially began on April 5, 2019 and is expected to end this year.

The project, estimated to be worth US\$ 5 million, is being funded by the world football body, FIFA, and should serve a capacity of 7,000 spectators on completion.

If Namungo FC knocks Al Rabita out, the Tanzanian team will then meet Sudan's Al Hilal Obeid in the first round showdown.

Al Hilal Obeid are among the 13 clubs that have been handed byes for the preliminary round.

## Kihwelo: Ngorongoro Heroes seek progression to 2021 U-20 World Cup finals

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

AFTER qualifying for the finals of the next year's Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) U-20 Championship, Tanzania's national U-20 football squad 'Ngorongoro Heroes' head coach, Jamhuri Kihwelo, is adamant his team are now focusing on making it to the 2021 FIFA U-20 World Cup.

Kihwelo has successfully guided the Ngorongoro Heroes to the next year's AFCON U-20 Championship finals, to be played in Mauritania from February 14-March 3.

Four teams, which will book a place in the last four stage of the continental showdown, will automatically qualify for the 2021 FIFA U-20 World Cup, which will take place in Indonesia from May 20 to June 12.

The coach said that despite Ngorongoro Heroes' 4-1 loss to Uganda's U-20 team in this year's Council for East and Central Africa Football Associations (CECAFA) U-20 Championship final, he still believes his youngsters have great potential and will make intensive preparations in an effort to do well in Mauritania.

Uganda, popularly known as 'Hippos', posted the comprehensive victory over Ngorongoro Heroes to lay their hands on the tournament's silverware, with Arusha hosting the showdown.

He explained that Tanzanians need to have confidence in their team as the results in the final match was due to a high level of competitiveness which Ngorongoro Heroes' players faced in the last four stage's clash against South Sudan.

The match, which ended with Ngorongoro Heroes posting 1-0 victory over their opponents, had several players in the



Tanzania's national U-20 football squad 'Ngorongoro Heroes'.

former's squad suffering injuries.

He disclosed: "Some players suffered injuries in a difficult semi-final match and they failed to play well in the final, however our ambition was to qualify for the AFCON U-20 finals, and now we have succeeded."

"Years ago, I said that one of my goals in coaching football is to enable Tanzania to qualify for the AFCON and the World Cup, thankfully I have qualified for the AFCON and now I am focusing on the World Cup," he disclosed.

Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) president, Wallace Karia, said they have put in place strategies for ensuring the team performs well in the AFCON U-20 finals.

Apart from congratulating the team's players and the technical bench, Karia said that one of their strategies is to enable the team to set up camp abroad and participate in a special U-20 tournament, slated to take place in United Arab Emirates (UAE).

He said the team's camp is scheduled to start soon, with the players set to return for the camp in mid-January next year ready for the UAE tournament.

However, Karia stopped short of naming the country where the Ngorongoro Heroes will camp.

He noted: "I know football stakeholders will want to know why the CECAFA U-20 Championship's trophy went to Uganda and not Tanzania. In short, the players worked

hard and fought for their nation with the goal of qualifying for the AFCON U-20 Championship and winning the CECAFA U-20 Championship's title, however, the final match was very difficult and many of our players were injured."

"Losing is part of the game, but the goal was to qualify for the AFCON U-20 Championship as well as win the CECAFA U-20 Championship."

"We won the CECAFA U-20 Championship's trophy last year in Uganda and stayed with it, I urge stakeholders to start thinking about the AFCON U-20 Championship finals and qualifying for the U-20 World Cup," Karia said.