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TANZANIA

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'Bongozozo' appointed UK tourism ambassador

By Guardian Reporter

NATURAL Resources and Tourism minister Dr Hamisi Kigwangala has appointed Nick Reynald, a citizen of the United Kingdom popularly known as 'Bongozozo' tourism ambassador for Tanzania in the UK.

Handing the letter of recognition for the title, TTB Marketing Manager Geoffrey Meena said Reynald who was born in Zimbabwe but lived in Tanzania for 18 years from 1998 will be a good tourism ambassador as he is conversant with the country's many tourist areas.

Meena said Reynald became popular for his affinity with this country in many fields including



Statistics for 2018 showed that 77,199 tourists came from the UK while the US brought in 94,876 tourists

being an ardent Taifa Stars fan and of footballer Mbwana Samatta, who now plays for Aston Villa Club in the England Premier League.

He said 'Bongozozo' was attracted by Tanzanian soccer and has been travelling with Taifa Stars in various competitions including the AFCON finals last year in Egypt.

TTB has resolved to develop tourism by increasing the number of tourists from UK as the country is second in bringing tourists to Tanzania after the US, he stated.

Statistics for 2018 showed that 77,199 tourists came from the UK while the US brought in 94,876 tourists, he pointed out.

"The board is so pleased today on behalf of the minister to hand to Nick Reynald a letter of appointment as Ambassador of Tourism for Tanzania in the UK as the best tourism centre in Africa and the entire world," the manager declared.

On his part Reynald said he will try to be a good ambassador in the UK by advertising all that is good for Tanzania all over the world through his social networks in order to spur more tourists to visit Tanzania.

"In my social networks I will be telling the entire world that Tanzania is home to very hospitable people, as well as its tourist attractions. Hence I have agreed to do that on behalf of Tanzania," he added.

Troubled railway line part set to be shifted



President Dr. John Magufuli talks with the European Union head of delegation in the country, Ambassador Manfredo Fanti (C) who was accompanied by EU senior official, Ambassador Emilio Rosetti at the State House in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: State House

SUSPENSION is likely to cost the TRC around 150m/- in losses monthly until it resumes services

By Correspondent James Kandoya

AUTHORITIES at the Tanzania Railway Corporation (TRC) are conducting a feasibility study to enable it shift a section of the central line that is periodically swept by floods to elevated grounds.

This observation has come as hundreds of passengers remain stranded after ongoing rains swept rail lines stretching 120 kms from Kilosa in Morogoro Region to Makutupora in Singida region.

Speaking to reporters in Dar es Salaam yesterday, TRC Managing Director Masanja Kadogosa said rail trips directly from Dar es Salaam to Mwanza and Kigoma have been suspended.

Places affected by rainfall are Kilosa (Morogoro region), Gulwe (Mpwapwa district of Dodoma region), Igandu, Zuzu and Makutupora (Singida region).

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JPM consoles Xi Jinping on coronavirus outbreak

By Guardian Reporter

PRESIDENT John Magufuli has written a letter of consolation to his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping following the outbreak of coronavirus that has killed 490 people in the Asian country.

Speaking after handing the letter to Chinese ambassador Wang Ke at the State House in Dar es Salaam yesterday, the head of state said Tanzania was touched by the rising death toll, noting that the government was ready offer any support to enable China eradicate the disease.

"China is our friend. We

● Meets SADC chief executive, EU envoy

“About 3,600 people on a second cruise ship which docked in Hong Kong are also being tested

wish to send our heartfelt consolation to President Xi Jinping and the people of China who have been affected by this disease in one way or another. We have always been together with China and on this one we are together as well," a statement released by the Directorate of Presidential Communications stated, citing the president's letter.

TURN TO PAGE 2

Govt preparing bush meat sale regulations

“The new rules will allow hunting of the animals and establishment of registered butchers at various national parks and forest reserves

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

ADEPTS of bush meat who normally buy it in informal markets now have a reason to smile as the government is preparing guidelines to regulate its sale.

The Deputy Minister Natural Resources and

Tourism, Constantine Kanyasu told the National Assembly here yesterday that the government is preparing guidelines that will regulate of traders engaging in the sale of bush meat from national parks and forest reserves.

"The new rules will allow

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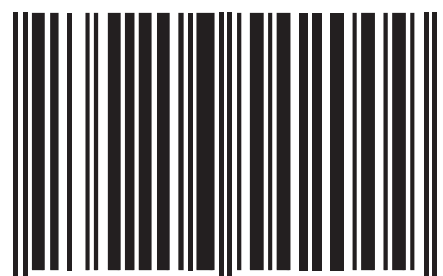
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JPM consoles Xi Jinping on coronavirus outbreak

FROM PAGE 1

The president held talks with the Executive Secretary of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Dr Stergomena Tax who briefed the president as current SADC chairman on implementation of various projects coordinated with other countries in the region.

Dr Magufuli also met the European Union Ambassador to Tanzania, Manfred Fanti where the envoy promised that the EU will continue assisting development projects through budget support.

Meanwhile, at least 10 people aboard a cruise ship which docked in the Japanese port of Yokohama have tested positive for coronavirus, health authorities there said.

Around 300 of the 3,700 people on the Diamond Princess have been tested so far. The number of infected could rise, they said.

The checks began after an 80-year-old Hong Kong man who had been on the ship last month fell ill with the virus.

About 3,600 people on a second cruise ship which docked in Hong Kong are also being tested.

Chinese health authorities are stepping up efforts to control the spread of the virus, with approximately 18 million people in the east of the country now required to stay at home.

In Wuhan, the epicentre of the virus, 11 large public venues including sports arenas are being turned into makeshift hospitals to provide an additional 10,000 beds for the sick. Two new hospitals have already been built there since the outbreak started.

President Xi said China's preventive measures were "achieving a positive effect," state media reported. The president expressed confidence in the country's ability to win the war against the virus, after authorities were criticised for their initial handling of the outbreak.

The World Health Organisation has declared a global health emergency over the outbreak but said it did not yet constitute a "pandemic," the worldwide spread of a new disease.

However, the number of cases in China jumped by nearly 4,000 on Tuesday alone to more than 24,300 with another 65 deaths bringing the total to 490.

China is our friend. We wish to send our heartfelt consolation to President Xi Jinping and the people of China who have been affected by this disease in one way or another. We have always been together with China and on this one we are together as well



The Chargé d'Affaires of the US embassy in Tanzania, Dr. Inmi Patterson talks to the Chief of Defence Force, General Venance Mabeyo during the handover of \$18 million-worth of equipment to the Tanzanian People's Defence Force (TPDF) as part of the African Peacekeeping Rapid Reaction Programme (APRRP). The ceremony was held at Kunduchi in Dar es Salaam recently. The APRRP is a partnership between the United States and six African nations: Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Senegal, and Ghana; creating the capacity and readiness to provide tactical and logistics support for UN and AU peacekeeping operations. Over the past year, US trainers had worked with the TPDF APRRP unit, preparing to support peacekeeping, humanitarian, and disaster relief efforts in Tanzania and across the continent. Dr. Patterson reaffirmed that the US will remain a steadfast partner with the TPDF and will continue to support the APRRP unit as well as the pre-deployment training of Tanzanian peacekeepers. Photo: Courtesy of US embassy

Govt preparing bush meat sale regulations

FROM PAGE 1

hunting of the animals and establishment of registered butchers at various national parks and forest reserves," he said.

He said there is no space for additional accommodation facilities at the Serengeti National Park and forcing this would affect the environment and tourism activities.

"We have agreed that interested investors should be allocated building sites at nearby national parks. This will also improve accommodation services at the parks," he stated.

He was responding to a supplementary question from

Ulanga MP Goodluck Mlinga (CMM) who said enabling tourists to obtain wild meat dishes will attract more visitors into the parks.

"We should establish barbecue stands for visitors to enjoy wild meat as per their choices. There should be a plan to build hotels outside national parks for the locals to benefit from such investments," the MP asserted, querying why most tourist hotels are inside the parks.

In his basic question, the MP wanted to know government strategies to increase revenues from the tourism sector.

Responding, Kanyasu said the country's tourism sector has

been growing every year, with the number of visitors increasing from 1.1m in 2015 to 1.5m in 2018. The sector contributed \$2.4bn (5.4trn/-) to national income in 2018, he stated.

The tourism sector has been contributing 17 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and 25 percent of all foreign exchange earnings, he pointed out.

"There are 1.6 million people employed in the sector," he further noted, elaborating that the government is implementing several initiatives to increase the number of tourism products.

These include Resilient Natural Resources for Tourism and Growth

(REGROW), a project which seeks to strengthen the management of protected areas and promote nature-based tourism in the southern tourism circuit.

He said efforts are ongoing to improve tourism in the southern circuit by upgrading facilities at various parks, citing Katavi, Kitulo, Mahale, Udzungwa Mountains, Mikumi, Ruaha and Nyerere.

Kanyasu said establishment of new national parks namely Burigi-Chato, Ibanda-Kyerwa, Rumanyika-Karagwe, River Ugalla, Nyerere and Kigosi will boost the sector, opening up tourism opportunities in most regions.

The 'Karibu Kusini' tourism

expo held last September by the ministry working with the Southern Highlands regional authorities and Morogoro region was meant to promote tourism. About 500 participants both local and foreign based participated.

Last October the ministry in collaboration with stakeholders organized the Swahili International Tourism Expo (SITE) which brought together 400 participants and 200 tourism agents from around the globe.

"We are working to organize the Great Lakes International Tourism Expo (GLITE) to be held in June," he added.



Finance and Planning minister Dr. Philip Mpango (L) shakes hand with head of delegation from Southern African Development Community (SADC) Sikhumbuzo Dlamini after their meeting held in Dodoma yesterday. Photo: MoF

Chamwino school in need of clean, safe water - call

By Beatrice Philemon

THERE is an urgent need for clean and safe water as well as pit latrines to save the lives of nearly 500 pupils and their teachers at Msanga B primary school in Chamwino district, in the capital city Dodoma.

The water that is currently being used at the school is said to be unsafe for human consumption as waterborne diseases such as

typhoid, fever, dysentery and cholera threaten their lives.

The school's head teacher Idd Mloba said yesterday that despite a recent assistance from the National Microfinance Bank (NMB) which donated 57 desks, the challenge remains for water and toilets.

"We are calling upon well-wishers to assist to help us because the school has 465 pupils against three hole toilets which

are shared by pupils and teachers as well," he said.

Other needs according to him include electricity, head teacher's office and school teachers' office.

Msanga B primary school was officially started in 2009 as satellite school to support students who were forced to walking long distances from where they stay to school to get education while others walked 7 kms. He said so far the school has

four classrooms, three pit latrines and seven teachers.

According to him, lack of space affects fourth and seventh grade pupils because they don't get enough time to concentrate on what they study, they just get short time to study because the classrooms are overcrowded.

Elaborating on classrooms they have, he said right now Standard 1 and 11 pupils are forced to study for shifts, Standard IV and V are

forced to share one classroom and this is also the same situation for Standard VI and VII pupils while nursery school kids study under the baobab tree.

He said although Msanga B primary school is government school pupils are still suffering a lot to get good learning environment because right now the school had four classrooms that accommodate 465 pupils and is very overcrowded.

Troubled railway line part set to be shifted

FROM PAGE 1

Passengers booking their trips had been refunded as rebuilding the railway section may take time.

"We have temporarily suspended operations. The train service will continue between Dodoma and Mwanza as well as Kigoma," he stated.

Suspension is likely to cost the TRC around 150m/- in losses monthly until it resumes services, he said.

TRC is seeking a permanent solution to seasonal rainfall affecting its services every year, he declared.

A team of engineers were in the field to evaluate the damage and what is needed to ensure services resume, before embarking on a permanent solution, he said.

"In the new study, the rail track will not be laid near river systems and instead shift to elevated areas," he explained.

Kadogosa said that when the feasibility study is completed, the results will be submitted to the government for action.

Ten out of 26 places along that section were in serious condition with the rail infrastructure including culverts having been damaged, he said.

Recalling the Eli Nino rainfall (1997/98), he said experience had shown that area is most likely to be affected by unusually heavy rains each ten years.

The former Reli Assets Holding Co. (RAHACO) chief executive before it was merged with TRC said construction of the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) had reached 70.5 percent by year-end 2019.

What will follow is commissioning test, with the construction of pylons to connect the SGR system to the national grid having reached 70 percent, he said.

On January 4 it was reported that hundreds of train passengers were stranded after TRC suspended services due to ongoing rains.

Passengers were refunded their fares to look for alternative means of transport in Dodoma and Dar es Salaam stations.

In Dodoma alone, TRC refunded 48 passengers travelling from Kigoma to Dar es Salaam on account of deplorable conditions of the railway line at Zuzu and Kigwe in Dodoma region, the Dodoma head of station Rose Ngaugao explained.

Visiting the passengers, Dodoma District Commissioner Patrobas Katambi on Tuesday directed the authorities to look for alternative transport for those stranded especially commuter buses, apart from returning their fares.

However, he lauded TRC for their prompt communication that helped to save lives of hundreds of travelers.

Fire and rescue force suspects surrender laptops to PCCB

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

SIX suspects in the contentious contract for the supply of fire and rescue equipment worth Euros 408 million (over 1trn/-) yesterday surrendered the laptops and computers they were given by the supplier during the negotiations of the deal to the Prevention and Combating of Corruption (PCCB).

The suspects who were the members of the contract negotiation committee from the Fire and Rescue Force arrived at the PCCB headquarters in Dodoma at 10am for interrogation but first handed over the gadgets to PCCB detectives.

After the end of the interrogation, the officials left the premises with their other personal effects except the laptops. Revealing the suspected corrupt deal last month, President John Magufuli questioned the integrity of the officials, arguing that the gifts plus the sitting allowance that they were being paid during their trips to Europe stink corruption.

Those who were grilled yesterday and left without their laptops include Fires and Rescue Force's

Commissioner for Finance Baraka Semwanza, Deputy Commissioners Fikiri Salma, Lusekelo Chaula and Ully Mburuko.

Others are Fire and Rescue Force's economists Boniface Kiponela and Felis Mshana.

Apart from the six, others who have been interrogated by PCCB over the matter include former Home Affairs Minister Kangi Lugola who was sacked by President Magufuli because of the deal.

Others are Deputy minister Hamad Masauni, Permanent Secretary who resigned Jacob Kingu and his then deputy Ramadhan Kailima.

The President has also sacked the Commissioner-General for the Tanzania Fire and Rescue Force Thobias Andengeny who was involved in signing the dubious contract.

He added the project was authorised by officials in the Ministry of Home Affairs without the knowledge of the Ministry of Finance and Planning, and without the approval of the National Assembly.

He directed other officials in the Attorney General's Chambers and the Tanzania Fire and Rescue Force who were involved in the shoddy deal should be accountable.



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa talks to one of Dar es Salaam independent school pupils, Elyn Michelle Mgunda during their study tour to the National Assembly in Dodoma on Tuesday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

WHO reinforces preparedness in African countries for novel coronavirus -Moeti

By Guardian Reporter

WHILE there are no confirmed cases of novel coronavirus reported in the African region, the World Health Organization (WHO) is strengthening its support to countries in the detection and management of suspect cases and in ensuring a robust response, should a first case be detected.

In a statement availed to the media yesterday stated that since the 22 January 2020, WHO has received dozens of alerts regarding

possible novel coronavirus infections from 20 countries. Once countries investigate these alerts to determine if they meet the definition of a 2019-nCoV suspect case, samples are taken and sent to laboratories.

Dr Matshidiso Moeti, WHO regional director for Africa said: "WHO is working with countries to rapidly scale-up diagnostic capacity for 2019-nCoV. It is crucial that countries in the region can detect and treat severe cases early, preventing a widespread

outbreak, which could overwhelm fragile health systems.

Dr Moeti said that as this is a new virus, up until early this week there were only two laboratories - one in Senegal and the other in South Africa - which had the reagents needed to test samples and they have been working as referral laboratories for countries around the region. Four more countries (Ghana, Madagascar, Nigeria and Sierra Leone) have now reported they can conduct tests as well.

WHO is sending kits to 29 laboratories in the region which will ensure they have diagnostic capacity for novel coronavirus and can support testing samples from the neighbouring countries as well.

"A new virus is always a challenge and most laboratories in Africa lack the key material they need to perform tests on a novel pathogen," she said.

WHO has identified 13 top priority countries in the region, which due to their direct links or high volume of travel to China need to be particularly vigilant for the

novel coronavirus. She named the top priority countries as Tanzania, Algeria, Angola, Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia as thirteen top priority in the African region.

According to her, WHO plays an active role in supporting countries to coordinate preparation efforts and surge staff have arrived in seven of the 13 countries and by the end of the week teams are expected to be in place in all.

She further noted WHO is dispatching protective equipment for health workers, as well as thermometers and other essential supplies for screening and handling suspect cases at airports and other points of entry.

While the top priority countries are WHO's first areas of focus, the organization will support all countries in the region in preparing for novel coronavirus.

The World Health Organization is also engaging with partners to support preparedness in key ar-

reas, including community awareness raising and increasing treatment capacity should the need arise.

Dr Moeti highlighted that many countries are building on expertise they have gained in preparing for an influenza pandemic as coronaviruses cause illnesses similar to influenza. In addition, since the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo started in 2018, WHO and partners have helped countries at high risk to prepare for possible Ebola cases.

China assures safety of Zanzibari students

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

CHINESE Consulate in Zanzibar has assured parents and relatives in the Isles that all Zanzibaris living in various cities in China are safe and none has been infected by the recent outbreak of the highly contagious, pneumonia-causing illness (Coronavirus).

Consul General Xie Xiawu told reporters yesterday here that all the 400 Zanzibaris (students) living in the Asian country were safe.

"So parents and relatives should have nothing to worry about because the government is taking close care of them and if it will happen any one gets infected, we will take care of him/her with great care," he said.

He added that the Chinese government in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO) is taking all measures to ensure that the virus does not spread more to other areas, especially after it declared the disease a disaster. Including China's efforts to build a special hospital to treat all those infected.

For his part, director of the Zanzibar Information Service department Dr Juma Muhamed urged journalists to avoid reporting news/information that may antagonise those who are already infected by the disease.

The disease which has been dubbed as Wuhan coronavirus has killed at least 92 people in China since it started two weeks ago. Confirmed cases topped 24,500 worldwide and there were worrying signs of new outbreak clusters in Hong Kong and Japan.

The viral disease which has no direct cure spreads more easily from person to person than previously thought, the World Health Organization (WHO) said in a statement after a meeting in the Austrian capital of Vienna. The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the fast-spreading coronavirus as a global health emergency.

WHO said coronaviruses are a family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such

as Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). These viruses are transmitted between animals and people.

Late last week, the Tanzania's Ministry of Health, Community Development, Elderly and Children said that personnel stationed at vital entry points to the country are being trained on how to identify and care for patients with the new coronavirus which is fast-spreading around the world.

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INTERESTED BIDDERS ARE INVITED to submit bids for the purchase of the above named property.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT, Moshi Hotel 2010 Limited (hereinafter referred to as "the Company") in collaboration with TIB Development Bank (hereinafter referred to as "the Bank") hereby advertise for sale its property described in the table below which is mortgaged to the Bank.

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Figure 1:

Figure 2:

1. Bids must be sealed and clearly marked with the Bidder's name, physical address, mobile number, email and the following identification: "SEALED BID FOR PROPOSED SALE OF MOSHI HOTEL 2010 LIMITED'S REAL PROPERTY".
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4. The Successful Bidder shall pay the balance of 80% within 30 days from the date of notification of the award.
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6. Any and all due diligence and property inspections must be completed before the date of the bid opening as no provision is made for a due diligence period once bids have been opened. Interested bidders can inspect the property on working days from the date of this publication from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. To book visitation, kindly contact Mr. Salim Mushi the Counsel for the Company through his mobile number 0688 498 912 or email address salim@dexter.co.tz or TIB Development Bank Arusha Zonal office located at PSSSF building, Mezzanine floor.
7. The successful bidder shall be announced within seven working days upon completion of bid evaluation.
8. Bids may not be withdrawn once they have been received and opened.
9. In the event the successful bidder fails to effect payment as prescribed, the Bank and the Company reserve the right to offer the property to the next highest or preferred bidder who meets the conditions or cancel the sale process.
10. The Bank and the Company shall not be bound to accept the highest bid or any bid at all.
11. Bidders are advised to conduct their independent valuation and inspection of the property.
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Deputy Minister of Education, Science and Technology, William Ole Nasha speaks at a press conference in Dodoma yesterday during the inauguration of the national competition of science, technology and innovation for primary and secondary schools and universities (Makisatu 2020). The event had been organised by his ministry and sponsored by CRDB Bank. On his left is the ministry's Permanent Secretary, Dr Leonard Akwilapo and CRDB delegation led by ag director of corporate banking, Prosper Nambaya (3rd L). Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Energy, minerals committee demands formation of law to govern geothermal energy

By Guardian Reporter

THE Parliamentary Standing Committee on Energy and Minerals has called for the formation of a special law to govern geothermal energy which its absence currently is discouraging investment in the lucrative sector.

Committee chairman Dunstan Kitandula (pictured) told the National Assembly yesterday and challenged the government to finalise the draft of recommendations of Geothermal Bill and present it to the Parliament for amendment.

He said that Tanzania has capacity of producing up to 5,000MW of geothermal energy with the country targeting to produce 200MW of the energy by 2025. He said that the government through Tanzania geothermal development company (TGDC) is implementing five key projects to achieve the 200MW.

"Geothermal energy is vital for the country's development, so it is high time the county come up with the special Act to development of the sub-sector is crucial," he said.

The committee urged that efforts should be increased to ensure availability of reliable electricity in support of the government's industrialisation strategy.

"However the availability of power in the country is currently stable, so

we are appealing for the government to continue supporting the Tanzania Electrical Supply Company (Tanesco) to enable the firm produce enough power to serve the country's needs," said Kitandula who is MP for Mkinga (CCM).

In the first half of the 2019/2020 financial year, Tanesco sold electricity worth 783bn/-, equivalent to 94 per cent of its target of collecting 835bn/- during this period, he said.

However, in the period of between July and December 2019, the power utility firm collected 963bn/- equivalent to 91 per cent of the target of collecting 1.113tr/-, he said.

The state power utility also managed to connect 216,480 new customers with power services thus surpassing the goal of connecting 145,000 new customers in every half year.

"The power company however faces a number of challenges including poor/outdated infrastructures thus leading to loss of power, high charges of land compensation, insufficient funds and theft of electricity by some dishonest people," he noted.

On minerals, the committee urged the government to support the Minerals Commission to enable it embark on a programme to educate the public on the new mineral law as majority of people are unaware of the Act.

SADC advised to assess their economies

By Guardian Reporter

SOUTHERN African Development Community (SADC) countries have been advised to examine themselves and form bodies to assess their economies instead of leaving the mandate to international bodies.

The minister for Finance, Dr Philip Mpango was speaking yesterday in Dodoma when he met the SADC delegation led by Sikumbuzo Dlamini which is in the country on an economic assessment tour for the year 2019/20.

Dr Mpango said most African coun-

tries have been used to seeing the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) coming to their countries to assess their economies while they can better do the same within the region because they know each other.

"The aim of the tour is to assess the economy, foreign exchange, export and import flows as well as see where we can improve," he said.

He said SADC countries agreed to send a delegation which will see how the national economy is being run including the implementation of various major projects such as the Stiglers

Gauge and the Standard Gauge Railway.

On his side, the leader of the delegation Dlamini who is also the manager for economic policies and statistics at the Central Bank of Eswatini hailed Tanzania for the progress made after visiting some projects, saying this will help in attaining sustainable development goals.

SADC collaborates with bilateral and multilateral International Cooperating Partners (ICPs), as well as other organizations that provide development assistance to SADC, to facilitate mobi-

lization of resources for the attainment of the SADC's regional integration and poverty reduction priorities.

The partnership assists SADC to deliver specifically on the implementation of the Region's two primary key strategies.

Through the establishment of a SADC Common Market, the overall goal of economic development and regional integration is to facilitate trade and financial liberalization, to establish competitive and diversified industrial development, to increase investment, and eradicate poverty.



'Govt investing in infrastructural development in the tourism sites'

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame, Arusha

THE Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, Prof Adolf Mkenda, said the government is investing in infrastructural development in tourism sites.

Prof Mkenda, who is currently inspecting roads and bridges linking the country's

two top tourist destinations of Ngorongoro Conservation Area and Serengeti National Park, explained that the ongoing torrential rains were a testimony to infrastructures networking national parks, game reserves and conservation areas.

"Protected areas are sensitive locations, which means even, handling and repairing of the roads, bridges and other infra-

structures need to be carefully calculated," he said.

The permanent secretary, expressed satisfaction that, despite torrential rains pounding the country for five months now, there is little damage to the infrastructures linking local parks.

"Tourism activities have not halted, despite heavy rains, though on the other hand, some sections had been damaged due

to effects of the storms," he said.

The commissioner of conservation at Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority, Dr Fred Manongi, said to execute the damage caused by the rains on local roads, the NCAA had injected 27bn/- which will also serve to repair bridges.

"We had to seek the assistance from the army, when incomes to bridges," stated Dr Manongi.

He pointed out that Ngorongoro Conservation, despite being a tourist destination, was also the gateway to the Serengeti National Park in addition to linking Arusha with Musoma and Loliondo, as travelers use the NCAA roads when traveling to the lake zone and Wasso.

Deputy conservator, Assangye Bangu, said they were planning to hatch new roads as well as addi-

tional entrance gates, to increase and ease tourists' inflow in the conservation area which receives 600,000 visitors per year, making it the leading destination in the country.

Serengeti, the second most visited destination gets an average of 350,000 tourists per annum. Tanzania targets to increase the number of tourists visiting the country from the current 1.5 million, per

annum to 2 millions by the end of this year.

Infrastructural development is being billed as key component for the strategy.

At least 600 kilometers of road networks circumnavigates the Ngorongoro Conservation Area as well as linking it with Serengeti.

The Crater itself has 140 kilometers of road networks within its wildlife field basin.



Expression of interest to conduct final evaluation for the 'Chakula Chetu' project

The Chakula Chetu project provides daily school meals to more than 14,468 students in 16 primary schools using locally purchased food. The program builds the capacity of local stakeholders to lead and manage their own school meals programs.

PCI Tanzania is seeking a consultant or firm to conduct and lead a final for Chakula Chetu using a quasi-experimental design with both quantitative and qualitative methods. This program has been implemented in Mara region for the past 2 years. The qualified aspirants are expected to meet the following minimum requirements:

- I. Extensive experience in quantitative and qualitative data collection, analysis and report writing in food security and/or food assistance programs.
- II. Experience leading data collection in Swahili and ability to communicate efficiently in English.
- III. Strongly preferred applicants with background in evaluating school feeding programs and/or projects funded by U.S. Government.

Interested candidates should indicate their Expressions of Interest by submitting the following on or before 16 February 2020: brief letter of intent describing qualifications, curriculum vitae of key team members, and a list of previous, relevant evaluations.

Please submit all materials to Stephanie Grow, sgrow@pciglobal.org and Wilfred Donath, wdonath@pciglobal.org.



Members of Fire and Rescue Force who were among the delegation representing the ministry of Home Affairs at the signing contract agreement between Fire and Rescue Force and Rom Solutions .Co. Ltd wait to be interrogated by the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) as ordered by the government in Dodoma yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

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Norway-based paint company commends Tanzania friendly investment environment

By Guardian Reporter

THE Jotun Group, an international paint company based in Norway has announced plans to invest in the country's manufacturing industry citing friendly investment policies among the factors to choose Tanzania as its investment destination.

The company has a presence in more than 100 countries around the world, with more than 10,000 employees, 63 companies in 45 countries, and 37 production facilities in 21 countries.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam recently, Zulfikar Ismail, Director of Wellworth Group of Companies representing Jotus group in Tanzania, said the manufacturing company will be built in Tanzania but will serve East and Central Africa.

He was speaking shortly after the launch of their new paint shop at Masaki, in the city.

Ismail said: "Tanzania is the unique investment hub in the East African Community (EAC) as well as Southern Africa Development Communities (SADC) as it is blessed with the sustainable peace and harmony,

the factor that attracts big investors.

He said the company has been in Tanzania for two years whereas it has enjoyed good support from the government and private sector as well. He commended the support from private sector calling for more support from Tanzanians.

He said: "We have chosen to invest in the manufacturing sector to support government's industrialization endeavors aiming to make Tanzania a middle income nation".

The Director explained that, more than 100 painters from Dar es Salaam and Dodoma have benefited with professional painting skills offered by Jotus Group.

The training aimed to improve the quality of their work since the company produces 15,000 different colors which require skills and experience in its use.

Norwegian Ambassador to Tanzania, Elisabeth Jacobsen said it is time for Tanzanians to benefit from the company which has 90 years in the market. She said the company has contributed into creation of jobs in various countries.



Dar es Salaam region officers take oaths at a training aimed to educate them on the permanent register of voters. The event was organised by the National Electoral Commission. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

Varsity offers breast cancer screening to students, staff

By Guardian Reporter

THE Kampala International University (KIU) on Tuesday offered free breast cancer screening to its students, staff and members of the public as part of commemoration of World Cancer Day.

According to a statement re-

leased yesterday by the Dar es Salaam-based higher learning institution, over 200 people turned up for the event conducted in collaboration with Lancet Laboratories Tanzania. "The university commemorated World Cancer Day by having a Breast Cancer awareness and diagnosis camp

where the audience were taught intensively by experts on cancer in general, breast cancer, how to self-diagnose and the application of Fine Needle Aspiration Cytology (FNAC) in extracting cells from a lump found around the breast for testing to see if it is cancer or not," reads the statement.

The awareness programme also covered causes and risk factors such as habits and others.

According to the statement, the awareness was presented by Dr Shaila Shah, a professional pathologist working for KIU in Tanzania. In her presentation, she stressed that contrary to popular belief,

breast cancer is not limited to women but men too, adding that it is important for people of both gender to have regular check-ups since early detection makes treatment easy, thus, improving one's quality of life. After the presentation, the audiences were invited to conduct test through

self-breast examination, which is followed by Fine Needle Aspiration Cytology (FNAC) if a lump is discovered from a person.

The Dean Faculty of Medicine and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Prof Josiah Ntogwisangu gave the opening remarks followed by the Vice Chancellor, Prof Jamidu

Katima before Dr Shah made the presentation. The self-examination tests on breast cancer were done by both doctors from KIU and Lancet Laboratories. However, only Lancet Laboratory specialists, headed by the specialist pathologist conducted the FNAC tests.



Assistant registrar lands and housing council in central zone Shilly Repenti (R) and land officer Anord Mkude explain to visitors council's operations at the ongoing Law Week at Nyerere Square in Dodoma on Tuesday. Photo: Correspondent Munir Shemweta

Varsity embarks on tree planting campaign to fight climate change

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

MZUMBE University has embarked on tree planting campaign in efforts to fight effects of climate change.

The University's Vice Chancellor Prof Lughano Kusiluka led hundreds of students from the Faculty of Science and Technology (FST) to plant more than 1,000 trees in the area leading to the University's main campus entrance in Maekano, Mzumbe Ward in Mvomero District.

Speaking soon after the exercise, Prof Kusiluka thanked for the cooperation from students and added that the historical event will be remembered in their lives as they will leave a mark that cannot be erased.

"Your participation will leave behind memories for tomorrow because even when you will leave school you will remember the trees you have planted. This is from the heart of patriotism which should be inherited to others in the caring and protection of the environment to wriggle out of the adverse impacts of climate change that contribute to environmental degradation," he said.

He also pledged for the University to continue being goodwill ambassadors in the tree planting campaign and that already as University they have in place an environmental policy that focuses in environmental protection that supports government efforts.

The Head of the faculty of Science and Technology of the University Dr Joseph Sungau said they decided to embark on tree planting campaign as part of education to students in recognition of the scientific importance of trees in fighting the effects of unclean air produced by human activities including factories, vehicles and other machineries.

"We have started the campaign with these few trees but our aim is to continue teaching science to students in practice by starting with the issue of tree planting," he said.

The campaign that was conducted by incorporating the nearby Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) through Earth Day Network has been an impetus to the communities surrounding the University in seeing the importance of educating them on the benefits of tree planting.



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Adhere to professionalism, RC urges legal practitioners

By Correspondent Mutayoba

Arbogast, Bukoba

KAGERA Regional Commissioner, Brigadier General Marco Gaguti has called on legal practitioners to adhere to professional ethics

when executing their duties.

RC Gaguti made the call here over the weekend when speaking at the event to mark Law Week, an annual event which is commemorated in all High Court Zones across the country.

He also received procession of

the legal fraternity which was led by Judge Lucia Gamuya Kairo, Tanzania High Court in Bukoba Zone.

He urged them to refrain from engaging in corrupt practices in order to restore confidence of the people, as there were fears that justice could not be obtained with-

out being bought.

The RC also appealed to lawyers especially those in private firms, to be sincere to their clients. "When someone comes to you for a legal matter and you find out it is null and void, tell him the truth that he will lose the case, in-

stead of deceiving him/her only to end up losing his/her money and time."

He also call upon the public to be contented with legal judgments instead of wandering 'here and there' to the authorities which have no mandate after the

matter had been brought to court of law.

Judge Kairo said the high court will visit various institutions in Kagera such as prisons, secondary schools, and market places, bus stops, to give out legal aid to the community.

Law Week is an annual event which brings together the legal professionals and public together, aiming to foster a better understanding of roles of law and justice, and offers the opportunity to find answers to the legal questions history of the courts etc.



Arumeru district commissioner, Jerry Muro, talks to residents in the district during his visit to water sources. He urged them to protect the environment
Photo: Correspondent Woinde Shizza

Rains cause havoc in Manyara Region

By Guardian Correspondent, Babati

THE ongoing rains in Manyara region have killed three people and caused destruction to road infrastructure as well as people's settlements in the region's Babati, Kiteto, Simanjiro and Hanang districts.

During his inspection visit in the areas afflicted by the rains, Babati District Commissioner and the Chairman of Defense and Security Committee Elizabeth Kitundu said the rains have caused great havoc to the people in the area.

Babati Urban Member of Parliament Pauline Gekul also visited the area on Tuesday and called upon the wananchi to be alert during this period of heavy rains. Similar call was issued by the Kiteto District Commissioner Tumaini Magessa.

In Hanang District a bridge on Katesh-Haydom road was swept away by floods.

The District's Commissioner Joseph Mkirikiti said workers from Tanzania Rural and urban Roads Agency (TARURA) have arrived and started repair work on the bridge.

A villager from Terrat village in Simanjiro District Elias Mollel said his home collapsed due to continuous downpour in the area and added that he and his family were now put up at their neighbour's home.

Terrat Ward Councillor Jackson Ole Materi said the rains has severed land communication within the ward and added that those seriously affected by the rains included students of Terrat Secondary School as they could not reach their homes due to floods.

A Galapo villager Mariam Hassan said the roof of her home was blown away by strong winds and added that her crops were also destroyed. She called for help from the government to all victims of the heavy rains.

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Public Service and Good Governance Shadow minister Ruth Mollel addresses journalists in Dodoma on Tuesday on human rights violations in Tanzania. She is flanked by Special Seat MPs Suzan Lyimo (R) and Cecilia Pareso. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

GIMAC conference: Change requires action, not talk shop

By Correspondent Kenneth Simbaya

TRANSLATING frameworks and policies into actions is one of the biggest challenges thwarting 'Gender is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC)' as well as African Union (AU) Member States from realizing the desired results.

This was revealed during the two-day GIMAC 35th conference, themed: "Silencing Guns Beyond 2020: Recognizing and Amplifying Women and Girls' Agency to Silence the Guns in Africa."

The conference took place at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) complex in Addis Ababa Ethiopia from February 3-4.

According to GIMAC chairperson and Executive Director Forum For African Women Education (FAWE) Martha Muhwezi, African countries are not in shortage of policies and frameworks, the only challenge hindering progress on various commitments made, is lack of translating the very policies and frameworks into tangible actions.

"We have been talking and talking and talking," lamented the GIMAC Chairperson, citing an example of implementation of the

United Nations Resolution 1325.

The Security Council adopted resolution S/RES/1325 on women and peace and security on 31 October 2000, among other things, urges all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations peace and security efforts. It also calls on all parties to conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict.

The 35th GIMAC conference besides Silencing Guns agenda, also explored on other interlocked gender related issues that affect women and girls human rights, like sexual and reproductive health (SRH) specifically speaking louder on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) against women and girls, harmful practices like female genital mutilation (FGM), and HIV and AIDS, urging for change of the status quo that discriminate against women and girls, which is pervasive in most African countries, insisting that gender equality should be at the heart of African countries development processes.

"Despite the fact that substantive progress has been made in

tackling maternal, newborn and child mortality, but there are still significant areas of concern relating to access to quality essential health services including sexual and reproductive health services, nutrition, gender-based violence and discrimination which are all contributing factors that limit the ability of women and girls to realize their human rights and health," one panelist at the conference said.

"Many African countries are not doing well in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), un-silenced guns complicates realization of the development goals, including those agreed by AU Member states as contained in agenda 2063," said Muonyelu Aadaeze Chidinma, a GIMAC youth champion delegate from Nigeria Young Women Christian Association (YWCA).

This year's GIMAC theme, according to Cecilia Shirima, a youth delegate from Young and Alive Tanzania, is important to young women in many ways, it provides them with networks to leverage on and provides young people with an avenue for learning important skills which they need to be successful in their lives.



POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT Assistant Scientist - Market Research IITA-TZ-2020 - R4D-001 -NRS-DSM

The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) on behalf of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) invites applications for the position of **Seed Systems Specialist**

Background: IRRI develops and promotes new rice technologies such as high yielding varieties, climate and stress resilient varieties and technologies that offer the promise of increased productivity with optimum resources and hence ensure the welfare of farmers. There is a need to scale up the adoption of these varieties /technologies for better impacts. Tanzanian national program has released many rice cultivars, but the adoption is very low. Farmer-to farmer exchange of seeds is considered to be the main mechanism for the widespread dissemination of varieties. The dimension of farming system has changed in terms of the preference of the farmers, use of mechanized agriculture, men moving out for work and women holding the charge for farming. It's important to conduct research that can suggest interventions to improve the awareness creation, demand creation, adoption and impact of new varieties. It is also important to compare and find the pros and cons of different delivery/extension approaches for dissemination of these varieties and research around this also needs to be strengthened. Under the minimum supervision of Senior Scientist I - Plant Breeding, this position will work around, strengthening seed systems and extension research, promoting rural innovation, partnership and liaisoning, monitoring and evaluation of seed systems' development. Monitor the strategic collaboration around seed systems and extension research, conceptualize, design and execute research with the aim of evaluating the ongoing seed systems activities across different key project sites in Tanzania and strengthen the same; and interact vigorously with the regional team in relevant activities

Duty Station: The position will be based Morogoro, Tanzania.

Criteria for Success / Qualifications

- Master's degree in Agriculture/Rural management/Agri business/Rural development with minimum 5 years or relevant work experience around social sciences, rural livelihoods, sustainable agriculture/development and project management
- PhD in Agriculture/Rural management/Agri business/Rural development with minimum 3 years or relevant work experience around social sciences, rural livelihoods, sustainable agriculture/development and project management and gender

Skills and knowledge mandatory

- Knowledge and extensive experience in the field of social science, business planning, rural development, agri and allied subjects
- Strong oral and written communication skills and scientific documentary skills
- Strong organization and interpersonal skills
- experience in working with government stakeholders (Ministries, national partners)
- experience in extensively working with and managing partners
- experience with gender and rural development approaches
- experience in data analysis and statistical tools like SPSS/STATA, research designer software like Survey Be/ODK/CSPRO etc

Preferred

- Working experience in social science, development research, rural development and applied economics
- Work experience with international organizations and area of international development
- Good understanding of rural livelihood systems

Responsibilities

3.1. Purpose

- To Monitor and manage the strategic collaboration around seed systems and extension research, conceptualize, design, execute collaborative research to evaluate, improve or strengthen varietal ad quality seed demand creation approaches across various project sites in Tanzania
- To Promote, manage various rural development and innovation models around extension/seed

system/climate smart technologies engaging various institutions, change agents and stakeholders

- Lead development of gender- and market-responsive seed systems interventions and extension approaches for enhancing livelihoods, including demonstration of new varieties to generate demand and capacity building of local institutions.
- Lead development of approaches for promoting seed entrepreneurship amongst women and youth and their collectives
- Design, manage and monitor research activities including necessary protocols, research tools, data collection, analysis and interpretation
- Establish and promote strategic partnership, innovation forums and partner management for key projects.

3.2. Engagement

- Coordinate research with NARES/ Govt and Non Govt extension agencies, and private sector partners for strengthening seed systems and extension research and new approaches in seed and delivery systems
- Manage partners, facilitators, enumerators for executing surveys and various research-oriented interventions
- Lead coordination with NGOs, Community based institutions (CBOs), women's groups for innovation in extension approaches, gender responsive interventions and piloting seed entrepreneurship models
- Engage with Knowledge agencies, training institutions and experts for stakeholder capacity building and strengthening partnership
- Monitor and manage field technical staff for strengthening outreach programs, monitoring, evaluation, action research and experiments

3.3. Delivery

- Strategic Partnership and Collaboration managed and established for research and development activities
- Research studies designed, managed, analyzed and interpreted
- Documentation of research findings including data collection, analyses and reporting, measured outcomes, impacts
- Technical literature and publication in scientist journals/websites
- Knowledge and communication products including website, blogs, newsletters, etc
- Various extension models and interventions for farmers, women farmers and key stakeholders monitored and evaluated
- Develop concept notes and projects for funding or technical collaborations for research and development jointly with relevant IRRI staff
- Develop and contribute towards documentary outputs like knowledge products and research document/publications/scientific writing/policy briefs.

General information:

The duration of contract for the position is two years. This is a nationally recruited position and IITA offers a competitive remuneration package.

Applications: Applications including curriculum vitae, copies of certificates, telephone number, email address, and names and addresses of two referees should be sent to the Country Representative, IITA-Tanzania, Plot No. 25, Mwenje - Coca-Cola Road, Mikocheni Industrial Area P.O. Box 34441, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania or by email to IITA-Tanzania@cgiar.org

Applicants are requested to please indicate the reference number for the position as indicated on the heading of the announcement in your application as well as on the subject of your email if sending by email. If sending by post or hand delivery, please indicate the reference number on your application as well as on the left-hand side of your envelope.

Please note that any applications without the reference number indicated will be automatically disqualified.

Closing date: Two weeks from the date of advertisement appearing in the newspaper. Please note that only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

The Guardian

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THURSDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2020

Taking A New Look
At The News
ESTABLISHED IN 1995

We should protect our girls and eliminate female genital mutilation

IN 2020 alone, there are 4.1 million girls around the world at risk of undergoing female genital mutilation. According to UNFPA, the cost of preventing female genital mutilation is \$95 per girl today. 30 countries where female genital mutilation is prevalent are experiencing high population growth, with at least 30 per cent of girls undergoing female genital mutilation under the age of 15. Young people aged 15 to 19 in countries where female genital mutilation is prevalent are less supportive of continuing the practice than are adults aged 45 to 49.

In many countries where female genital mutilation is prevalent, young girls have a dramatically increased chance of growing up without the risk of undergoing this harmful practice compared to their mothers and grandmothers.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures that involve altering or injuring the female genitalia for non-medical reasons and is recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights, the health and the integrity of girls and women. Girls who undergo female genital mutilation face short-term complications such as severe pain, shock, excessive bleeding, infections, and difficulty in passing urine, as well as long-term consequences for their sexual and reproductive health and mental health.

Although primarily concentrated in 30 countries in Africa and the Middle East, female genital mutilation is a universal problem and is also practiced in some countries in Asia and Latin America. Female genital mutilation continues to persist amongst immigrant populations living in Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand.

To promote the elimination of female genital mutilation, coordinated and systematic efforts are needed, and they must engage whole communities and focus on human rights, gender equality, sexual education and attention to the needs of women and girls who suffer from its consequences.

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2020 Theme: Unleashing Youth Power

In 2012, the UN General Assembly designated February 6th as the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, with the aim to amplify and direct the efforts on the elimination of this practice. Ending female genital mutilation in one decade will require support from every quarter. With significant population growth, especially among youth, investing in young people becomes indispensable. That is why this International Day will focus on mobilizing youth around the eliminations of harmful practices, including female genital mutilation under the theme: "Unleashing Youth Power: One decade of accelerating actions for zero female genital."

UN Action

Although the practice has been around for more than a thousand years, there are reasons to think that female genital mutilation could end in a single generation. That is why the United Nations strives for its full eradication by 2030, following the spirit of Sustainable Development Goal 5.

Since 2008, UNFPA, jointly with UNICEF, leads the largest global programme to accelerate the elimination of female genital mutilation. The programme currently focuses on 17 countries in Africa and the Middle East and also supports regional and global initiatives.

Over the years, this partnership has seen significant achievements. For instance, more than 3.3 million girls and women supported by the Joint Programme have benefited from female genital mutilation-related protection and care services, and 13 countries have established legal frameworks for banning female genital mutilation and have established national budget lines funding programmes to address it.

Illegal fishing is robbing Africa of its ocean wealth

AFRICA'S rich coastal waters have long been plundered by foreign fleets, fishing illegally. Now global initiatives are gathering forces that aim to end such plunder – and protect the livelihoods of coastal communities. For these initiatives to succeed, however, many more countries around the world need to participate.

Illegal fishing is a theft from national revenues. No less than non-renewable petroleum and metals, Africa's renewable fishery resources are a potential source of wealth and opportunity. Governed wisely, they could support livelihoods, promote food security, generate export earnings and support vital ecological systems.

Africa has 35 coastal nations and has some of the world's regions worst hit by illegal fishing. Africa's role will therefore be critical in pushing forward this important global agreement.

At the regional level, the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has issued a policy handbook to help guide efforts by African governments to make fisheries management an integral part of their national development strategies.

African governments should increase fines on vessels that fish illegally, support artisanal fishing, increase transparency, and provide full disclosure of the terms on which commercial fishing per-

mits are issued. It's time to limit the unequal and unfair competition between industrial fishing fleets and artisanal fisheries.

Too often African nations lack the capacity to monitor and enforce compliance. They are weakened by the inaction of states that are unwilling or unable to carry out their regulatory responsibilities. A registry of fishing vessels that sail under a flag of convenience should be established, so African governments have the option of avoiding agreements with such vessels.

Some countries in Africa and beyond are taking decisive action to monitor fishing in their waters. We need many more to follow their lead.

As demand for fish increases worldwide, African waters are becoming a magnet for more and more fleets from around the world. To safeguard these fisheries for Africa's people and for future generations, all countries should join the Port State Measures Agreement and the Fisheries Transparency Initiative. The world's oceans are our common heritage. To protect that heritage, we need to act together, and we need to act quickly.

Fishing is the activity of trying to catch fish. Fish are normally caught in the wild. Techniques for catching fish include hand gathering, spearing, netting, angling and trapping.

The Guardian Limited Key Contacts

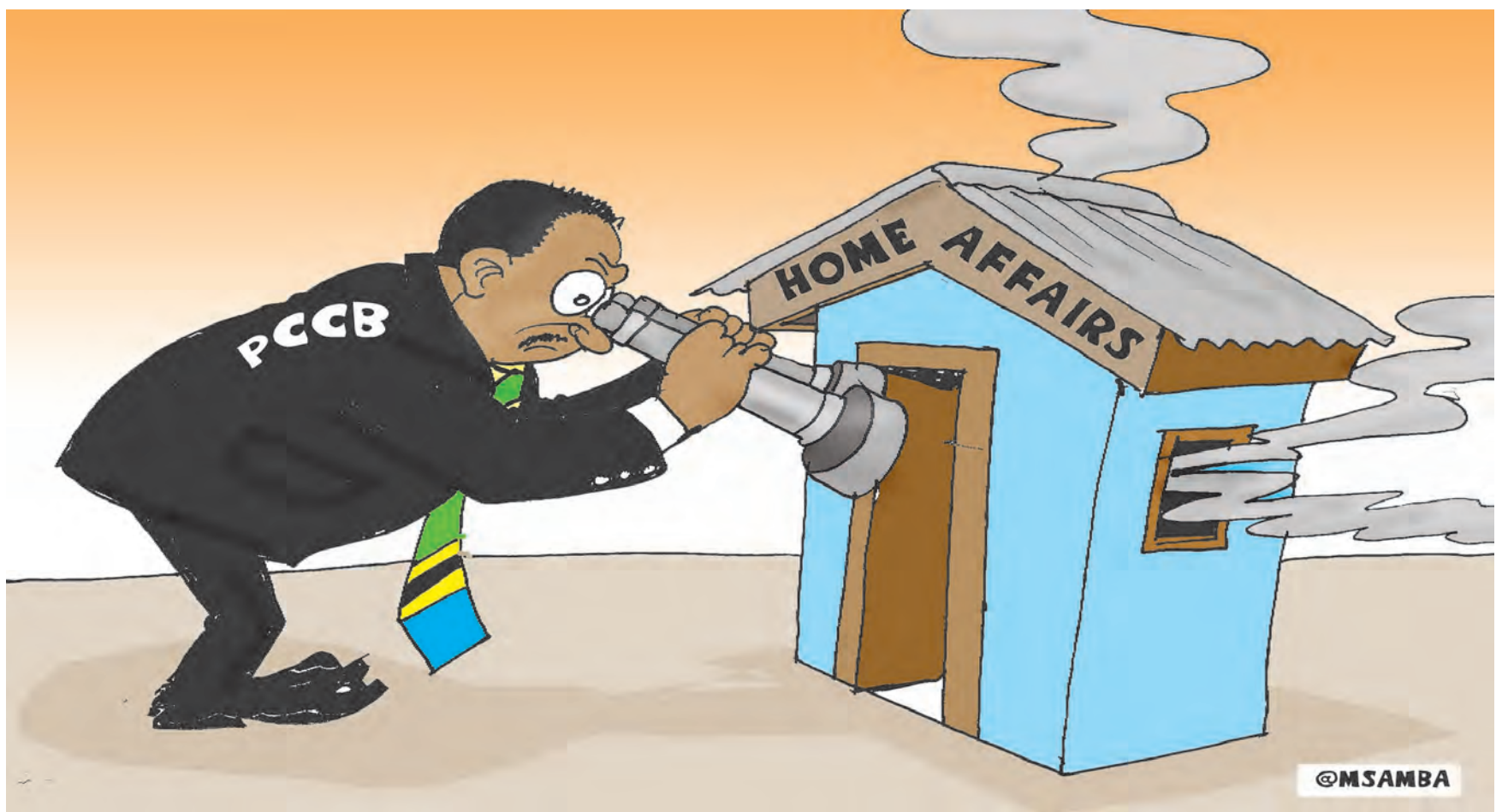
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Multilateralism versus regionalism: Which path should African countries pursue to expand trade and investment opportunities?



WTO members meeting at the General Council agreed on 10 December to extend two existing moratoriums related to customs duties on electronic transmissions and the initiation of "non-violation" complaints under the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). They also approved the WTO's budget for 2020.

By Amina Mohamed

INCREASINGLY, the ability of multilateralism to address contemporary global issues such as climate change and international trade is being questioned. In the case of international trade, WTO Members have thus far not been able to conclude the Doha Round, which was launched in November 2001. The Round was supposed to have been concluded on 1 January 2005, but it has been beset by persistent differences among the WTO Members. Whereas most developing countries believe that the Round is still active and have called for the fulfilment of all Doha mandates, several developed countries are of the view that the Round has run its full course and overtaken by developments in the global economy. They note that three out of the ten top economies in the world are developing countries - Brazil, China and India - and that several developing economies are also competitive in certain sectors of the global economy and that by granting significant flexibilities in the negotiations to these competitive developing economies, the Round's mandates are no longer valid and that differentiation among developing countries should be part of the broader on-going discussion on WTO reform.

The stalemate in the Doha negotiations has prompted countries to look at alternative ways to liberalize trade and investment for the benefit of their businesses and consumers, including negotiating pluri-

lateral agreements at the WTO among a subset of WTO Members and negotiating bilateral and regional trade agreements. In the last five years, concluded bilateral and regional trade agreements include the United States-Mexico and Canada Free Trade Agreement, the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between the European Union and Canada, the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership between eleven Pacific-rim countries, including Australia, Canada and Japan, the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations Plus between Australia, New Zealand and the fourteen Pacific Island Countries and European Union and MERCOSUR Free Trade Agreement.

The scope of these agreements goes beyond the current WTO Agreement and addresses issues of importance to businesses such as electronic commerce, competition policy and investment as well as labour rights and the protection of the environment.

African countries have also not been idle and have recently concluded the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), which is expected to create a market of 1.2 billion people with a gross domestic product of USD2.5 trillion. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa estimates that trade among African countries, which is currently around 15 per cent, can easily be doubled if the current

overall average tariffs of 6.1 per cent are eliminated. The figure is projected to be even higher if the removal of tariffs is accompanied by the elimination of non-tariff barriers on intra-African trade.

With Africa's population expected to exceed 2 billion by 2050, it is envisaged that it would be a magnet for foreign direct investment by leading multinational companies. The World Economic Forum estimates that the AfCFTA will generate USD4 trillion for investments and commercial transactions of goods and services on the continent.

Notwithstanding the immense opportunities the AfCFTA will bring to the African continent, African countries should not turn their backs on the rules-based multilateral trading system, which has contributed significantly to the expansion of the global economy and in the process lifted several millions of people out of absolute poverty. Between 1948 and 2019, world trade grew from USD58.5 billion to almost USD20 trillion and it is estimated that more than 700 million people have been lifted out of absolute poverty with much of that happening in China and India.

African countries should show determination and work closely with the leading WTO Members, including the United States, the European Union, China, Brazil and India to strengthen the organization for the benefit of all countries, particularly African and least developed countries which have been operating at the per-

iphery of the multilateral trading system.

There is agreement among all WTO Members that the current Agreement needs updating considering that the current Agreement entered into force in January 1995. So much has happened in the intervening period and WTO rules need to reflect contemporary trends in the global economy if it is to remain relevant.

The task of reforming the WTO should not be left to a few countries. All countries have a stake in a well-functioning multilateral trading system and collective engagement will ensure that all spectrums of views are considered in the design and implementation of new and effective multilateral trade rules.

The benefits from the AfCFTA would be far greater if alongside regional liberalization, there is also multilateral liberalization, especially considering that Africa's largest trading partners are the European Union, China and the United States.

The two approaches to liberalization are not mutually exclusive and can complement each other as various studies have shown. African countries need not make a choice between the two approaches and should pursue both doggedly to achieve robust economic growth and sustainable development.

The world needs a reinforced rules-based multilateral trading system more than ever to confront the challenges of the 21st century. Bilateral and regional trade agreements cannot be a perfect substitute for the rules-based multilateral trading system, as issues such as trade distorting domestic support to the agriculture sector can only be effectively addressed at the multilateral level.

These agreements, including the AfCFTA also tend to rely heavily on the WTO framework in many areas, including health and food safety and trade remedies.

All WTO Members should work together to preserve and strengthen this public good. Compromises will have to be made and the overarching reason why countries join the WTO in the first place should not be lost on them. Every country that is a WTO Member acknowledges the role trade can play in their national economies in creating jobs, attracting foreign direct investment and lifting standards of living. Protectionism imposes significant costs and countries should avoid going down that path.

African countries have a role to play in breaking the impasse at the WTO and they should work intensively with other WTO Members to reform and strengthen the institution and the rules-based multilateral trading system, while they commence implementing the AfCFTA to boost trade and investment on the continent.

Youths urge decent work guidelines to curb exploitative working environments

By Gaudensia Mngumi

UNEMPLOYMENT remains a chronic challenge for youths in many parts of Tanzania, forcing youths to migrate to cities and especially Dar es Salaam to seek any sort of paid occupation, where the most likely outlet is offering cheap labour. As a result one more often finds dozens of unemployed gathering outside commercial and industrial premises from early morning searching for jobs.

Often such young seekers are found along business parks and industrial areas like Ubungu, Tabata, Mikocheni, Vingunguti, Mbezi and along Nyerere Road, where they incur up to 2,000/- just to go there and leave.

The challenge of massive youth unemployment, plus people working in an environment that is beneficial to employers but disadvantageous to employees, seeing the hopeless situation of job seekers, women abuse and sextortion in work places among other issues were raised in a National Youth Dialogue on Decent Work organized by ActionAid Tanzania (AAT) in Dar es Salaam, late December 2019.

The theme of the meeting was to address a plethora of challenges in the employment sector particularly the prevalence of indecent jobs. These jobs were said to be major contributors to unemployment and the poverty crisis in the country, largely affecting women and children.

In line with the theme, the government through the Ministry of Labour assured the participants that it was working on a number of initiatives to create decent employment environment, which includes the formulation of a national decent work program.

An official from the ministry told the youth dialogue that the ministry is working with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to formulate the program, and strategies

or mechanisms that that will be implemented to overcome the challenges associated with youth unemployment and its attendant indecent work crisis.

More importantly, during the national dialogue on decent work youths explained how they are marginalized and subdued by the fact that some employers are abusive and can hire and fire as they wish.

The young speakers mentioned that early risers who parade outside industrial front gates each morning epitomise the character of the employment crisis in the country. It has made some employers feel like they are over the moon and can do anything they wish to embarrass and subdue employees.

Poverty and globalization were mentioned as major causes of unemployment and indecent jobs in the country, forcing poor young men and women to succumb to indecent work that does not have an employment contract, and is not aligned with the country's labour laws.

Youths from Zanzibar and others from the Mainland spoke bitterly about the way girls (female workers) are exploited in tourist hotels, resorts and hotel lodges by being forced by their employers to put on short and tight dresses, high heels, etc.

"Women are forced to wear short, tight and small garments like miniskirts and small tops at work places to attract customers. Some employers impose that dress code upon women workers to exploit them sexually. They want us to expose our bodies, breasts to persuade customers who sometimes abuse us sexually," they said, insisting that the situation was precarious in casinos where some garments are too revealing, on the basis of what some Zanzibar youths affirmed in a side interview with The Guardian.

The woman complainant said further that, such contract

terms have subjected many girls to sexual harassment by customers, supervisors and even the hotel operators.

The National Youth Dialogue on Decent Work that brought together the Ministry of Labour, lawmakers, NGOs and the media heard a stream of arguments castigating conduct on the issue of employment without contracts and the way it has affected thousands of youths in Tanzania.

Workers are not given contracts and they are assigned to work without mention about work type, length of stay whether it is a three or two year contract, no mention about benefits provided to employees.

Benefits like maternity and lately, paternal leaves are not indicated, termination matters are not explained at all, and as a result workers are unaware under what circumstances the employee or the employer may terminate the contract. Absence of such information expose youths into an indecent work pile up of cases.

Challenges of unscrupulous working contracts emerged during the national youth dialogue on indecent work, with some employers cited as forcing employees to sign misleading contracts. One such contractual format is said to involve signing that an employee shall work for the company for 100 years, and if one quits the job he (or she) has to pay the employer. All those prerogatives mean nothing but to evade company or factory owners' responsibilities.

Amina Bakari Yusufu of the Zanzibar Youth Coalition mentioned that some fishing and tourism companies are forcing workers to sign a 100 year working contract.

Amina observed that despite the fact that tourism and the fishing industry are critical to the socio-economic development of Zanzibar and much for-



eign exchange is harvested from the two sectors, to that extent those are serious challenges for workers. There are things that are happening in those sectors which amplify the extent and manner of indecent employment particularly for the youth.

"Government attention should also be directed at the way in which some employees are not giving their workers personal copies of the employment contracts when they sign them," urges the Isles youth.

As some workers are directed to sign contracts of employment and submit them to employers without being served with their personal copy, some managers alter the contents of the contracts without the workers' knowledge.

And the purpose of doing that is to bar workers from claiming rights such as compensation, leave entitlement, overtime allowances and others as stated under the law.

The youths appealed to the government to formulate an appropriate Decent Work Country Programme for Tanzania that guarantees workers all basic rights, social protection and tripartite dialogue.

Other aspects mentioned are providing for decent jobs, employment benefits such as insurance for high risk work like fishing, etc. Still other areas of entitlement are compensations, overtime allowances, maternity leave benefits and child nursing rights.

Maternity issues raised a heated debate as many youths charged that child birth is a challenging issue when it comes to women in employment.

Many women participants noted that some employers discourage young women workers from having babies.

They prevent them on the ground that if they go for maternity leave it is a loss to the company because they will not be fully utilized when they are expecting and during the time of nursing their babies, the company or factory will suffer losses.

Women who persist and have babies are punished as they have to work from the first month of pregnancy to the full time of gestation. And because most of them are given low wages and do not have employment contracts they do not receive maternity benefits like paid leave as well as time to nurse their newborn.

Similarly, women go through sexual harassment in order to get jobs or even to be paid the full salary amount. In many factories or elsewhere supervisors approach women and solicit sexual favours from them.

Some girls get jobs through sextortion but the terms of employment are often unclear and many aren't sure how much they are supposed to be paid in a month.

At this juncture youths put some recommendations to the government on the way forward, when they de-

manded that the government make systematic follow up to ensure that employers observe labour laws and human rights.

They observed that the current trend where local and central governments officials put greater emphasis on tax collection, revenue and investments while looking down upon multiple challenges in the employment sector.

They recommended that the government increases the number of labour inspectors to safeguard the workers' wellbeing.

Among other things the inspectors should look into how companies and factories observe factual accuracy on workers' earnings, the minimum wage and contracts, on the basis of what Nyoso Mapunda, the Mafia District Youth Development Officer stated.

Mapunda proposes that in districts which do not have labour inspectors youth development officers can be in charge of labour administration - tasked with presiding over relevant meetings, hear complaints and other matters raised by workers to minimize employment distress in the country.

The youth platform, when addressing challenges of sexual violence on women in work places, said that the time has come to create gender desks at work places to empower women to counter sexual proposals and support them to channel harassment cases in work places to the Preventing and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) and other relevant authorities.

ActionAid official Levina Nawenzake underlined that it is not a choice Tanzania that needs a decent work program to safeguard security of employment and better working conditions for women and youths. They are working in an environment that is beneficial to employers but disadvantageous to employees because they face the negative impact of insecure and unstable working environments.

Jovina emphasized that it is through the formulation and implementation of the national decent work program that this trend can be reversed, to stem workers' exploitation, lack of job security, people being employed without employment contracts, women being denied maternity rights, to add to sexual violence on women in places of work.

The NGO activist observes that pressures arising from competitive globalization, privatization and low pace of local investments have gradually caused increasing job insecurity and low wages.

These features have negatively impacted on Tanzania's social and economic growth, which needs to be addressed through labour laws, policy and regulations, she added.

What will the UK look like a decade after Brexit?

Glasgow, United Kingdom

ON Friday, January 31, when clocks across the United Kingdom strike 11pm, Britain's protracted exit from the European Union becomes official.

A fundamental shift in the country's history is under way.

An 11-month transition period compels the UK to briefly abide by EU rules after it ceases to be a member state, but captains of industry, political leaders and human rights groups are bracing themselves for the biggest constitutional change in modern British history.

Can the UK thrive alone, and what might Britain look like 10 years from now?

In the last three and half years, the UK Parliament repeatedly failed to pass its Brexit legislation until the Conservative Party secured a majority in December's general election.

"The end of the Brexit deadlock did bring some welcome relief to businesses," said Suren Thiru, head of economics at the British Chambers of Commerce.

"But we are also aware that this is the first step down a long road and the focus for businesses right now is on that future trade agreement with the EU."

After Johnson's EU-agreed framework for leaving the union was approved earlier this month, he promised to deliver a post-Brexit trade deal with

the bloc by the end of 2020.

The EU's chief Brexit negotiator, Michel Barnier, warned that both sides faced "the risk of a cliff edge" if a trade agreement is not signed off by the end of the post-Brexit transition period on December 31, 2020, when freedom of movement - a central tenet of the EU - will also be abolished in Britain.

Post-Brexit future

In the UK, industry insiders need to know whether the transition period will result in a trade deal or if they should start preparing for a no-deal Brexit.

"UK businesses are very resilient and are able to adapt to significant change if they know what that change will be," argues Thiru, who said British investment in new technologies and moving towards a net-zero carbon economy will be crucial for the long-term economic prospects.

But he also says that Britain's "move away from the existing arrangements" means that it is important to have a "clear future trading relationship with the EU" in order to maintain sustainable growth into 2030 and beyond.

The UK's ability to lift 14 million Britons out of poverty post-Brexit has also become pertinent.

"The more distant we get from the EU the more likely it is that we will get trading barriers,

and that has, all things being equal, negative economic consequences," said Helen Barnard, deputy director of policy and partnerships at the Joseph Rowntree Foundation - an independent social change organisation working to solve UK poverty.

Barnard told Al Jazeera that there are places in the UK that are "much more exposed to their economies taking a hit if we get a lot of trading barriers".

"So, if we end up with a more distant trading relationship what will the UK government do to stimulate those local economies?"

That said, Barnard can imagine a future where, in 10 years' time, "we have left the EU and poverty has been radically reduced" through appropriate government intervention, and where the time freed up from the Brexit process can be fully focussed on "domestic priorities".

Brexit has also raised questions over the UK's clout and unity.

Tim Bale, a politics professor at the Queen Mary University London, expects Britain to "lose the amplification - diplomatic, trading and otherwise - it got from EU membership... despite the UK's independent nuclear deterrent, its seat on the UN Security Council, its own fairly large economy [and] its so-called special relationship with the US."

Anti-Brexit protesters protest outside the Houses of Parliament in London. File photo



"So, on balance, its influence and significance, while it won't disappear, will be diminished - if only slightly by 2030."

Immigration and racism

The campaign to leave the EU relied on rhetoric against immigration and for bolstering, or "regaining control" of borders.

Last year, a UK-wide survey revealed that in the wake of the Brexit vote, ethnic minorities in the UK were facing increasing levels of overt racism.

"People voted to leave the European Union for all sorts of reasons," British-Nigerian historian and broadcaster David Olusoga told Al Jazeera.

"But there are people who have taken that decision as being a new form of nativism. And no what matter your views on Brexit, you can see how

these people have taken the decision [to leave] as a license to express a view of Britain that is fundamentally racial."

Yet, any latent form of racism that has emerged from the Brexit vote, he said, could become a thing of the past in 10 years. "Brexit is a project of the older parts of this population rather than the younger," he said.

"Come 2030, the younger generation will be in charge and their sentiments and their world view and what they're comfortable with [will differ from] their parents and their grandparents."

Scottish statehood?

Scotland and Northern Ireland voted "remain" in the 2016 Brexit referendum, as opposed to leave-voting England and Wales.

Some observers argued this has

raised the prospects of Scottish independence and Irish unity.

Ireland, which is not part of the UK, will remain in the EU, meaning the UK will share a border with the bloc come Saturday.

George Kerevan, economist and former member of Parliament for the pro-independence Scottish National Party (SNP), believes that Scottish statehood, currently supported by 45 to 50 percent of Scots, is likely within the next 10 years.

"I think you could easily say that within 10 years, the natural progress of demographics will see the younger core vote who are more solidly pro-independence move into a majority as the older [more anti-independence] generation dies off," he told Al Jazeera.

Agencies

Cameroon holds elections in a time of crisis

BY PAUL-SIMON HANDY AND FONTEH AKUM

ON 9 February over six million Cameroonians will be called to vote in twin legislative and municipal elections. Initially planned for 2018, the polls were postponed twice for organisational and financial reasons. Voting later this week will still take place under tenuous security and political conditions.

Since 2013, Boko Haram has recurrently attacked in the Far North Region of Cameroon bordering Nigeria and Chad (see map). While the country's defence and security forces have repelled most attacks, Boko Haram maintains sleeper cells in remote enclaves from where it stages deadly sporadic incursions.

Further south-west, armed groups threaten to prevent the vote from taking place. Since 2017 government forces have been fighting a multitude of separatist factions claiming the independence of anglophone regions from a majority francophone Cameroon.

The fighting has forced about 40 000 people to seek refuge in Nigeria and over 450 000 have been internally displaced. This situation accounts for the 2018 presidential election turnout of just 5.36% and 15.94% of voters in the North-West and South-West Regions respectively.

Political tensions added to the security impasse after the 2018 election, which saw President Paul Biya win another seven-year term. Despite losing his appeal at the Constitutional Court, opposition figure Maurice Kamto - the closest contender who officially secured 14% of the vote - claimed he had won.

In January 2019 Kamto was arrested for sedition, insurrection and incitement to violence. This came after a rally organised by his party, the Cameroon Renaissance Movement (MRC), and which had been banned by administrative authorities, ended in violence.

Under pressure internally and externally, Cameroon's president organised a national dialogue in October 2019 aimed at finding solutions to the anglophone crisis. Among other measures, the dialogue recommended greater autonomy for the anglophone regions.

Two months later a law was passed in Parliament enacting the special status of the North-West and South-West



provinces and extending the scope of decentralisation. To further de-escalate political tensions, Kamto was released in October 2019 after eight months of detention. Some have called for the further postponement of the elections until the anglophone crisis is resolved and a more consensual electoral law is passed.

Cameroon's leading opposition political parties remain ambivalent regarding their participation in the polls. They legitimately criticise the electoral law and the government's control over the elections' governing bodies. However, they know that boycotting the polls can affect them negatively.

In March 1992, at the peak of its popularity, the strongest opposition party at the time - the Social Democratic Front (SDF) - boycotted the legislative elections. It was protesting against the management role in the polls of the Ministry of Territorial Administration. The SDF's boycott probably prevented the ruling

With decentralisation on the cards, elections should ideally build the legitimacy of Parliament and municipal councils. File photo

Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) from a humiliating electoral defeat, and enabled the emergence of the National Union for Democracy and Progress as the main opposition bloc in Parliament.

The SDF then performed admirably in the October 1992 presidential election. But the party had a relatively weakened institutional position, as the election management rules hadn't changed much and it had no representatives in Parliament for political leverage. The SDF never really recovered politically from that legislative boycott, and has since always participated in elections.

This partly explains why other political parties haven't followed the MRC's decision to boycott this week's elections. Currently the MRC has only one representative

in Parliament, and so will neither be present in the next legislature nor in any of the city councils. This could be a missed opportunity for a party that - though riding on the popularity of its candidate at the last presidential election - has much to lose if it doesn't secure representation across the country.

Since the re-introduction of multiparty politics in 1992, only seven opposition parties out of over 253 registered political parties have been represented in the 180-seat National Assembly. Biya's CPDM has won absolute majority since 1997 (see table below) and continues to use the machinery of the state to guarantee a single-party type of political domination.

Despite the extreme centralisation of Cameroon's political system in which the president supersedes all other institutions and presiden-

tial decrees are law, Parliament still plays a crucial deliberative, if less legislative, role.

This is seen in the way the ruling party guarantees its hold on the low threshold of a one-third majority. It uses this position to block discussion of important issues such as the anglophone problem, or seeing bills pass the lower house unopposed, and through the upper house, where the president appoints three out of every 10 senators per region.

Given the difficulties faced by opposition parties to present candidates in all constituencies, the CPDM's victory is likely in both elections. In the National Assembly, the main issue will be around the designation of the main opposition party, a role currently played by the SDF with 18 seats.

The biggest challenge for these

elections remains the capacity of Elections Cameroon (ELECAM) - the national agency tasked with organising, managing and supervising the elections - to organise free and fair elections. Regularly criticised for its perceived bias towards the ruling party and government, ELECAM officials must demonstrate the body's neutrality and professionalism.

Above all, the 9 February elections are important to renew the legitimacy of Parliament and municipal councils in the wake of a new decentralisation that is expected by many citizens. Unfortunately, the current political and security climate might make that difficult - leaving a permanent marker on the upcoming elections.

Agencies

UN staffers rattled by deadly coronavirus pandemic

UNITED NATIONS

WITH over 37,500 staffers in its global Secretariat payroll, the United Nations has gone high alert as the deadly coronavirus continues to take a heavy toll worldwide.

The 39-storeyed Secretariat building is perhaps the only sprawling office space in New York city where thousands of staffers and diplomats from 193 countries either work or meet under one roof - along with hundreds of journalists and representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs).

Patricia Nemeth, President of the UN Staff Union (UNSU) in New York, told IPS that staff members have "expressed concerns" to the UNSU, "as to what measures are being taken by the administration to prevent the possibility of contracting the virus from colleagues who may have visited areas where prevalence of the virus is high."

The Staff Union has requested the Department of Operational Support (DOS) to keep staff informed in a timely manner.

"The Staff Union has already been advised that colleagues in DOS are working on various scenarios and options for both the safety of staff and to mitigate any potential impact on the continuity of operations", Nemeth added.

Currently, the total membership of the UN staff union in New York is approximately 6,400 but overall it is close to 20,000 (representing UNHQs NY staff, locally recruited staff in overseas peacekeeping missions and some of the departments that are governed by the Secretariat but their offices based outside of New York ie. United Nations Information Centres (UNIC)

The rest of the staff are not members of UNSU.

The spread of the coronavirus is being described as a pandemic. And at last count, there have been more than 360

deaths in mainland China where the disease originated, with over 17,200 infected, mainly in China, while it has spread to 27 countries and territories - even as researchers are struggling to develop a new vaccine to fight the virus.

The disease has plunged US stocks and threatened to disrupt the global economy as it undermines the import-export trade in China, the world's second largest economy. At least three major US airlines - Delta, United and American Airlines - have temporarily suspended flights to China.

Samir Sanbar, a former UN Assistant Secretary-General (ASG), told IPS the U.N. lead agency, World Health Organization (WHO), seems to be moving in the right direction by suggesting preventive measures and precaution.

A swift appearance by its Director General on the spot indicated serious professional attention.

Obviously, he pointed out, the widespread epidemic across borders places limitations on both the efforts of staff professionally combatting the virus and those trying to perform their regular tasks worldwide.

"It raises a challenge on finding balanced action between the international community and one of the most widely populated member states, a permanent member of the Security Council (namely China)".

That stretches way beyond the WHO framework to the whole U.N. system, said Sanbar, a former head of the UN's Department of Public Information (rechristened Department of Global Communications).

He also suggested that perhaps an Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) - now under another title - composed of heads of UN agencies, funds, programmes and departments should meet to focus in such pressing issues under the leadership of the Secretary-General.

Meanwhile, a UN circular dated Janu-



ary 31 says: "You will have noted that the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the outbreak of a novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) as a public health emergency of international concern"

"While there is currently no known infection of staff and other personnel actively deployed within the Secretariat, the situation is being closely monitored and issues and options are being developed to both maintain the safety and protection of personnel and mitigate any impact on operations where possible."

Precautions and prevention are a priority in supporting preparedness and response efforts across the Secretariat. Multiple actions have already been taken, including strengthening preparedness of UN health facilities and initial efforts to raise awareness amongst all col-

leagues, the circular added.

A dedicated webpage has been established to provide all staff and other Secretariat personnel with more information. Information on precautions and other preventative measures will continue to be added to the site.

"For any UN personnel who are free of symptoms, and returning from China, managers are encouraged to exercise flexibility in terms of using remote working arrangements for staff in these situations who would like to limit their contact with others and work from home for 14 days post travel," the circular says.

A January 30 travel advisory by the US State Department pointedly says: "Do Not Travel to China due to novel coronavirus" - first identified in Wuhan, China, which has a population of over 11 million people.

Travelers should be prepared for travel restrictions to be put into effect with little or no advance notice. Commercial carriers have reduced or suspended routes to and from China.

The US has also placed additional restrictions and advised foreign citizens they will be denied entry into the US if they had traveled in China within the past 14 days.

This would apply to most UN staffers who are neither US citizens or permanent residents who are exempted from the new restrictions.

At this moment, said Nemeth, the Staff Union does not know if any UN staff member has been affected by this new directive.

"Nevertheless, we will continue to follow-up with the administration regarding this matter and should there be a need, we will recommend appropriate action to

maintain the safety and well-being of staff".

Moreover, the Staff Union also stands ready to assist any staff members with concerns, she declared.

The UN circular also says: "If you must travel to China or another area known to be affected:

- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Discuss travel to China with your healthcare provider. Elderly adults and travelers with underlying health issues may be at risk for more severe disease.
- Avoid contact with animals (alive or dead), animal markets, and products that come from animals (such as uncooked meat).
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

Any individual who has travelled in China in the last 14 days and feels sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing should be advised to:

- Seek medical care right away. Before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.
- Avoid contact with others, including public places, commuter transport, and the workplace.
- Do not travel while sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

Agencies

FEATURES

Mahenge villagers relish modern office buildings

By Lusekelo Philemon

THE date might have no symbolic meaning to many but to the residents of Mbindo, Kisewe and Nawenge in Ulanga district, Morogoro region, February 1, 2020, shall remain a day to remember.

A huge elated gathering braved the rains only to greet us with big smiles and ululations.

Men, women—the young and the old all seem to make up the over 100 villagers who have come to witness the ground-breaking ceremony for the three office buildings constructed in their localities by graphite mining firm—Mahenge Resources Limited—a subsidiary of Australian-based Black Rock Mining.

The buildings worth 51m/-financed by the Graphite mine firm as part of its corporate social responsibility (CSR).

Despite the downpour that hit the graphite-rich and mountainous area, villagers from the three villages stayed put as they waited for the official inauguration of the three office buildings, described as crucial to the mine project in the area located 231 km from Morogoro town.

Villagers have been living in abject poverty for years but the arrival of the graphite mining company has seen certain improvements in the residents' welfare.

"We are happy because of these office buildings and we're quite sure that more community projects like this are on course," exclaimed an old lady in the crowd.

She said: "We're happy to these buildings built in our villages. This is a good sign that the mine company has shown to us. Our leaders used to work in difficult conditions."

The event brought on board minister for Minerals, Dotto Biteko, mining officials, Ulanga district officials as well as ward and village leaders.

After enduring years of grinding poverty, residents of Mahenge are now looking forward to a better life, thanks to the discovery of graphite in the area, which is one of the best in the world. Reports have it that the large flake size and high purity of Mahenge graphite tested to date suggests that it can be applied to the premium battery market as well as traditional applications.

People in the area are optimistic that the graphite project would come up with its own blessings ranging from boosting people's livelihoods to the improvement of roads as well as getting reliable markets for their produce.

"This is an important milestone to us and we're optimistic that graphite mine will take us further in terms of socio-economic development," said Michael Lyondo, Nawenge village chairman.

"What Mahenge Resources is doing is a good start. We've started tasting the sweet things and I am sure that when the project becomes fully operational social amenities in this area will be improved," he said.

Ulanga District Executive Director, Jonas Mahosa described graphite mine firm as key for the development of the district and the country at large. He said despite the fact that the investor hasn't started operating, "we've started



Minister for Minerals, Dotto Biteko (C) hands over keys of three village office buildings, which had been built by Graphite Mining firm—Mahenge Resources Limited to Ulanga district commissioner Ngolo Malenya (L) in Mahenge over the weekend. Photo: Guardian Correspondent.

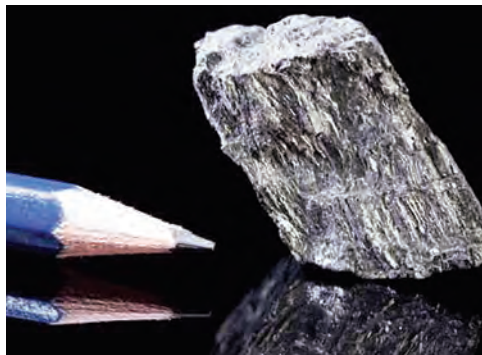
seeing the benefit of mining sector."

"As authorities, we're also working hard to create better and friendly environment to ensure that investors work smoothly," he said, adding that residents are highly involved in every stage related to the project including evaluation process for people who are to be compensated to pave way for the project to kick off, and we've started appointing resident representatives to the evaluation team.

Ulanga MP, Goodluck Mlinga said that the government has moved in to ensure the prospecting and mining is done in accordance with the law and in an orderly way, and ensure that there is a win-win situation between residents and residents.

He said if all goes as planned Mahenge will attain quick socio-economic development, thanks to the presence of Graphite and other the minerals as in most cases investors conducting mining activities need better roads which will open up opportunities in the area.

"This has become a new hope for our people. Mining and graphite mining, in particular, has lots of things to offer for people who in one way or the other will benefit from



the entire value chain of graphite mining activities," said Ngolo Malenya, Ulanga District Commissioner.

Minister Biteko for his part describes the event to hand-over modern offices as a call on other mining firms to make sure they benefit communities around them.

He said Ulanga is endowed with varieties of minerals but in the past neither its people nor government were benefiting from the natural resource, but now things have changed.

The establishment of mineral trading centres in the district, he said that has helped to boost revenue collected from the sector.

noting: "I visited Ulanga District when I was deputy minister for minerals, I discovered that minerals which were sold from one of the mining companies in period of five years worth 4m/- but after the establishment of the mineral trading centre the revenue increased to 396 m/- in just five months."

He however described Mahenge Resources project as an important part of the construction of major mines in the country and will make Mahenge area in Ulanga District one of the best graphite producers in the world.

"Building the three offices is part of the firm's commitment towards responding to people's needs," said John de Vries, Black Rock Mining, managing director & CEO.

"When we asked you (the potentially affected persons), what you wanted, and the response was "we want better housing" we want our communities preserved. We want the keys to our new home. We have heard you. "Give us the Keys" is our approach to Relocation Action Plan (RAP). Today we start with the keys to the village offices," de Vries said.

According to him, building of the village

offices in partnership with Kisewe, Mbindo, and Nawenge villagers was part of the firm to fulfill its promise of "giving the keys".

"In commencing our program of "hand over the keys" we start with your village offices. We also start with completing the RAP process and we agree on fair and reasonable compensation for all affected people," he assured villagers.

De Vries also said Mahenge can play an important role in limiting the impact of climate change through the use of graphite in lithium ion batteries to replace internal combustion engines in cars.

Climate change is increasingly the critical issue of our time and importantly of our children's time, Mahenge is globally important in saving our planet, Vries said.

Through the use of graphite in Lithium Ion Batteries to replace internal combustion engines in cars, Mahenge can have a very important role in limiting the impact of climate change.

"Climate change is increasingly the critical issue of our time and importantly of our children's time. Mahenge is globally important in saving our planet."

He, however, noted that over the last four years they have demonstrated that Mahenge graphite is one of the best graphite in the world.

Mahenge Resources is now finalising a resettlement plan before moving ahead with mobilising financing for building its mine.

The company, whose shareholders injected \$23 million, has so far completed exploration and will also have to comply with the requirement to handover 16 percent free-carried equity to government.

The global graphite market is segmented into North America, Europe, Asia Pacific, Latin America, and Middle East & Africa.

Among all the applications, lubrication, refractoriness, foundry, battery production, and others (Automobile, diamond synthesis, electrolysis), refractories accounted for major revenue share compared to other applications.

WHO executive board appoints directors for Africa and Europe

By Guardian Reporter

THE World Health Organisation's executive board, currently holding its 146th session in Geneva, has re-appointed Dr Matshidiso Moeti (pictured) for a second term as WHO regional director for Africa and Dr Hans Kluge as regional director for Europe in his first term.

"I am greatly honoured to have been appointed to serve a second term as the WHO regional director for Africa and I would like to thank you for the trust you have shown," Dr Moeti said in a statement.

"As Africa increasingly faces the double burden of diseases, the next five years in public health will be crucial in laying a strong foundation to reverse this burden."

Dr Moeti, who is from Botswana, said she will accelerate action towards attaining universal health coverage so that everyone can access care without financial hardship.

Despite significant health challenges in the African region, which serves 47 countries, progress is being made in strengthening health systems, combating diseases and improving people's health. Recent efforts by member states include policies to tackle tobacco use, vaccines for cervical cancer and malaria prevention as well as joint initiatives to procure medicines affordably.

As the first woman WHO regional director for Africa, Dr Moeti was elected as WHO regional director for Africa on 1 February 2015. In 1999, she joined the WHO regional office for Africa, and has served as deputy regional director, assistant regional director, director of noncommunicable diseases, WHO representative for Malawi, coordinator of the inter-country support team for the South and East African countries and regional advisor for HIV/AIDS.

Before joining WHO, Dr Moeti worked as team leader of the Africa and Middle East desk in Geneva (1997-1999) with the joint united nations programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). She also worked with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) as regional health advisor for East and Southern Africa; and with Botswana's ministry of health as a clinician and public health specialist.

Dr Moeti holds a degree in medicine (M.B., B.S) and a master's degree in public health (MSc in community health for developing countries) from the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine, University of London and

the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, respectively. She was awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Health & Allied Sciences, Ghana.



In his new role as regional director for Europe, Dr Hans Kluge will direct international health work across the 53 countries of the WHO European Region, serving a population of 900 million people.

He said his vision for health in the European region is for no one to be left behind and that major govern-

ment policies should include health for people-centered and financially-sustainable healthcare and public health services, including affordable medicines.

Dr Kluge is a Belgian national who was previously Director of the Division of Health Systems and Public Health at

WHO/Europe. In his role with WHO/Europe, he prioritized a participatory approach with staff based on the WHO values charter as well as eradicating harassment.

Explaining his vision for health, Dr Kluge commented, "Every child, every woman and every man in our beautiful and diverse Region has the right to health. I am committed to delivering united action for better health."

This means applying the best data and evidence, demanding increasing investment in health, strengthening our health systems around people's needs, and extending inclusive and non-discriminatory access to health care to all. By so doing, we build fair, happy, sustainable societies for ourselves and generations to come."

Over the past 25 years, Dr Kluge has been active in public health, beginning his career as a family doctor in Belgium and serving for Médecins Sans Frontières in Liberia and Somalia.

His work involved large-scale tuberculosis programmes in prison systems in Siberia and several countries of the former Soviet Union. At the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia, he headed tuberculosis, AIDS and malaria programmes in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Myanmar.

'Nobody eats GDP', AfDB boss tells African govts to get to work

ABIDJAN

AFRICA'S economies are growing strongly, but growth alone cannot meet the needs of the continent's poorest citizens, because "nobody eats Gross Domestic Product (GDP)," the President of the African Development Bank, Akinwumi Adesina said as he unveiled the Bank's flagship economic report on Thursday.

The 2020 African Economic Outlook (AEO) showed that the continent's economies are growing well, higher than the global average. The report projected a steady rise in growth in Africa from 3.4 percent in 2019 to 3.9 percent in 2020 and 4.1 percent in 2021.

According to the report, the figures do not tell the whole story across the continent, the poor are

not seeing enough of the benefits of robust growth. Relatively few African countries posted significant declines in extreme poverty and inequality, which remain higher than in other regions of the world.

Inclusive growth occurred in only 18 of 48 African countries with data, the report revealed.

According to Adesina "growth must be visible, growth must be equitable, growth must be felt in

the lives of people."

The theme of the 2020 Africa Economic Outlook report, Developing Africa's workforce for the future, calls for swift action to address human capital development in African countries, where inclusive growth has been held back by a mismatch between young workers' skills and the needs of employers.

The Bank's flagship report states

that increased investments in education is key as well as progressive universalism in education spending, setting high priorities for the poor and disadvantaged and focusing on basic education first where social returns are highest.

In its recommendations, the report suggests on improving access to education in remote areas, incentives such as free uniforms and text books, banning child labour

and improving teaching standards.

To better match skills with job opportunities, the report recommends that governments need to develop a demand-driven education system in tune with rapidly emerging jobs in the private sector, including software engineers, marketing specialists and data analysts, the report says.

"Africa is blessed with resources, but its future lies in its people...ed-

ucation is the great equalizer.

Only by developing our workforce will we make a dent in poverty, close the income gap between rich and poor, and adopt new technologies to create jobs in knowledge-intensive sectors," said Hanan Morsy, director of the macroeconomic policy, forecasting and research department at the Bank.

Digital civil registration to reduce number of 'invisible' people, bring Kenya closer to the SDGs

NAIROBI

A RECENT opinion piece in the New York Times titled, "Kenya's New Digital IDs May Exclude Millions of Minorities" raises an issue that the UN is passionate about: that the pursuit of sustainable development should leave no one behind.

In seeking inclusivity of all in the development narrative, Kenya is making important gains in making the invisible, visible.

The court ruling that gave the Government the green light to continue with digital civil registration- if implemented in an inclusive and non-discriminatory manner, could assist many citizens who have come to be known as 'invisible' people - including stateless persons, people with disabilities, and people living in rural and remote areas. This will improve inclusion and access to services.

Most of these groups continue to miss out on a range of key services such as schooling, bank accounts, obtaining a mobile phone, getting a job, voting and registering a formal business.

Estimated to number one billion globally, they are 'invisible' because they have often failed to get registered, with UN member states adopting SDG Target 16.9 "to provide legal identity for all, including birth registration" by 2030, with consensus that identification is a key enabler of many other SDG goals and targets.

Several organizations including the UN and the World Bank Group are currently supporting civil registration and ID-related projects that will enhance and strengthen the transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness of governance and the delivery of public services and programmes.

For years, Kenya has had unique challenges in the registration of citizens, especially due to a migrant population, and those with historical and cultural ties to relatively unstable areas, particularly on the border with Somalia. The terrorist attacks by the Somalia-based Al Shabaab have often led to stricter requirements for proof of citizenship by those living in the bordering counties. This is an issue the national and county authorities must come together to resolve.

I have seen first-hand the scourge of cross border terror attacks in Kenya and we are mindful of the concerns of



Kenyans register Huduma-Namba. File photo

the state security apparatus, but the primacy of Human Rights must be safeguarded.

A compounding factor is that many Kenyans do not have birth certificates as many mothers give birth at home. In the absence of birth certificates, registration officers have had to demand for other documents as proof of citizenship, demands that have been deemed discriminatory. This is challenge and must be resolved. Birth registration is important because it's the first step in ending statelessness in the country. As per UNHCR, it is estimated that there are at least another 14,000 stateless people in Kenya seeking nationality who need help.

There have been cases of non-citizens acquiring IDs by corrupting government registration officials.

The issue of registration of minority ethnic groups has been raised by human rights groups for a long time.

Embracing of digital technology per se is not in itself the problem. Indeed, a past report by the Kenya National Human Rights Commission proposed the fast-tracking of a bio-metric system of registration among other policy and administrative recommendations.

While biometric registration is expected to reduce cases of fraudulent issuance of IDs, there are also genuine fears that digital technology can increase many of the risks associated with collecting and managing personal data, and this is one of the issues being canvassed in the on-going court case. This underscores the need to implement the digital registration respecting rights to data protection and ensuring participation of the public for their buy in.

The high court emphasized this

in its ruling on 31 January 2020.

To its credit, the government has already acknowledged the challenges related to civil registration, and the Minister for Interior Mr Fred Matiangi has been remarkably hands-on in reforming the department.

President Uhuru Kenyatta has launched the blueprint themed "powering Kenya's transformation" one of whose pillars is the use of digital services and platforms to generate more revenue; reduce waste; improve Government services and efficiency and increase citizen participation.

Despite its unique challenges, Kenya cannot be an exception and will need to join the rapidly growing number of countries implementing new digital ID systems. Kenya is indeed a leader

on this biometric ID project and as such the example that Kenya will undoubtedly influence others within the region. This is why the UN in Kenya is dedicated to an ongoing process of support to develop the country's capacity, institutions, laws and regulations to make the registration process inclusive and fit-for-purpose in the digital age.

This support is in line with the Principles on Identification for Sustainable Development that were developed in 2017 and endorsed widely by the UN and international organizations, non-governmental organizations, development partners, and private-sector associations.

As Kenya prepares for its national elections in 2022, and with over 1 million voters coming of

age every year, a robust digital identity can dispense with the need of voter registration which is time consuming and expensive

While speaking to Joe Mucheru, the Cabinet Secretary for ICT, Innovations and Youth, he said, "as emphasised in the court ruling, we will together with all key partners, including the UN to develop rigorous security systems and regulations for data protection".

The UN in Kenya is committed to partner with the Government to avoid risks of exclusion and discrimination, especially those of the poorest and most vulnerable and leave no one behind.

Siddharth Chatterjee is the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Kenya.

A bigger impact in a smaller world: The China situation

NEW YORK

WE are now living in a hyper communicative world where news does travel faster than lightning. Boundaries, borders, geographical and time differences have become next to obsolete in today's speed driven world. At any point in time people, news and local occurrences can influence internationally without much local isolation. Along with the advantages of technology, communications and connections world is also facing new challenges that are proportionally evolving with advancement. One region affected today is affecting the global economy and population in frenzy of minutes, hours and days.

China's population reached 1 billion in 1982. As of November 2019, China's population stands at 1.435 billion, the largest of any country in the world. And Chinese nationalities are avid travelers. In less than two decades China has grown to the world's most powerful outbound market. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Chinese tourists overseas spent \$277.3 bn in 2018, up from around \$10 bn in the year 2000. (1)

In February 2020, China has reported an outbreak of a highly pathogenic strain of the H5N1 virus which is a subtype of the influenza A virus which can cause illness in humans and many other animal species when affected. The flu has been detected at a farm in Shaoyang city of the southern province of Hunan in China. The case occurred on a farm with 7,850 chickens, 4,500

of which have died of the bird flu. The authorities have culled 17,828 poultry following the outbreak. (2) No human cases of the Hunan H5N1 virus have been reported yet.

The pandemic influenza virus has its origins in avian influenza viruses. The highly pathogenic avian influenza virus subtype H5N1 is already panzootic in poultry, with attendant economic consequences. It continues to cross species barriers to infect humans and other mammals, often with fatal outcomes. A study published in the open-access journal Respiratory Research reveals that, in human cells, the virus can trigger levels of inflammatory proteins more than 10 times higher than the common human flu virus H1N1. This might contribute to the unusual severity of the disease caused by H5N1 in humans, which can escalate into life-threatening pneumonia and acute respiratory distress. (3)

The outbreak of the H5N1 virus has a severe impact on the global economy and health. The virus was first detected in 1996 in geese in China. Asian H5N1 was first detected in humans in 1997 during a poultry outbreak in Hong Kong and has since been detected in poultry and wild birds in more than 50 countries around the world. However, bird flu is highly deadly to humans who contract it, with a mortality rate of more than 50 percent in cases over the last 15 years, which is much deadlier to humans than either SARS (a 10 percent mortality rate) or the novel coronavirus (a 2 percent mortality rate in the outbreak so far). From 2003 to 2019, WHO reported a total of 861 confirmed human cases of H5N1 worldwide, of

whom 455 have died. In China, 53 human cases of bird flu infections have been reported in the past 16 years, with 31 having died. (4)

This outbreak of H5N1 is following the outbreak of the Wuhan coronavirus, which is believed to have originated from a bat in the Hubei province, which is North of Hunan, continues to spread throughout the country. The number of confirmed cases of the coronavirus worldwide is now 14,557, most of which are in China, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) data. The death toll has risen to at least 304.

A 44-year-old man in the Philippines died of the virus on Saturday, making him the first reported death outside of China. All territories and provinces in China have now been impacted by the virus. (6) The rise in new coronavirus cases outside China now constitutes a global health emergency, the World Health Organization's Emergency Committee declared on all countries to take urgent measures to contain the respiratory disease. (5) Coronaviruses are a large family of respiratory viruses that can cause diseases ranging from the common cold to the Middle-East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) (7).

The Novel Coronavirus has now spread to 16 countries. While this represents only one percent of the total, the geographic spread is wide, with patients diagnosed in Australia, Europe, and North America as well as several countries in Southeast Asia. At a press briefing in Geneva, Michael Ryan, the head of the World Health Organization



People wear face masks in the waiting area at China's Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport. File photo

health emergency program, said that "the whole world needs to be on alert now. The whole world needs to take action and be ready for any cases that come from the epicenter of another epicenter that becomes established". (8)

Chinese authorities have announced a temporary ban on outbound group travel. Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and the Philippines have stopped accepting visitors from China's Hubei province, and Russia and Mongolia have closed their borders with China. The latest numbers of cases detected so far internationally according to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control of Coronavirus outside China till February 3rd, 2020 are: 20 cases in Japan, 19 in Thailand, 15 in South Korea, 12 in Australia, 11 in Taiwan there, 8 cases in Malaysia, Singa-

pore, the United States, Germany, and & in Vietnam. UAE, Canada, Italy, The United Kingdom, Russia, Cambodia, Finland, Nepal, Spain, Sri Lanka, and Sweden have also reported the detection of cases. (9) Across the world, from United Airlines to British Airways have cut flights to and from China or suspended them altogether. The chief economist at SMBC Nikko Securities estimates that if the Chinese government banned travel overseas for six months—an extreme scenario—spending by Chinese group tourists would decline \$83.1 billion and take 0.1 percentage points off global economic growth. (10)

China is planning to push a net 150 billion yuan into its economy to help protect it from the impact of the coronavirus outbreak. China's central bank said the move would ensure there was

enough liquidity in the banking system and help provide a stable currency market. Analysts say the impact of the virus - which has left major cities in full or partial lockdown, could harm growth if it lasts for a prolonged period. Global markets have been also been shaken by the epidemic. (11)

The Chinese authorities have established massive efforts and helped to slow down the spread of the virus, but it has not been halted. There is a continuous increase in the number of cases and the evidence of human to human transmission outside China is deeply concerning. The inbound and outbound travel occurring before the cases were detected have created a massive impact on spreading the virus.



Thursday 6 February 2020



Zimbabwe's Finance Minister, Mthuli Ncube.

Legal experts question Zim's tax exemptions for Huawei

HARARE

Zimbabwe's decision to grant tax breaks and back date refunds for Chinese tech firm Huawei has been criticised by legal experts who argue that this disadvantages local companies and other taxpayers.

The Southern African country continues to lean on China for its tech programs. The most recent example of this was when TelOne partnered with a Chinese company to help set up Zimbabwe's first computer assembly plant.

Huawei is considered a major tech player in Zimbabwe because it provides network equipment used to upgrade the platforms of mobile phone operators NetOne and TelOne. Funding for these network expansion and upgrade programs is being provided by the Export Import Bank of China.

Legal expert Fadzai Mahere said on Wednesday that she was "disgusted by the fact that (Zimbabwe has) given a rich, Chinese tech giant, Huawei a tax break that dates back to 2009 in circumstances where local corporates and individuals are choked to death" by the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority.

A 2019 government gazette notes: "With effect from the 25th August, 2014, the receipts and accruals of Huawei Technologies Co... are approved ... as being exempt from income tax on any receipts and accruals."

Additionally, last Friday, the government published a statutory instrument which further backdated the tax exemption, which will culminate in tax refunds for the period between 2009 and 2014. Statutory Instrument 24 of 2020 amends section one of the 2019 SI "by deletion of the words 25th August 2014 and substitution with the words 30th December 2009."

This applies to exemptions and refunds of Value Added Tax. The government will pay refunds on income tax backdated from 2014 to 2009 under Statutory Instrument 25 of 2020, also published Friday. Other analysts also questioned the granting of tax exemptions to Huawei as "it is not building any factories" or creating meaningful jobs.

However, legal resource organisation Veritas explains that the tax exemptions and refunds "give effect to the Framework Agreement between the Government of Zimbabwe and the Export-Import Bank" of China.

They confer "taxation privileges" for the purposes of NetOne Cellular Limited and TelOne Limited infrastructure modernisation projects conducted using funds provided by the Bank. The Statutory Instruments "exempts Huawei's receipts and accruals under the projects from income tax, non-resident tax on fees and capital gains tax."

Veritas adds that regulatory instruments also provide for "VAT refunds for the benefit of Huawei, NetOne and TelOne in respect of goods and services purchased for the projects using funds" provided by the Bank.

Africa Trade Insurance offers to cushion govt against commercial borrowing

By The Banker Reporter

TREASURY can save taxpayers billions of shillings in credit processing and services charges if it uses Africa Trade Insurance Agency's instruments.

ATI Resident Underwriter, Tusekile Kibonde said in Dodoma city yesterday while briefing Treasury officials on the agency's financing options which the government can make use of to avoid paying massive charges on loans borrowed to finance giant infrastructure projects.

"ATI is now among the top development financing institutions working in Africa. We achieved this status based solely on the valuable partnerships we have formed over the years with our member governments," said Kibonde.

Tanzania which is one of ATI's founder members, has already made use of the agency's financing instruments which includes funding for Standard Gauge Railway and other projects valued at over US\$2 billion (over 4.6trn/-) in the past five years.

"As a founding member, Tanzania was an early supporter of our development so we are humbled to now be in a position to put everything we can into helping to propel our countries forward," she



ATI Resident Underwriter, Tusekile Kibonde speaks in Dodoma early this week. Photo courtesy of ATI.

noted. She said ATI proposal supports Treasury's efforts to attract more investments and decrease commercial borrowing costs.

In a series of briefings with government officials including Treasury Permanent Secretary, Dotto James, ATI offered solutions that can provide a viable option to attract needed investments while reducing future financing charges by US\$2-3 million (between 4.6 and 6.8bn/-) annually on financing covering 10 or more years.

Tanzania is a founding member of ATI, a multilateral and pan-African institution providing investment and credit guarantees to help member governments attract investments. Under the proposed scheme, before the government approaches the international market with a

borrowing request, ATI could provide a 'credit wrap' on the request, which would trigger a reduction in the financing charges.

Tanzania Private Sector Foundation's Executive Director Godfrey Simbeye who is also an ATI board member said as a representative of Tanzania, he has full confidence in the agency's financing opportunities.

"I can confirm that ATI has grown into a powerful partner that is respected by African governments as well as international financial institutions. ATI is therefore well positioned to provide a link to international markets that will benefit Tanzania and other governments," Simbeye said.

Commenting on ATI's financing opportunities,

representatives from the country's two main commercial banks, CRDB Bank Plc and NMB Bank Plc said the option is good and convenient.

"As a leading fully-fledged local commercial bank in Tanzania, NMB Bank Plc is committed to support government's development plans in a sustainable manner through innovative financial solutions, leveraging key partners with strong global recognition and capacity such as ATI towards achieving the goals of Vision 2025," noted the bank's Head of Trade Finance, Linda Tegissa.

"In partnership with ATI, CRDB has been able to support big infrastructure projects in Tanzania, which as a commercial bank we could not be able to do it alone. We look forward to enhance this partnership with ATI, to support more infrastructure projects in Tanzania," said Prosper Nambaya, who is the bank's acting Director of Corporate Banking.

ATI has already helped several West African member governments under the proposed initiative. In 2019, ATI helped Benin and Côte d'Ivoire to obtain close to US\$1 billion financing with tenures in the low-single digits and with 10 to 12 year tenures. ATI bridges financing gaps by providing required guarantees to its member governments backed by endorsement by global credit rating agencies, S&P and Moody's.



Finance Minister, Dr Philip Mpango has exerted pressure on Bank of Tanzania to reign in hiked interest rates charged by financial institutions on loans.

Interest rates on deposits go down as banks post handsome profits

By Francis Kajubi

TIER 1 commercial banks have continued to post impressive results raking in billions of shilling in profits while denying their depositors fair interest payment.

According to Bank of Tanzania's monthly economic review for the year ended November 2019, overall interest rates offered on deposits by banks fell from 7.84 percent in 2018 to 6.97 percent last year.

"The decrease in deposits rates reflects adequate liquidity in the banking system while one-year deposit rate averaged 9.38 percent compared with 8.03 percent. Accordingly, the spread between one-year deposits rate and lending rate narrowed to 7.51 percentage points from 10.65 percent in the corresponding period," the BoT report stated.

The central bank also asserts that lending rates declined on account of measures taken to reduce risk premium coupled with sustained accommodative monetary policy stance and streamlined fiscal policy.

The overall lending rate eased to an average of 16.94 percent from 17.13 percent while one-year lending rate fell to 16.90 percent from 18.69 percent, the Central Bank stated noting that on the contrary, most profitable commercial

banks namely CRDB Bank Plc, NMB Bank Plc, National Bank of Commerce, Standard Chartered Bank, Diamond Trust Bank, Azania Bank Limited, Stanbic Bank, Barclays (Absa), TPB Bank and Exim Bank registered a combined 429,487bn/- net profit for the year ending December 2019.

Bank of Tanzania which has been under pressure from Finance and Economic Planning Minister, Dr Phillip Mpango to reign in hiked interest rates charged on loans has always promised to use available legal provisions to ensure that banks don't fleece clients.

In comments made late last year when he spoke to The Banker, BoT's Director of Finance Sector Supervision, Jerry Sabi said the country's banking industry is liberalized with interest rate left to be determined by market forces.

Sabi said much as the Central Bank may wish to intervene, it can only do so by cutting down on its discount rate to boost liquidity which in return makes money available for lending at lower rates.

"However, to ensure there is proper market conduct and to protect borrowers banks are required to disclose their lending rates to the public through publications in the newspapers and at their respective banking halls," the BoT Director noted.

Half of Malaysia's banking assets to be Sharia-compliant by 2030

KUALALUMPUR

Malaysia can expect half of its banking assets to be Islamic by 2030 as the industry's growth outpaces conventional banking, according to its lenders' association.

Loans that comply with the religion's

ban on interest is set to increase by 10 per cent to 15 per cent annually over the next five years, outpacing the 5 per cent to 7 per cent growth seen for non-Islamic loans, said Adissadikin Ali, president of the Association of Islamic Banking and Financial Institutions Malaysia, or Aibim.

"The name of the game in Islamic finance is differentiation," he said in an interview in Kuala Lumpur. Consumers are becoming more familiar with Sharia-compliant products, he added. Moreover, the industry's focus on values-based financing, which calls for protecting people and the planet, will

help spur demand amid growing interest in ethical investing, he said.

Malaysia, which pioneered Islamic finance in the 1980s, set a target for Sharia-compliant assets to reach 40 per cent of the total industry by 2020. That proportion has only reached 31 per cent as of 2018, equivalent to 916.7 bil-

lion ringgit (\$224bn), according to the central bank.

Mr Adissadikin, who is also chief executive at RHB Islamic Bank, said he was confident of his 50 per cent forecast for 2030 even if Malaysia falls short of its 2020 goal. The signs can be seen in the nation's largest banks, he

said, with Malayan Banking's Islamic loans accounting for 61 per cent of the total and RHB Bank's ratio rising to 38 per cent, from 26 per cent in 2017. "Islamic banks are already on par with the conventional in Malaysia," he said. "What you see in conventional, you can see in Islamic."

RC urges public to seize franchise opportunities presented by Total Tanzania

By The Banker Reporter, Marangu

LOCAL business people have been challenged to seize investment opportunities being presented by Total Tanzania Limited which is expanding its business empire in the country.

Kilimanjaro Regional Commissioner, Anna Mghwira said in Marangu this week that local business owners should take advantage of the energy giant's expansion by seeking franchise deals to run and operate Total service stations.

Mghwira who launched Total Tanzania's service station along Himo-Marangu Road, said such expansion projects also help to improve service delivery to the public hence government will always support the company and others in the market.

"When we get opportunities like these, where by our local businessmen can partner with multinational companies like Total, it is a very good idea that should be emulated by other companies," she said. Total Tanzania is a subsidiary of France based Total International.

The Kilimanjaro RC also commended the local businessman who teamed up with Total to bring



Kilimanjaro Regional Commissioner, Anna Mghwira refuelling a customer's car when she launched a Total Kilimanjaro service station in Marangu earlier this week. Right is Total Tanzania's Managing Director, Jean Franchois Schoepp and other company officials. Photo courtesy of Total Tanzania.

to Marangu the world class service station to serve consumers with quality brand products and car servicing.

"I hope other business owners will follow your lead and that we will be able to see more of Total service stations in other areas

as they promote growth of communities by providing employment opportunities," she added.

Briefing the RC, Total Tanzania Limited's Managing Director, Jean Franchois Schoepp said the French conglomerate has an expansion plan aimed at reaching Tanzanian consumers by providing them good services and brand products from Total.

"We invite partners, who are willing to franchise with the Total brand through our DODO program. As we stand, we know Kilimanjaro is big and we have other areas where Total has not reached such as Rombo, Machame and Holili, it is my expectation that more Tanzanian businessmen will grab this wonderful opportunity to partner with us," Schoepp noted.

"We are very happy to work in partnership with Eliawony Towo and we look forward to supplying the region with our products and expand our markets further," he added.

On his part, owner of the new Total Kilimanjaro service station, Eliawony Towo not

only promised superior products such as fuels, lubricants and car services, but also to open a modern Total shop and a cafe that will save locally roasted coffee to produce cappuccino and expresso. "Now that the Total brand is here, expect the best," pledged Towo.

Total Tanzania Limited is a petroleum marketing and service company, incorporated in Tanzania since 1969 with focus on marketing, supply and servicing of petroleum products, heavy furnace oil and lubricants.

As part of its diversification, Total Tanzania through the Total Access to Solar (TATS) project supports the distribution of Total solar lamps to local communities.

Total's recent acquisition of Gapco Tanzania Limited and the launch of a lubricants blending plant has expanded its footprint in the market with more than 100 service stations.

EFG concludes advisory to Pakistan's UBL's sale of local subsidiary to Exim Bank

By The Banker Reporter

EFG Hermes, the leading financial services corporation in Frontier Emerging Markets (FEM), has announced the successful completion of its advisory services to Pakistan's United Bank Limited (UBL) on the sale of the assets and liabilities of its Tanzanian subsidiary, UBL Tanzania (UBLT) to Exim Bank Tanzania Limited.

EFG Hermes acted as the sole adviser to UBL on the transaction, which is part of the Pakistani bank's strategy to reposition and realign itself globally, EFG said in a statement. "The transaction is a testament to our ability to successfully conclude cross-border mandates involving multiple jurisdictions, laws and regulations," said EFG Hermes Frontier's CEO, Ali Khalpey.

"With on-ground presence in 13 countries across four continents and a world-class team of professionals with a stellar track-record in equity, debt and M&A transactions, EFG Hermes is now uniquely positioned to continue



EFG Hermes Frontier's CEO, Ali Khalpey.

its foray into Frontier Emerging Markets," added Khalpey.

The UBL advisory is EFG Hermes' first cross-border M&A transaction in East Africa since entering the Kenyan market in 2017 as a hub and

launching pad into East Africa. "Both of these transactions are indicative of what has been a watershed year for EFG Hermes' Frontier. We have a strong, dedicated team of professionals in place who have helped us emerge as market

and thought leaders within a very short period of time despite less than optimal market conditions," he noted.

"Our first frontier advisory came in 2018 in Southeast Asia with the IPO of ASA International on the London Stock Exchange, followed by advisory on Helios Towers' LSE listing earlier this year and we look forward to more to come," the EFG Hermes Frontier CEO bragged.

With the current momentum and a strong pipeline of deals in newly-entered markets, EFG Hermes Frontier is poised to ramp up its expansion into frontier markets with advisory services that complement the firm's market-leading brokerage and research offerings.

UBL is Pakistan's largest private bank with more than 1,390 branches across the country and 19 international branches serving more than four million customers. The bank operates in wholesale and retail banking through its presence across 12 countries including the UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Yemen, UK, Switzerland, China, Oman and the United States.

IFC leads buyout of AAR Healthcare

NAIROBI

A consortium led by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) is set to acquire a 54.23 percent stake in AAR Healthcare Holdings, the operator of hospitals and clinics in Kenya and other East Africa countries.

The Competition Authority of Kenya (CAK) approved the proposed transaction which will cost the consortium, Hospital Holding Limited, more than Sh1.5 billion. The regulator says the buyout will not have a negative impact on competition in the local healthcare sector, noting that the consortium intends to make additional investments in AAR besides retaining its current workforce.

"Premised on the above, Authority approved the proposed acquisition of 54.23 percent of issued shares from AAR Health Care Holdings Limited by Hospital Holding Limited unconditionally," CAK said in a notice. Besides IFC, Hospital Holding's other investors include Sweden's State-owned investment company Swedfund and other private entities.

The deal follows IFC's November 2019 announcement that it had partnered with private investors to raise a total of Sh11.5 billion to buy significant stakes in health facilities in Kenya and Tanzania. IFC in 2013 made an individual Sh400 million (\$4 million) equity investment in AAR Healthcare when it operated 28 clinics across the three markets.

AAR is an operational holding company which owns and operates 40 primary care clinics in East Africa and a hospital in Uganda. In Kenya, AAR runs 21 primary outpatient healthcare clinics which provide consultation, laboratory, pharmacy and basic radiology services.

AAR currently operates 40 primary care clinics in East Africa and a hospital in Uganda. In Kenya, it runs 21 primary outpatient healthcare clinics providing consultation, laboratory, pharmacy and basic radiology services, giving it a 0.6 percent market share in Kenya.

IFC says its investment in AAR is motivated by the growing trend towards private health care in Africa. "World Bank Group studies show that 50 percent of health expenditure in sub-Saharan Africa is financed by out-of-pocket payments from individuals," IFC said.

Motsepe's TymeBank partners with Zion Christian Church

JOHANNESBURG

Investment holding company African Rainbow Capital (ARC), which was founded by billionaire SA businessman Patrice Motsepe, announced on Sunday that TymeBank, in which ARC has a majority shareholding, has entered into a partnership with the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) to offer a banking proposition to its members.

The ZCC is the largest African-initiated church in Southern Africa, with membership of about 12 million. About nine million ZCC members are based in South Africa of which about six million are adults.

The partnership with TymeBank introduces the ZCM (Zion City Moria) Membership Card, which will serve as both a membership card as well as the member's bank debit card. Among the benefits offered by the card are extra Smart Shopper rewards on Pick n Pay purchases; zero-rated data for SmartApp and internet banking; and security access control.

The first phase of the partnership is a pilot run with a smaller group of ZCC elders taken through TymeBank's kiosk-based process, supported by Zetnet agents. Zetnet Mobile is a mobile and digital services company, managed by Shafick Jardine and Trevor Theledi, which is owned by the church. The company drives the church's digitisation mandate, distribution and



TymeBank CEO Tauriq Keraan.

mobile telephony products and services.

Motsepe said at the launch, which took place at the church's headquarters in Moria, Limpopo, that, as the majority shareholder in TymeBank, ARC is very proud of its partnership with the ZCC to provide a competitive and

low-cost banking product to the members of the ZCC.

He pointed out that ARC, which is entering its fifth year as a business, has made a number of key investments to drive financial inclusion. For instance, in the life insurance industry it partnered with Rand Mutual Assurance and African

Rainbow Life; in healthcare it partnered with Afrocentric; in pension fund administration it partnered with Alexander Forbes and in banking it launched TymeBank.

"All of these investments, along with many others, challenge the status quo in terms of the often relatively high cost

CRDB board chair Ally Laay's word on Nsekela comes true

By The Banker Reporter

WHEN Ally Laay, the CRDB Bank Plc Board Chairman announced Abdulmajid Nsekela as new Managing Director in September 2018, he raised enough eyebrows from both shareholders and the public.

Laay said in statement then that it wasn't easy to find a replacement for veteran banker, Dr Charles Kimeji who had led the Tier 1 bank for over two decades as chief executive. The fear came from the fact that many considered Nsekela not fully experienced to lead CRDB Group after joining from rival NMB Bank Plc where he was Head of Retail Banking.

"It wasn't easy but we have finally settled for Abdulmajid Nsekela who we have confidence that he will take the bank to the next level," Laay said. When Nsekela finally took over in October 2018, the bank had posted the poorest profit since 2016 when it hit an over 118.2bn/- pre-tax profit.

The amount was however a 37 per cent drop from 187.7bn/- pre-tax profit made in 2015 under Dr Kimeji, which was the highest in the bank's over 20 years history. Nsekela's job portion was thus clearly spelt out, "Take the bank back to where it belongs to convince noisy and demanding shareholders who are used to taking home fat cheques annually for many years in memory."

In his statement, Laay said Nsekela was instrumental in engineering the transformation of retail infrastructure and growth of branch networks when he served at CRDB between 1998 and 2008 when he joined NMB Bank.



CRDB Board Chairman, Ally Laay (R) and Managing Director, Abdulmajid Nsekela.

"Nsekela also championed the establishment of alternative channels such as banking technology and ATM banking network," he noted.

According to the statement, in 1998, Mr Nsekela was selected to be part of the transition team that changed CRDB bank culture, before forming a solid team in 2000 which established and developed the current corporate

banking department following his contribution to CRDB Bank.

"In many ways, Nsekela has been responsible for the transformation of the banking industry in Tanzania by spearheading numerous innovations and contributing to change within the two largest commercial banks in Tanzania," Laay added.

And so when Nsekela finally as-

sumed office in October, he pleaded to deliver. "I will do everything in my capacity to deliver to the public and shareholders. I assure you that the bank is in safe hands," the youthful banker promised.

Then, he hit the ground running, fast forward by end 2018 he witnessed a 77 per cent increase in profits to 64.1bn/- just two months in office. His really

first full year in office was last year and he has posted an impressive 120bn/- profit, a whopping 87 percent increase compared to last year's amount.

"We have changed the way we do business by investing more in efficient processes, improving productivity and inculcating a high-performance culture," Nsekela said while commenting on the impressive results.

Among key drivers of the good performance include net interest income which grew by 19 percent to 526bn/- driven by retail loans, investment in government securities and reduced funding costs. Non-interest income also grew by 15 percent to 253bn/-.

During the year, customer deposits increased by 11 percent to 5.2trn/- fuelled by a mix of business initiatives such as enhancement of the digital banking offering (SimBanking and internet banking) and the launch of new products targeting new segments of the market.

"We are actively engaging customers using targeted forums with the view of listening to their unique needs and building better relationships to help them achieve their goals," the CRDB Group CEO noted.

Loans and advances grew by 8 percent to 3.4trn/- compared to 3.1trn/- reported in the fourth quarter of 2018 thanks to a favourable business environment and reinforced sustained push to extend credit to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and consumer sectors. Non-performing loans fell significantly to 5.5 percent from 8.5 percent reported in 2018 following the implementation of stringent bad loans containment strategy.

The group also enhanced its net-

work distribution by recruiting more than 9,000 CRDB Wakala agents to deliver banking services to the masses, an expansion aimed at deepening financial access and drive financial inclusion. "Financial inclusion is part of our broad strategy to create value because we see it as an opportunity to build a sustainable business," Nsekela explained. Group total assets grew by 11 percent to 6.6trn/-, up from 5.9trn/- reported in the same period in 2018, further reinforcing its strength as a market leader in domestic banking industry.

Privatized in 1996 after near collapse of state owned Cooperative and Rural Development Bank, CRDB Bank Plc has grown and prospered over the years to become the most innovative, first choice, and trusted bank in the market. CRDB Bank Group comprises of CRDB Bank Insurance Brokerage Limited and CRDB Bank Burundi SA as its subsidiaries with expansion plans to cover East Africa.

Nsekela's performance has earned him Treasury heavyweights including Finance Minister, Dr Philip Mango who told shareholders last year that CRDB management was doing very well in the market with first quarter results showing that profit grew by 216 percent to 30.7bn/- from 9.7bn/- during a similar period 12018.

"Because of its good performance, the price of CRDB Bank's shares at Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange has increased by 4 percent from 125/- to 130/- each by April 2019," he added while pointing out that the bank's profit by end 2019 was likely to hit the ceiling. It peaked 120bn/-.

By The Banker Reporter

EVER since their official recognition by President John Magufuli in 2018 when the head of state issued them identity cards, petty traders also popularly known as 'Machingas' have found space in commercial banks' boardrooms.

The banks which until recently never considered street vendors and small business owners as potential customers with capacity to repay loans, have now started designing loan products targeting the group.

One such bank which recently launched 'Jikwamue' concessional loan scheme is Azania Bank Limited which last week introduced the new product in Mwanza, the country's second largest city. Azania's Board Chairman, Engineer Julius Nyamukama said the new loan scheme targets petty traders who have been disenfranchised by banks for many years.

"Today is another historic day for Azania Bank in our efforts to uplift entrepreneurs through their efforts to boost incomes," Eng Nyamukama said noting that ABL whose majority shareholders are pension funds, is a truly public bank.

He said Azania's management thinks and acts in line with the majority of the public because its founders and major shareholders are all local hence the commitment to serve the wider public which is manifested in margin-

Azania Bank comes up with 'Jikwamue' loan scheme targeting 'Machingas'



Azania Bank's Managing Director, Charles Itembe speaks at the launch of new 'Jikwamue' loans in Mwanza city earlier this week. Photo courtesy of ABL.

alised groups such as 'Machingas'.

"This bank's owners are members of the public who are employed in both the public and private sectors because majority shareholders are pen-

sion funds," the ABL Board Chair noted stressing that it is with such background that the bank's leadership felt obliged to back President Magufuli's efforts to uplift petty traders and ordinary

Tanzanians.

He said the bank which is one of the top five largest in the market, has been posting strong results with 15bn/- net profit made last year. "Such good results have convinced us to support President Magufuli's efforts to raise living standards of the majority poor who are toiling to become economically strong," he added.

Briefing Deputy Minister for Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development, Angelina Mabula who graced the launching ceremony, Azania Bank's Managing Director, Charles Itembe said 'jikwamue' loans are aimed to enable petty traders graduate into small and medium size businesses.

"The issue of collateral has been a major hurdle to many small business owners to access loans hence our bank decided to address the challenge by getting rid of it," Itembe said sending relief to many petty traders who attended the launch.

He pointed out that 'jikwamue' loan scheme targets small businesses owned by marginalised group who include women, youths, the disabled

and the needy. "We fully understand what these segments want to grow and by extending 'Jikwamue' loans, we hope to offer a holistic package of products that feed directly into their growth strategy," the ABL chief noted.

Itembe added, "Our bank is committed to helping small scale business operators to prosper and graduate into key players in the country's economy as we head towards industrialisation and middle income status."

In her official remarks to launch the loan scheme, Deputy Minister Mabula who is also Nyamagana legislator, commended the Dar es Salaam based lender for coming up with such a new loan scheme saying it's an important vehicle in fulfilling government efforts to tame poverty through growth.

"This kind of innovative initiative by the bank's leadership makes our work as government to uplift the standards of ordinary Tanzanians simple," Mabula said while pointing out that commercial banks and other financial institutions have a responsibility to serve the majority marginalised groups who include petty traders and small business owners.

BANKING & FINANCE

SA's banks: What to watch out for in 2020 as digital rivalries ramp up

JOHANNESBURG

Auditing and consulting firm PwC sums it up as the birth of "a marketplace without boundaries": South Africa's retail banking industry was shaken like never before in 2019.

Discovery Bank and TymeBank opened their doors to much fanfare in March and April this year. Discovery Bank already had 50 000 people signed up to become its customers, way before they even knew what its offering would look like. The group's 2019 integrated report, however, shows that by September 2019, the bank only had 22 000 clients who collectively had 50 000 active accounts.

TymeBank which started from scratch, with no client base, managed to attract over a million customers. Roughly 40% of them transact on a regular basis.

Then came African Bank, launching its shareable MyWorld account in May. Sasfin, the small specialist bank that predominantly serves business owners, also entered the consumer bank-

ing segment when it partnered with Hello Group to transform Hello Paisa from a money remitting business to a bank.

Non-banking players, from insurers who have partnered with the likes of RCS and DirectAxis to lend to their client bases, to those who have teamed up with niche players like Grobank to receive deposits, are also intensifying competition for consumers' money.

And then there are retailers, mobile network operators and new fintech payment providers, who have made sure the unbanked market will cope well without a bank account. Nedbank CEO, Mike Brown, warned earlier this year that if traditional retail banks don't boost their digital capabilities, these disruptors will capture more of the banking value chain. Of course, most incumbent banks have reacted, launching new accounts and many digital firsts.

But are 'disruptors' changing anything?

It's still early days for new competitors to change the composition of SA's



Nedbank CEO, Mike Brown.

retail banking sector in terms of assets and customer numbers. Prudential Authority's latest annual report shows that Standard Bank, FirstRand, Absa, Nedbank and Investec still dominate the sector in terms of assets, and when it comes to customer numbers, Capitec remains the biggest.

PwC, which published a report analysing performance of local banks on Wednesday December 18, says in the first six months of 2019, new entrants have changed the operating landscape, and the changes we've seen so far are an indication of more fierce competition ahead. The auditing firm says in-

creased competition has shifted banks' thinking, and most now focus on "customer-first" strategies when designing products.

"This context of increased competitiveness in the domestic banking market represents exciting opportunities for South African customer, who stands to benefit from ongoing customised and fit-for-purpose banking," said PwC in its analysis.

The PwC's observations echo those of Solidarity, which published its annual bank charges report earlier in December. Solidarity's report also showed that new competition has helped to lower banking charges, especially on entry-level accounts. But it also forced banks to provide more value across their retail offerings.

Shifting competition gears

While lowering fees dominated banks' competition strategies in the past year - Nedbank, FNB, Standard Bank and Capitec slashed fees on some of their offerings - the value-adds Solidarity is talking about, and tailor-made banking, will likely to be the focus go-

ing forward.

Most of the incumbent banks have earmarked billions of rands to improve their digital offering. For instance, Nedbank, the only one to publicly put a number to it, said it would be spending R2bn per annum for the next few years.

African Bank said it is an army of 29 data analysts who were being trained at its Cape Town academy in 2019 will join the business in 2020 to help it achieve its ambition of offering the best digital experience.

TymeBank is incrementally adding new functions to its digital accounts which will allow it to track from consumers' shopping baskets if they've had life changing events - think of someone who's suddenly buying nappies or chlorine every month when they never used to. It's probably safe to say that even those who have played their cards close to their chests have something up their sleeves too. Bottom line; banking will be an industry to watch.

WORLD

A newly emboldened Trump gives Democrats a reason to fret

WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Donald Trump took the stage for his State of the Union speech in an unfamiliar position: With the wind at his back.

For most of his three years in office, Trump has been surrounded by tumult, much of it of his own making, resulting ultimately in his impeachment by the House of Representatives.

Now, for the first time in a long time, things are looking up.

He is on the verge of being acquitted by his fellow Republicans in the U.S. Senate on Wednesday. Opinion polls show his approval ratings on an upswing. And the Democratic presidential nomination race was consumed by chaos as results from the Iowa caucuses this week were delayed by a full day because the mobile app used to record the results had a coding problem.

Despite being impeached, he is firmly entrenched in office, after surviving the Mueller investigation into Russian electoral interference and accusations that he abused his office by pressuring Ukraine to investigate a political rival, former vice president Joe Biden.

"He has had existential political threats facing him from the moment he was elected until tomorrow," said Texas-based Republican consultant Matt Mackowiak, referring to the impending acquittal vote on impeachment charges. All of it brought out the showman in

the former reality TV star during his State of the Union speech on Tuesday night. At one point, he choreographed a reunion between a U.S. servicemember returning from Afghanistan and his family to cheers from lawmakers.

Along that line, for much of the speech, Trump appeared to be making an overt appeal to suburban voters who could decide his fate.

He spoke of child-care initiatives, and efforts to combat AIDS and the opioid crisis. He called for greater transparency for medical bills, and he sought to take credit for protecting Americans with pre-existing healthcare conditions, even though his administration supports a lawsuit that would gut the Affordable Care Act.

Trump also touted bipartisan accomplishments such as the U.S.-Mexico-Canada trade deal and vowed to protect entitlement programs such as Medicare and Social Security. He pledged to protect the public from the coronavirus that is spreading in China and beyond.

RIGHT TURN

But lest anyone think the combustible Trump had turned touchy-feely, he also reassured his hardline supporters by previewing what promises to be a recurrent campaign theme: accusing Democrats of supporting unlimited free healthcare to undocumented immigrants.

As he did during his first presidential



US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California, tears her copy of US President Donald Trump's State of the Union address after he delivered it to a joint session of Congress on Capitol Hill in Washington, on Tuesday. Vice President Mike Pence is at left. (AP)

campaign, he warned of so-called "Sanctuary Cities" and detailed incidents of violent crime committed by border-crossers.

Trump, too, seemed eager to exploit divisions among Democrats as they struggle to settle on a candidate who could mount the biggest threat to him.

The early favorite, Biden, appeared to have stumbled badly in Iowa, while U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders, a democratic socialist, was much more competitive.

At one point, Trump appeared to reference Sanders, who favors a government-run healthcare system, by declaring "We will never let socialism destroy American healthcare!"

At a campaign event in New Hampshire, Sanders drew a laugh from the crowd on Tuesday when he questioned Trump's pledge to improve healthcare in America: "Really? How gullible do you think the American people are?" he said.

In his speech to Congress, Trump did not address the most polarizing topic in the room, the months-long attempt by Democrats to remove him from office. He avoided any temptation to take a victory lap ahead of Wednesday's Senate vote.

"It was very smart to ignore the impeachment trial, stay above the fray and instead provide a laundry list of accomplishments along with proposals that will keep his base rock solid," said Ron Bonjean, a Republican strategist in Washington.

That did not stop partisan tensions from running high. At the close of his remarks, Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi, who had orchestrated Trump's impeachment in the House, tore up her copy of his speech. Earlier, Trump had refused to shake her hand upon entering the chamber.

While recent polls showed that more than 40 percent of Americans favored Trump's conviction and removal from office on charges that he tried to persuade Ukraine to interfere in the coming election, Trump received good news from another poll on Tuesday.

The Gallup organization said he had reached his personal best in their tracking poll, hitting 49% approval - the highest since he took office.

That prompted nervous Democrats on social media all day to fret that Trump, after three years of non-stop drama, might be peaking at just the right time.

Agencies

UN Secretary General says Libya situation a 'scandal'

GENEVA / UNITED NATIONS

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday called the situation in Libya a "scandal" even as his envoy cited a "genuine will" by rival military factions as they planned their first meeting to secure a lasting ceasefire.

"I am deeply frustrated with what's happening in Libya," Guterres (pictured) said in a press conference in which he was critical of countries that last month

met in Berlin to push for progress in Libya peace talks.

"They committed not to interfere in the Libyan process and they committed not to send weapons or participate in any way in the fighting," Guterres said at the United Nations headquarters in New York. "The truth is that the Security Council (arms) embargo remains violated."

He called the mediation efforts of UN envoy to Libya Ghasan Salame "the only good news"



there.

Salame told reporters earlier Tuesday that there was a "genuine will to start negotiating" between opposite sides, though he added

that an arms embargo was being violated by both sides and that new mercenaries and arms were still arriving "by air and by sea" in Libya. Forces loyal to eastern based commander Khalifa Haftar have been trying to take the capital, Tripoli, for the past 10 months.

The talks bring together five senior military officers from Haftar's Libyan National Army and five from forces aligned with the internationally recognised Government of National Accord (GNA)

in Tripoli.

Fighting has continued on the ground despite a call for a truce by Russia and Turkey starting on Jan. 12 and the international summit on Libya in Berlin on Jan 19 aimed at reducing international interference.

Haftar has had material support from countries including the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Jordan, and Russia, UN experts and diplomats say, while the GNA is backed militarily by Turkey. *Xinhua*

Turkey, Russia can tackle Syria escalation 'without anger' - Erdogan

ANKARA / MOSCOW

PRESIDENT Tayyip Erdogan said on Tuesday Turkey and Russia should resolve differences over the conflict in Syria's Idlib without anger, after a deadly flare-up in violence challenged the fragile cooperation between Moscow and Ankara.

The two countries support opposing sides in Syria's nearly nine-year war, as well as in Libya's escalating conflict, but have worked together to contain some of the bloodshed and have forged close defense ties in recent years.

An attack by Russian-backed Syrian government forces that killed eight Turkish military personnel on Monday posed the biggest challenge to Russian-Turkish ties since their 2018 deal to stem

fighting in Syria's northwest Idlib region.

Erdogan told Russian forces on Monday there to "stand aside" while Turkey struck dozens of targets in retaliation. Moscow and Ankara then argued about whether Turkey had told Russia it was sending waves of reinforcements into Idlib.

"There is no need for us to be engaged in a conflict or a serious contradiction with Russia at this stage," he was quoted as telling reporters on a flight from Ukraine. "We will of course sit down and discuss everything. Not with anger, though. Because those who sit down with anger, get up with losses," Erdogan added.

Russia supports President Bashar al-Assad in the war in Syria while Turkey backs rebels who



once aimed to topple him.

Analysts said the relationship should survive the testy spell even while risks remained on the ground in Syria. Turkey, which already hosts 3.6 million refugees, fears Russian air strikes and a recent northward surge by Syrian troops threatens to send millions more refugees toward its border.

At the United Nations, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for the cessation of hostilities

to keep the situation from getting out of control.

"We are particularly worried that now the escalation came into a situation in which we had Turkish army and Syrian army bombing each other," Guterres said.

"That, of course, is a change in the nature of (the) conflict that is extremely worrying."

A Turkish security official said clashes between Turkish and Syrian forces continued intermittently on Tuesday around Saraqeb, a town 15 km east of Idlib city.

"Now we see more clearly the limits of the Turkey-Russia cooperation in Syria ... and the question is have we reached a different level of escalation" given the attacks on Turkish troops, said Sinan Ulgen, a former Turkish diplomat who chairs the Center for Economics

and Foreign Policy Studies.

Now we see more clearly the limits of the Turkey-Russia cooperation in Syria ... and the question is have we reached a different level of escalation

Sinan Ulgen, a former Turkish diplomat.

But "this episode is not going to lead to a permanent break between Ankara and Moscow. They will find ways to overcome this ... because both sides continue to rely on each other" to contain the situation in Idlib, he said.

Speaking beyond the Syria conflict, Guterres said "all situations are different but there is a feeling of growing instability and hair-trigger tensions, which makes everything far more unpredictable and uncontrollable."

Agencies

Foreign political party leaders speak highly of China's anti-epidemic efforts

BEIJING

LEADERS of foreign political parties have sent messages to the International Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, speaking highly of and voicing support for China's efforts to fight the novel coronavirus outbreak.

Chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) and Nepali Prime Minister K. P. Sharma Oli said the party highly appreciates the outstanding efforts the Chinese government has made in containing the spread of the epidemic and treating the infected.

He said the party will maintain solidarity with the CPC and the Chinese government under the leadership of general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and Chinese President Xi Jinping, and believes that all measures taken by the Chinese government will certainly succeed in containing the deadly disease.

Abdullah Abdullah, leader of the National Coalition of Afghanistan and government chief executive, said the CPC and the Chinese government have taken timely measures to prevent and control the epidemic and treat patients, which deserves high recognition and appreciation.

The Afghan government and people will firmly stand together with China at a time of difficulty, Abdullah said, adding that Afghanistan strongly believes that the Chinese people, under the leadership of the CPC and the Chinese government, will overcome the challenge.

Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation Gennady Zyuganov said the Chinese people have maintained solidarity in face of a severe challenge, setting up a strong barrier against an invisible yet brutal opponent.

Under the leadership of the CPC, epidemic prevention and control have been fuelled nationwide and the will of the people has been coalesced into a mighty force, Zyuganov said, adding that the CPC is standing at the forefront of the fight against the virus.

The over 1.4 billion Chinese people under the leadership of the CPC are invincible in the fight against the coronavirus, he said.

Chairman of Mongolia's Democratic Party Sodnomzundui Erdene said the party is willing to join hands and unite efforts with China and its friendly people.

The party believes that China will surely contain the outbreak under the leadership of the CPC, Erdene said.

Raphael Tuju, secretary general of Kenya's ruling Jubilee party, said the party is deeply impressed by China's actions in combating the epidemic. He believes that under the strong leadership of Xi and the CPC, the Chinese people will win the battle against the epidemic and restore social order, a gain for all humankind.

Bashiru Ally, secretary general of Tanzania's ruling party Chama Cha Mapinduzi, said the party stands ready to join hands and overcome difficulties together with its brother party the CPC and the Chinese people.

Cesar Acuna, leader of Peru's Alliance for Progress Party, said that under the leadership of the CPC, and with advanced medical technologies and outstanding medical staff, China will definitely overcome the epidemic in a short time.

Javier Miranda, president of the ruling Broad Front party of Uruguay, said the party speaks highly of China's efforts to contain the outbreak.

The party hopes and firmly believes that the Chinese people will win the battle against the epidemic, and is willing to do all it can to lend a helping hand to China, Miranda said.

President of the Socialist Party of Serbia Ivica Dacic said the party believes that China's anti-epidemic measures will successfully contain the spread and could result in the development of drugs to treat the virus.

The CPC will win the fight against the epidemic, a benefit not only for the Chinese people but for the world, Dacic said.

In a joint letter, National Secretary of the French Communist Party (FCP) Fabien Roussel and President of the National Council of the FCP Pierre Laurent expressed respect for China's efforts to contain the virus and support for medical staff fighting at the frontline, adding the party strongly believes that China has the ability to overcome the epidemic.



Under the leadership of the CPC, epidemic prevention and control have been fuelled nationwide and the will of the people has been coalesced into a mighty

China intensifies epidemic prevention and control

COMMUNITY is basic for epidemic prevention and control. Recently, staff members of various urban and rural communities in China have taken actions to strengthen joint prevention and control, provide timely door-to-door guidance, and strictly prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus epidemic.

In recent days, community doctors in Beijing have been on a new task - to make phone calls to people coming back from the epicenter Wuhan, learn about their information and offer health guidance to them.

"For those we couldn't contact through phone calls, we tried to obtain their other contact information from the police stations or the communi-

ties they live in," said Zhao Menghan, a healthcare doctor from Jinsong community healthcare center in Chaoyang district, Beijing.

So far, the healthcare center has got in touch with about 270 people from Wuhan and provided health guidance for them. Li Yongjin, director of the center, said to prevent the epidemic from spreading, Jinsong community strictly practices pre-examination triage and adheres to the model that the physician who treats the patient from the very beginning has primary responsibility for the patient's care throughout the treatment.

For suspected and confirmed cases, the center has strengthened screening and isolation treatment, enhanced

monitoring and standardized relevant procedures.

Changsha in central China's Hunan province has deployed community keepers to inspect and control the spread of the epidemic in suspected areas. Xiang Hongbing, secretary of the Party branch of a residential area in the city, said that cadres of the community, community assistants, and volunteers are all on guard to intensify inspection.

In the end, they spotted 36 households in the community that needed to be isolated. During isolation, all the daily necessities for these households were offered and delivered to the isolated by the community workers.

On Jan. 20, Xiao Xiangxiu, a resident of the community went to visit her rela-

tives in Wuhan and returned home two days later. When she noticed the publicity posters of her community the following day, she reported her information to the community.

"Though I'm isolated at home, I'm supplied with adequate daily necessities and taken good care of by the community staff. Sometimes I would like to spend the time talking with a friend in my community through video chat," Xiao told People's Daily, adding that she is now an online publicity agent of her community, helping the latter dispel rumors.

The demand for protective masks soars on fears of the epidemic. How to deal with used masks to avoid secondary pollution is a tricky problem.

A residential community in Zhengzhou, central China's Henan province has installed a yellow trash can to collect used masks.

Residents need to put the masks in a plastic bag before throwing them into the can. When the masks are inside the can, an inspector will disinfect the can. In about one hour, a truck will stop there and two people wearing blue protective suits and masks will load the discarded masks on the truck and then transport them to a recycling station.

The recycling personnel are responsible for only designated areas in order to avoid cross-infection, according to Lv Chunlin, head of a garbage classification office of a district in the city. In the district, there are a total of 758 recycling

stations that have collected 3,288 pieces of discarded masks and 10,866 containers wrapping cleaning and disinfection waste since Jan. 28.

On Jan. 27, Zhengzhou issued an emergency notice requiring that special garbage containers be installed in residential communities, government agencies, and institutions to collect discarded masks.

The discarded masks are collected and transported by special vehicles, and they must not be mixed and compressed with other garbage at the garbage transfer station. After classification, the discarded masks are transported to the incineration power plant for harmless incineration.

People's Daily

Palestine seeks UNSC position in wake of US Mideast plan

UNITED NATIONS

PALESTINE is seeking a position from the UN Security Council in the wake of US President Donald Trump's announcement of a new Middle East peace plan, said Palestine's representative to the United Nations.

Palestine is looking for a draft resolution even though it may well be vetoed, Riyadh Mansour, the permanent representative of the observer state of Palestine, told a meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

"We will be seeking a position from the Security Council, a position in the form of a draft resolution that will be before the Security Council," he said.

"We know it will be defeated by a veto. But we want to show that the entire international community is reflecting the same position advocated by all of us and articulated by the secretary-general today again, as he articulated days ago, when this very bad (US) plan was announced in Washington, DC."

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who presided over Tues-

day's meeting of the committee, said the world body is committed to its established position of a two-state solution.

A draft United Nations Security Council resolution on Tuesday condemned an Israeli plan to annex its settlements in the West Bank in a rebuke of President Donald Trump's pro-Israel peace proposal.

A US veto at the council level would allow the Palestinians to take the draft text to the 193-member UN General Assembly, where a vote would publicly show how Trump's peace plan has been received internationally.

The draft text, circulated to council members by Tunisia and Indonesia, would seemingly face a US veto, but nonetheless offered some members' dim view of the peace plan that Trump rolled out last week with great fanfare.

Josep Borrell, the High Representative of the European Union (EU) for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, said on Tuesday that the US Middle East peace plan has departed from "internationally agreed parameters".

"The European Union is fully com-



Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine, Riyadh Mansour speaks during a press conference after the UN Security Council meeting (File photo)

mitted to the transatlantic partnership and values all efforts to help find a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," Borrell said in a statement.

Trump on Jan 28 revealed a controversial Middle East peace plan, which

calls for a two-state solution while recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's "undivided capital."

Mansour said Palestine is working closely with Tunisia, an Arab state on the Security Council, as well as other council members, for a text.

A document has been circulated to all members of the Security Council, and it is hoped that negotiations will be finished by Thursday or Friday and a draft resolution would be acted on in the Security Council on Feb. 11, when Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas will be present at the council.

ALSO READ: UNSC to meet over Trump's controversial Mideast plan

"We will be working to have a draft resolution with the strongest possible language and at the same time with the largest support possible in the Security Council," said Mansour.

Trump on Jan. 28 revealed a controversial Middle East peace plan, which calls for a two-state solution while recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's "undivided capital."

The US plan was immediately rejected by the Arab world. In an emergency meeting at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo on Saturday, Arab foreign ministers unanimously agreed to boycott the US plan and not to cooperate "in any way" with Washington in its implementation.

Xinhua

Putin says Russia ready for restoring Moscow-London mutually respectful dialogue

MOSCOW

RESTORING a dialogue and trade exchanges between Moscow and London meets the common interests of both countries and Russia is ready for this, Russian President Vladimir Putin said at a ceremony of receiving credentials from foreign ambassadors in the Kremlin on Wednesday.

"The current state of relations between Russia and Great Britain hardly satisfies both sides.

We are convinced that restoring a mutually respectful dialogue, strengthening trade and economic exchanges and building up cultural and humanitarian contacts meet common interests. And we are ready for this," Putin said.



Fight the virus, not the Chinese

BY IKENNA EMEWU

THE coronavirus (nCoV-2019) is fast spreading, now to over 20 countries. The fear coronavirus spreads is far bigger than the deaths and infections put together.

But a worse viral load is also somewhere in some other dimension working worse damage to humanity - that is the racism, profiling, hate and alienation of the Chinese person.

The social media in most parts of the world have hundreds of thousands of such hate harvest, most of all from societies that boast they are civilized and know better about what a virus should be and different from a citizen of a country from where a killer virus emanated.

For the coronavirus, China is the epicenter, the birthplace from where the world picks the vibes.

For the hate of it - hatovirus, the human and cultural offshoot of the coronavirus, the outer world is the epicenter. The vector is the media, especially the new media.

While in Europe and the Americas the Asian is the fall guy and 'demon' that deliberately created the virus, in Asia, the Chinese is singled out. So pathetic!

It's quite worrisome that most of the reports about coronavirus induced hate - hatovirus, come from Asian countries close to China. Such news simmers in Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam etc.

The worst of the reported cases was that of Indonesia on Friday, January 31, 2020 that "China flew overseas Hubei residents back to the centre of the outbreak in Wuhan on chartered planes from Thailand and Malaysia, citing "practical difficulties" the passengers had encountered overseas.". That doesn't sound cheery or humane.

In Australia, after two media organisations had screamed headlines that were heavily loaded with negativity against the



Photo taken on Feb. 2, 2020 shows policemen, medical staff and volunteers take passengers' body temperature and check identity information to prevent and control epidemic at the exit of a railway station in Changzhou, east China's Jiangsu province, where the passenger traffic increased gradually.

Chinese person, Global Times, a Beijing based media reported angst by 46,000 Chinese citizens who signed a protest against the reports and demanding a recant.

The Global Times report said: "More than 46,000 people have signed a petition demanding the Australian media to apologize publicly for racism against the Chinese community after two media outlets carried headlines and highlighted characters on their front pages which labeled the novel coronavirus-related pneumonia as a "Chinese virus" and hyped sentiments that would require Chinese children to stay at home.

The Australian daily tabloid newspaper, The Daily Telegraph, published on its Wednesday's paper a report titled "China Kids Stay Home," according to a photo of the paper circulating online.

The report indicated that the New South Wales government warned "parents not to send their children to school or daycare if they have recently been in China" due to "fears over the fast-spreading coronavirus outbreak."

In reaction to this odd trend, Bloomberg, a US platform captured it aptly that: "Airlines halt flights from China. Schools in Europe uninvite exchange students. Restaurants in South Korea turn away Chinese customers.

"As a deadly virus spreads beyond China, governments, businesses and educational institu-

tions are struggling to find the right response. Safeguarding public health is a priority. How to do that without stigmatizing the entire population of the country where the outbreak began - and where nearly a fifth of all humans reside - is the challenge."

In the US, a Chinese American celebrity, Michelle Phan said she's been targeted with barrage of racism on twitter amid Wuhan coronavirus scare.

And in one of the instances, she replied: "Why are some of you telling me to go back to eating bats? I'm American you ignorant f-s."

There have been many other reported cases of such hate attacks in Canada where the government of Ontario and the school board had to issue warning that no Chinese citizen should be maltreated or stigmatized because of the coronavirus outbreak.

In an interesting contrast, governments of many countries and intergovernmental bodies including the World Health Organisation (WHO), the EU, India, Pakistan, the Vatican through Pope Francis have praised the Chinese authorities for concerted efforts against the scourge and even offered to assist.

Dropping aside the usual antagonism, a US media organization published reports praising China's openness in managing and reporting the incident and also allowing the outer world to see what it's doing to curtail the

spread especially the WHO that has visited Beijing and interacted with President Xi Jinping. The report noted that this open and transparent approach is a deviation from the way China handled the management of the SARS outbreak in 2003, applauding the positive dimension.

So how do we reconcile a situation where governments praise China and pledge support in this challenging time while the citizens walk in contrary direction, compounding the problem with stigmatization? That becomes a task for the governments to sensitise the uninformed citizens to act properly.

However, it's many thanks to scientists in Australia and Ghana that have assisted with researches that created vaccines against the virus.

After Australia announced the breakthrough, Ghana told the world that two students of pharmacy who trained in China when the first minor coronavirus outbreak occurred cloned the virus with samples they obtained in China then and also volunteered to fly to China and assist in fighting this death agent.

Sincerely, if I have the scientific weapon and know-how, I would target to obliterate this virus. Yes, I would rather fight the virus that has traversed continents and nations.

But now, I haven't the equipment to stop coronavirus from spreading and killing the Chinese mostly, I would readily deploy the little weapon in my hands and within my reach - love, to love the Chinese and not mistake him or her for the virus.

Since the Chinese is NOT the virus, I rather fight the virus by loving and embracing the Chinese. I won't be fair to him/her and humanity to alienate or profile or castigate the Chinese spared by the virus at a time I should be consoling them for the loss of lives, peace and livelihood.

That is what humanity rightly demands of us.

People's Daily

French port town dreams of becoming duty-free haven

CALAIS, FRANCE

AUTHORITIES in Calais are lobbying the French government to create a duty-free zone for British shoppers that would cover the entire port town in northern France if a future trade deal between Britain and the EU heralds a return of trade tariffs.

Mayor Natacha Bouchart anticipates Britain's planned exit from the EU's single market will revive the cross-Channel 'booze cruises' that saw Britons in the 1980s and 1990s day-trip to Calais to buy cheap cigarettes, beer and wine on board ferries.

"Our mayor is fighting for the whole town of Calais to benefit from the same duty-free rules as the ferries," said Philippe Mignonet, one of Bouchart's deputies.

The fortunes of Calais rely on the smooth flow of people and goods across the English Channel. The mayor's initiative reflects the growing doubts in the town over whether a future trade deal will maintain the single market's zero-tariff, friction-free movement of goods across the Britain-EU border.

Calais authorities were also exploring the option of tax rebates that would allow visiting Britons to reclaim VAT on hotel stays and restaurant meals, Mignonet said, a move aimed at encouraging them to spend more time and money in the town.

EU rules allow private individuals to carry unlimited amounts of alcohol and cigarettes across the bloc's internal borders provided they are not for resale.



A ferry boat leaves for Britain from the port of Calais, northern France, Jan 30, 2020. Although Britain formally leaves the European Union on Jan 31, little will change until the end of the year. (AP)

But after Britain ended its 47-year membership of the EU on Friday, it now has until Dec 31, 2020, to negotiate a trade accord that will determine what tariffs, if any, Britain and the EU levy on each other's goods, and caps to duty-free commerce.

CHOCOLATES, ELECTRONICS

Mignonet said junior budget minister Gerald Darmanin had so far pushed back against the proposed city-wide duty exemptions for alcohol and tobacco in the town center because of smuggling concerns.

"I don't think they'll budge on those," he said, but added it could be applied to goods such as chocolate, perfumes and electronic goods.

Darmanin's office was not immediately available for comment on Tuesday.

The looming trade talks between London and Brussels will be closely watched by the own-

ers of the cavernous wine stores dotted along the highway leading out of Calais, where signs are in English and prices quoted in sterling.

"The worst case scenario? That would be to limit the huge volumes that British clients can take back with them to England," said Oliver Versmisse, owner of the Oliver, Vin et Compagnie store that overlooks the Eurotunnel terminal.

Several million Britons used to make day trips across the Channel every year during the heyday of the booze cruise, local officials say, before duty-free shopping ended in 1999 following the creation of the EU's single market.

Its renaissance on board vessels and in the ferry terminal would be "very good for the port", said Calais port director Jean-Marc Puisseuseau, who is overseeing a 700 million euro expansion that will double the port's capacity from early 2021.



Junior budget minister Gerald Darmanin had so far pushed back against the proposed city-wide duty exemptions for alcohol and tobacco in the town center because of smuggling

Salute to beautiful 'fighters in white' in China's battle against novel coronavirus

AS the third decade of the 21st century just raised its curtain, a novel coronavirus broke out in Wuhan, central China's Hubei province, turning hospitals into battlefields and medical staffs into soldiers.

The 84-year-old academian of the Chinese Academy of Engineering Zhong Nanshan rushed to the epicenter on a high-speed train, leaving a touching scene on television screens and social media networks; batches of medical workers volunteered to lend a hand for Wuhan, saying they don't need any reward and are not afraid of death.

They are sticking to their posts in the heart of danger, and going directly into the battlefield.

At 9:00 a.m., Jan. 22, Wu Xiaoyan, a physician from the pathology department of the Renmin Hospital of Wuhan University, who was on route to her hometown for the approaching Chinese New Year, immediately went back to Wuhan after receiving a call of medical assistance from her hospital.

Two hours later, she showed up at the hospital, saying she only felt assured when staying in the "battle ground" where everybody else was combating.

"My 'comrade in arms' are all here, and the more dangerous it is, the more we have to fight," said Yan Li, associate chief physician at the emergency department of Wuhan's Tongji

Hospital. She had applied for a vacation to the hospital and was preparing for a family trip on Jan. 22. However, she went straight back to the hospital from her airport.

Zhu Hu, vice president of the Wuhan Psychological Hospital who had just withdrawn from an aiding program in Tibet Autonomous Region, was suddenly diverted to the Wuhan Jinyintan Hospital, where he had worked for years to assist his former colleagues in the battle against the novel coronavirus.

It was on the second day of her daughter's arrival at home from Beijing for the Chinese New Year that Zhu received the order.

He went straight to the Wuhan Jinyintan Hospital after shortly seeing her daughter. Zhu has been living in a hotel near the hospital in case his family might be infected, and his daughter is still not able to see him till today.

In face of the epidemic, there are a great number of medical staffs across the country who have left touching words on their application letters to assist Wuhan, saying they stand ready at any time and will do anything to contain the virus.

When difficulties arise in one place in the country, aid comes from everywhere. A total of over 6,000 medical staffs went to Wuhan to aid the novel coro-

navirus control efforts. They volunteered to go to the battlefield and stand together with the people in Wuhan.

Fever clinics, designated hospitals, specialized hospitals, observation zones, isolation zones and red zones - these are terms that would always terrify people. However, there are over 60,000 medical staffs in Wuhan sticking to their posts, and 15,000 "fighters in white" combating on the front line.

According to an executive at the fever clinic of the Wuhan No.7 Hospital, the hospital has opened 6 consulting rooms since the clinic started on Jan. 22, and 9 doctors are working simultaneously for the patients.

The clinic receives around 1,000 patients on a daily basis, the executive said.

Liu Liang, a nurse from the Second Xiangya Hospital of Central South University assisted doctors to save 4 critical patients from 0:00 to 4:00 am, Jan. 29. They were in 5 protective suits each to draw blood, complete blood gas analysis and give injections.

After a short break, Liu continued her shift from 16:00 to 20:00. "Every trivial move becomes difficult under the thick protective suits, and sweats have soaked my clothes after working four hours non-stop," Liu said.

Days after arriving at the First

People's Hospital of Jiangxia, Wuhan, the voice of Sun Liquan, leader of the assisting medical team from eastern China's Jiangsu province started becoming hoarse.

The deputy director of ICU at the Second Affiliated Hospital of Nanjing Medical University always has lunch at 2:00 p.m., as she has to see the patients in the wards every morning with local doctors and make treatment plans. She always softens her lunch with water when the food gets cold.

"When a fighter is down, we have numerous coming up, standing their grounds and embracing unknown challenges."

People's Daily

The
Guardian

SPORT

Golf rulers says increased distance must be slowed



Rory McIlroy, of Northern Ireland, hits his tee shot on the fifth hole of the South Course at Torrey Pines Golf Course during the final round of the Farmers Insurance golf tournament Sunday, Jan. 26, 2020, in San Diego. (AP Photo)

PEBBLE BEACH, CALIF.

GOLFERS at all levels keep hitting the ball farther, and the game's governing bodies plan to do something about it by going after the one area they can control – equipment.

The USGA and the R&A on Tuesday released their “Distance Insights Project,” which revealed a steady increase in distance for more than 100 years – with average gains of about 30 yards by PGA Tour players in the last 25 years – and golf courses that keep expanding.

“We believe this continuing cycle of courses increasing in length is a cycle we want to break,” said Mike Davis, chief executive of the USGA.

The report attributes the distance gains to modern clubs and golf balls, improved athleticism and training, swing techniques geared toward hitting it longer and course conditions with tightly mowed fairways that allow for extra roll.

But the report made clear the governing bodies are targeting equipment as it seeks solutions.

“We also recognize that this assessment should not focus on player-related factors that contribute to increased distance, such as improved athleticism and swing techniques, for the desire to improve is integral to the game and is to be encouraged,” the report summary said. “Accordingly, we expect the main topic for research and assessment to be potential changes in the equipment rules.”

Among the possibilities is using specific golf balls or clubs that result in players not hitting it as far.

The report said equipment committees for the USGA and R&A would look into the option of a local rule “that would specify use of clubs and/or balls intended to result in shorter hitting distances.”

That suggests the possibility of tour players using different equipment than recreational players under the guise of a local rule, though the report said any golfer can choose to play with equipment that goes shorter.

“We’re still committed to a single set of rules,” said Thomas Pagel, the USGA’s senior managing director of governance.

The governing bodies also plan to review equipment testing standards to make sure they are effective in limiting distance.

“The intended purpose of this review is to

consider whether any existing specifications should be adjusted or any new specifications should be created to help mitigate the continuing distance increases,” the report said. “It is not currently intended to consider revising the overall specifications in a way that would produce substantial reductions in hitting distances at all levels of the game.”

Less clear is when any changes can be expected.

The USGA and R&A said they will publish a specific set of research topics within 45 days. After that, they will gather feedback that could take up to a year, and when comments and research are finished, manufacturers would receive notice of any changes. That would begin a new round of feedback.

Even so, it was the strongest signal yet that the two groups that set the rules worldwide want to rein in distance.

The USGA governs the U.S. and Mexico. The R&A governs the rest of the world. They published a “Joint Statement of Principles” in 2002 that said “any further significant increases in hitting distances at the highest level are undesirable.”

“Golf is a game of skill, a broad range of skills, and no one skill should dominate,” R&A chief executive Martin Slumbers said from St. Andrews.

Officials have become concerned in recent years over a style known as “bomb and gouge,” meaning distance is more valuable than accuracy. Some players no longer worry if a big tee shot lands in the rough because they have shorter distances to the green, often with a wedge in hand.

Davis said the two groups have spent two years collecting and analyzing data without contemplating how to fix any problems.

“We are not in the solution phase,” he said.

Along with how golf is played at an elite level, the USGA and R&A said they are concerned over distance increases because of bigger golf course properties that require more water, and how that raises the cost of playing.

“Our views have evolved as events have unfolded and new information has become available, just as they may evolve in the future, and we believe that it is never too late to do the right thing for the future of the game,” the report said.

AP

The long road to local loyalties among Tanzanian soccer clubs

BY CORRESPONDENT MICHAEL ENEZA

SOCCER pundits have often cited the fact that competition at Premier League level in England for that matter is noticed between cities and within cities, rival clubs craving for loyalty of fans and even within specific localities. While there can be a ‘Manchester derby’ as there are two major clubs in the medium-level city, there is a more localized competition for instance in London, where one gets up to five Premier League sides in a year. Not all European capitals are so endowed; when Paris opened its Stade de France in 1998 for the World Cup, it lacked a club.

Even now there is no important club camped at the stadium as the principal club in the French capital is Paris Saint Germain, and the old capital stadium of Parc des Princes suffices for it, outside any premises of its own. England clubs have their complete and modern stadia, not using municipal facilities as in some other countries, so it is clear the level of soccer roots is quite deep. Other countries have been trying to catch up but it is hard to see how that can work out.

When looking at the scene in East Africa generally and Tanzania in particular, one sees that soccer clubs are divided between corporate entities and civic or street outfits usually reliant on some investor or a group of them at times. Some clubs tend to have national status and claim sympathies and loyalties stretching into the diversity of the country and touching nearly all the fans, as with the leading city clubs here. Efforts to start other clubs especially by well oiled company executives meet with sporting curiosity and a breadth of following, but not loyalties.

Home grown loyalties would in this sense mean that fans in a particular city or part of a city are naturally gravitating around the princi-



Yanga fullback, Jaffary Mohamed (R), dribbles past Mtibwa Sugar fullback, Kibwana Shomary, when the squads clashed in Vodacom Premier League duel in Dar es Salaam recently. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

pal soccer club in the area, or their loyalties are soaked into rivalry if there are competing teams in the same locality. Why is this not the case in Tanzania, or at least in the Mainland – as it is likely that Isles clubs have greater attachment to their presence in various localities, not just immersed in a sea of fans of the city arch rivals? With a clear map of how clubs are scattered in various localities in each country, one sees a revealing picture of the manner in which the clubs came about, what sort of sentiments they represent, what makes them.

The first and perhaps most tantalizing question is how Simba Sports Club and Young Africans SC (Yanga) spread their wings around the country, what sort of campaign was conducted, etc. As in historical or administrative terms there was no such campaign,

but anyone coming to the city would take the ‘Yanga/Simba’ disease back home like a virus, it follows that it is just cultural influence rather than a proper campaign. Why then should this be the case is the question that follows, and the answer to that is there being no other existing loyalties, this rivalry took root.

Still it could not have taken root unless everyone was somehow identifying with the city of Dar es Salaam, either for residence or presence for a considerable part of the year somewhere, etc. This might have been the case for pioneers of Yanga/Simba influence upcountry, in that their awareness of this rivalry and adherence to one side stemmed from real presence in the capital, starting to join some street talking shops and naturally finding comfort in one or the other side, etc. In many other

instances, this influence was just inherited, growing naturally in school, etc.

What this itinerary of the Yanga/Simba rivalry suggests is something quite evidently banal in its character, that Tanzania is so fused as a nation down to soccer club loyalties, that there are two clubs to which we all belong – in like manner as the political party. But unlike political loyalties in sporting or soccer terms adherence is sweetened up by rivalry, so there was never any pressure for a soccer club of the ruling party even in the most intense loyalties to the one party system.

Still there are indicators as to the proper inclination in that context, but it was never really an institutional presence, since the top leaders of the political party were from the start divided in their club loyalties, not cuddling under a green and yellow banner for political considerations.

For reasons of human psychology this situation may continue permanently so long as no one has been able to build a rival team that takes centre stage, outclassing the city rivals for long enough to make an impression in minds of the youth. It might take a top level presence of five to ten years either as championship or runners up, and equally regular participation in international competitions and winning trophies, and relative confusion in one of the rival clubs for that to be the case.

Chances are that after Azam FC and its corporate entity failed to do so, hardly anyone else will attempt to break into the city archrivals’ platform as an insistent intruder for some time.

LeBron gets 36 in 3-point barrage, Lakers rout Spurs 129-102

LOS ANGELES

LEBRON James absorbed contact and tumbled to the court while his fifth 3-pointer in a three-minute span dropped through the net. The Los Angeles Lakers’ entire roster left the bench and crossed the court, gleefully picking up their leader while a sellout crowd roared.

“That’s what we’re all about,” James said. “Our team, anytime anyone is having success in the game, we cheer like it’s our own. So having that camaraderie, having that brotherhood, even though they’re beating you up, it’s just a pretty cool feeling.”

Nine days after Kobe Bryant’s death, the Lakers finally had an evening that felt like a return to normalcy.

Well, as normal as anything can be when King James is performing feats of basketball brilliance.

James scored 19 of his 36 points in the fourth quarter with that incredible 3-point barrage, propelling the Lakers to a 129-102 victory over the San Antonio Spurs on Tuesday night.

James added nine assists and seven rebounds, while Anthony Davis and Kyle Kuzma had 18 points apiece as the Lakers beat San Antonio for the third time, sweeping the season series.

After the Spurs chipped away at the Lakers’ big lead late in the third quarter, James and Kuzma put the game away with a combined seven 3-pointers in 3 1/2 minutes to start the fourth. James’ shots seemed to increase in difficulty with each possession, but he buried them all.

“When the guy gets hot like that, it’s always fun to watch him,” Davis said, laughing at the Lakers’ group celebration after the final 3. “It wasn’t the plan. We all just kind of ran over there and jumped on him.”

DeMar DeRozan had 28 points, nine rebounds and seven assists in his hometown for the Spurs, who have lost five of seven.



Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James swarmed by teammates after making several 3-point shots in a row during the second half of the team's NBA basketball game against the San Antonio Spurs on Tuesday, Feb. 4, 2020, in Los Angeles. (AP Photo)

San Antonio was outrebounded 58-28 by the bigger Lakers, and the Spurs grabbed only three rebounds in the fourth quarter while the Lakers went 16 of 24 from the field.

When asked what the Spurs can do when James gets rolling, coach Gregg Popovich quipped: “Make sure you get good pictures.”

Bryn Forbes added 13 points, but one night after the Spurs blew a late lead in a three-point loss to the Clippers, they returned to Staples Center and fell to 0-2 at the start of San Antonio’s eight-game road trip while a rodeo occupies AT&T Center.

“As a competitor, it’s what you want to play against,” DeRozan said of the LA back-to-back. “I don’t look at it like it’s being tough. It’s part of the job, part of the game, and as a competitor you want to compete against the best. You worry about the toll

afterwards.”

The Lakers returned to a semblance of normalcy at Staples Center in their first home game since their emotionally charged return last Friday for their first game following Bryant’s death.

Bryant’s two retired jerseys still remain isolated in a spotlight on the wall high above the court, and the Lakers crowd broke into a spontaneous chant of “Kobe! Kobe!” in the third quarter, and the chant returned in the final seconds of the game.

Meanwhile, New Orleans, Giannis Antetokounmpo had the strength and savvy to outshine rookie sensation Zion Williamson in the latest double-digit triumph for the NBA-leading Milwaukee Bucks.

Antetokounmpo had 34 points and 17 rebounds, and the Bucks defeated New Orleans 120-108 on Tuesday night.

“He’s the former MVP,” Williamson said when asked about his first experience

playing against Antetokounmpo. “It’s like going up against any great player; you do as much as you can to slow him down.”

The Pelicans struggled to slow Antetokounmpo, as have many teams this season – especially recently. The Greek star now has at least 30 points and 15 rebounds in each of his past four games.

Antetokounmpo also was a factor on defense. While he usually defends off the ball, coming in late for block attempts or rebounds, he had chances in New Orleans to guard Williamson and even dynamic wing player Brandon Ingram.

“I take pride in that, and whenever I have an opportunity to guard a guy 1-on-1, I like it,” said Antetokounmpo, whose defensive highlights included catching Williamson from behind on a fast break and swatting his shot out of bounds.

AP

Make no mistake: Lionel Messi is challenging Barcelona's hierarchy

BARCELONA

MAKE no mistake: Lionel Messi's decision to take to Instagram and blast Barcelona sporting director Eric Abidal's interview in which he blamed the club's players for the sacking of Ernesto Valverde is a direct challenge to the Catalans' hierarchy. It's also the kind of move that ends one of three ways: Abidal walks his comments back and issues a grovelling apology to Messi and his teammates, Barcelona get themselves a new sporting director (and possibly a new president at the next election), or Messi leaves the club. While that final one is about as likely as Liverpool not winning the 2019-20 Premier League, it is still, theoretically, a possibility.

In fact, were this any other player at any other club, the notion of Messi packing it in wouldn't be so absurd. After all, this is a guy airing the club's dirty laundry in public -- and not just anybody's underpants but those of his boss. (Or, at least, as much as anyone can be the boss of a GOAT candidate with 711 career appearances and 622 career goals under his belt, as well as six Ballons d'Or).

If Messi was upset with Abidal's interview and thought he was passing the buck on the decision to dump former coach Valverde last month by implicitly blaming the Argentine and other senior players -- and there really is no other possible reading of that post -- then the logical action would be to pick up the phone or stride into Abidal's office to confront him.

Leaving aside the obvious corporate protocol, the pair have known each for 13 years and were teammates for six seasons. It wouldn't just have been HR-compliant; it also would have been the civil thing to do.

That Messi instead chose to go public straightaway can speak to only one of two things. Either the relationship with Abidal is a lot worse than we thought (and has been for a while), or he is so angry and hurt at being depicted as two-faced (particularly since, in public at least, he always backed Valverde) that he reached for his phone without thinking and tapped away in a blind rage. That, frankly, is distinctly unlike Messi, which is why everyone is taking it so seriously.

Messi is a guy who rarely loses his cool on the pitch, let alone off it. He doesn't speak much, and when he does, it's usually in monosyllables or platitudes. As far as outbursts go, the only thing he has done that comes close to one was when he announced his retirement from international football after the 2016 Copa Centenario, throwing the entire Argentina football association under the bus. That came from a place of fury, hurt and rage. So did this.

Is it the sort of rage that might make him up sticks and go elsewhere? Probably not, but it's worth noting that if Messi wanted to move, he's ideally placed to make it happen. His contract expires in June 2021, which gives him plenty of leverage to seek a move this summer, when he'll turn 33. That's without counting the clause that, as my ESPN colleagues Sam Marsden and Moises Llorens report, could allow him to move as a free agent this summer. While it's pretty much guaranteed that Barca will try to extend his deal, Messi holds all the cards anyway.

Naturally, this puts the club in a very difficult position -- not just where Abidal is concerned but club president Josep Maria Bartomeu, too. After all, you don't become Barcelona president by acquiring a majority stake in the club. You have to be elected by a majority of club members, and all it would take for him to lose the next election -- scheduled for the summer of 2021, but at this rate,

don't exclude the possibility of it being moved to July 2020 -- is for Messi to publicly back another candidate.

Heck, such is Messi's popularity and standing in the eyes of club members that just about any Messi-backed candidate short of a cardboard cutout or J-Hope from BTS is likely to wipe the floor with him, particularly since Bartomeu himself isn't exactly crushing those approval polls.

That's why in the short term you can expect one of the other two outcomes.

Most likely, Abidal will come up with a face-saving public climb-down and issue a private apology, something along the lines of being misquoted or misspeaking, feeling terrible that Messi was hurt and promising to take better care next time. And if he doesn't? If he takes it on the chin and stands by what he said? At that point, either Bartomeu relieves him of duty and makes Abidal fall on his sword, or they're both out on their backsides when elections roll around. This is not a battle they can win.

If this isn't handled properly, it risks becoming another annus horribilis for Barcelona that, when you think about it, would be rather grotesque, given that they've won the past two Liga titles, are just three points off the pace this season (despite a rash of injuries, a managerial change and some horrendous performances) and remain among the bookmakers' favorites to win the Champions League, which resumes in two weeks' time. That's more a general indictment of the Bartomeu regime and the cloud of chaos that has enveloped it than anything else.

There's an upshot here, though, one that mustn't be overlooked and that speaks volumes about Messi. It's true: If he threw Abidal to the wolves without speaking to him privately first, it was the wrong thing to do. In fact, it's pretty unprofessional. But on the flip side, let's not lose sight of what motivated this. Messi is angry because his boss implied that he was a prime driver in getting Valverde fired. Because he defended Valverde until the bitter end, it's his word and his integrity that are under attack here.

Messi could easily have let this slide. He could wake up tomorrow morning and still be uber-popular and uber-rich, still playing for the only club he has ever played for professionally, the one he calls home, still in the running to win a Treble, still the GOAT in the eyes of many. But he chose not to. He chose to make it a matter of pride. He chose not to be used. He chose to defend his word, his integrity and his honour.

Money and trophies, goals and accolades: They come and go. The guy staring back at you in the mirror each morning will be with you as long as you're alive, and Messi doesn't want people to think that man is a devious liar who defends his boss in public while stabbing him in the back privately.



Africa's transfer window: The diamonds and the duds

BY ED DOVE, SPECIAL TO ESPN

THE January transfer window shut this weekend, as teams across Europe had one final opportunity to finalise their rosters before the closing stretch of a testing season.

It was a chance for title hopefuls to bolster their sides, for continental hopefuls to add the finishing touches to their squads, or for beleaguered sides to give themselves a final boost in relegation dogfights.

The January window also represented an opportunity for clubs to ship out unwanted players, or to cash in on those nearing the end of their contracts.

Since the inauguration of Europe's winter window, African players have regularly been central to the January transfer narratives, either for positive reasons -- such as Yakubu Aiyegbeni to Portsmouth in 2003 -- or for not quite so positive reasons -- Savio Nsereko to West Ham United in 2009.

With the January 2020 window now in the books, Ed Dove picks out the African transfers that particularly caught the imagination during an intriguing month of moves.

Grade: A+

Mbwana Samatta to Aston Villa

A high-profile African striker made his arrival on English shores during the window, as Aston Villa parted with £10 million to sign Mbwana Samatta from Belgian club Genk.

The striker became the first Tanzanian player to play in the Premier League when he made his debut against Bournemouth on Saturday, and the fact he scored should assuage fears that he'll take his time to adapt to English football.

He'll certainly need to fare better than Wesley, who netted just five goals in 21 league games after arriving from Club Brugge in the summer, only to suffer a season-ending cruciate ligament injury.

The 27-year-old Samatta is a relative late bloomer and only moved to Europe at 23; he's a trailblazer, beloved in his homeland -- witness the remarkable scenes of Tanzanian fans supporting Villa en masse and deliriously as he made his debut at the weekend -- while his movement off the ball and aerial threat will ensure he causes problems for Premier League defences.

However, he'll need to develop a strong rapport with Villa's creator-in-chief Jack Grealish -- and quickly -- if Villa are to pull clear from the drop-zone.

Jonathan Kodjia to Al-Gharafa

Heading the other way out of Villa



Mbwana Samatta

Park is Ivorian striker Jonathan Kodjia, who sealed a permanent switch to Al-Gharafa SC of Qatar.

It's a disappointing step away from the limelight for the 30-year-old, who struggled to rediscover the form he showed at Bristol City then in his first season at Villa after breaking his ankle in April 2017.

He's only scored 10 league goals in the subsequent three seasons, and struggled with the pace during his 112 minutes of Prem action this term.

"He wasn't up to the standard, in my opinion," said Villa manager Dean Smith, as per the Express & Star, in a curt epitaph for Kodjia's time at Villa Park.

"He hadn't got to the level of fitness that, for me, was required for the Premier League. That's the minimum standard to play Premier League football."

Odion Ighalo to Manchester United

Odion Ighalo's move to Manchester United on Friday lived up to a fairly tame deadline day, and perhaps partly because of this, he arrived as Old Trafford on a wave of goodwill.

There's certainly a lot to be positive about: Ighalo is a well-natured, God-fearing and humble character, he's enjoyed a fine scoring record in China since leaving the Premier League, and as a widely circulated photograph of him as a youngster suggests, was a United fan before his playing career took off.

Ighalo has already demonstrated his character since hitting the big time -- notably when bouncing back from the abuse he received after missing a key chance against Argentina at the World Cup to top score at the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations -- and he certainly has the experience

to have a good influence on some of United's younger players.

However, the positivity that surrounds his signing cannot mask the fact that his arrival, at 30, and from a relative footballing backwater, is indicative of where United find themselves in the world footballing hierarchy at this point in time.

Similarly, Ighalo's hideous loss of form at Watford -- he failed to net in 599 minutes of Premier League action in early 2016 and scored just one in 18 in the 2016-17 season -- cannot be ignored.

Considering United had reportedly been keen on Borussia Dortmund new boy Erling Haaland before he opted for the Bundesliga, the late move for Ighalo can certainly be seen as something of a panic buy, even if the loan move mitigates some of the risk.

Grade: A

Leon Balogun to Wigan Athletic

Nigeria's Leon Balogun is another seeking a fresh start following an underwhelming spell in top flight football as he leaves Brighton & Hove Albion for Wigan Athletic on loan, dropping into the Championship in the process.

When the Super Eagles stopper moved to the south coast in May 2018, it was clear the he'd have his work cut out to break up the Seagulls' defensive axis of Shane Duffy and Lewis Dunk.

Eighteen months later, with only five Premier League starts under his belt, and having lost his place in the Nigeria starting XI, Balogun must now make up for lost time, having failed to muscle into Brighton's first team under two different coaches.

At 31, it's imperative he puts together a run of games if he's to salvage the peak years of his career, and having battled Bundesliga relegation during his time with Mainz 05, he has the experience to help 22nd-placed Wigan pull clear of the drop.

Tariq Lamptey to Brighton & Hove Albion

As Balogun departs Brighton, Chelsea's Anglo-Ghanian defender Tariq Lamptey arrives, having not done enough during his 31 minutes of Premier League action to date to prove that he has a part to play in Frank Lampard's youthful revolution at Stamford Bridge.

"With his pace and technical ability, Tariq provides us with another option on the right side of the pitch both at right-back, where we already have good competition, and also further up the pitch," Seagulls boss Graham Potter told the club's official website.

Grade: B

Ayub Timbe to Reading

Also in the Championship, Reading have made an unlikely addition in the form of Harambee Stars wide-man Ayub Timbe on loan.

The determined winger is tenacious and capable of beating his man to whip in an effective cross, while he also provides a goal threat too, having scored seven in 14 for Beijing Renhe during 2018.

Kevin-Prince Boateng will hope for better luck -- and more playing time -- having moved on loan to Bestikas, a year on from his ill-fated move to Barcelona, and the 32-year-old has the personality and the charisma to be a big hit in Istanbul.

Henry Onyekuru to Galatasaray

Similarly, Henry Onyekuru returns to Turkish football with Galatasaray in search of more playing time following a frustrating spell at AS Monaco. The wide-man started just two games in Ligue 1 during the first half of the season, but will have fond memories of the Super Lig, where he netted 14 in 31 for Gala during the 2018-19 campaign.

Benjamin Moukandjo to Valenciennes

Cameroon's 2017 Africa Cup of Nations-winning captain Benjamin Moukandjo has the quality and experience to help promotion-chasing Valenciennes enjoy a late-season surge in Ligue 2 after arriving on a free transfer, while Nigeria's John Ogu can also make up for lost time at Saudi strugglers Al Adalah, where he will be used in a deeper role.

"I'm settling in well," Ogu told ESPN. "The team are in a tight situation in the league, so the objective is to help stay up for next season."

"There are good people here, and we've got internationals from Mali, Senegal and Madagascar."

Musa Barrow to Bologna

In Italy, three deals have also caught the imagination, with Fiorentina securing the long-term future of Hellas Verona loanee Sofyan Amrabat from Club Brugge and Christian Kouame from Genoa, and Bologna bringing in Atalanta's Musa Barrow on loan with the obligation to buy.

All three are in their early 20s and have the potential to take their game to another level over the next three years.

Barrow, part of Tom Saintfiet's exciting Gambia team, netted on his second Bologna outing against SPAL 2013, while Kouame could prove to be an absolute bargain for La Viola after arriving on loan with an obligation to buy for a minimum €10 million in the summer.

Messi blasts Abidal: Don't put blame on players

BARCELONA

LIONEL Messi has engaged in a war of words with Eric Abidal after the Barcelona sporting director suggested Ernesto Valverde was fired because the players were not happy with him.

Messi believes Abidal, who plays a huge role in appointing and sacking coaches at Barca, is passing the buck on January's decision to dismiss Valverde and replace him with Quique Setien.

The Argentina forward says Abidal should take responsibility for his own actions and complained that he had spoken about players in general without naming anyone in specific.

Sources have told ESPN that Messi feels he's been incorrectly blamed for Valverde's sacking and that the sporting director's comments will encourage more people to draw false conclusions.

"I honestly don't like doing these things but everyone has to be responsible for their job and take responsibility for their decisions," Messi wrote on Instagram alongside a screenshot of Abidal's interview with Diario SPORT.

"When things don't go well on the pitch, the players are the first ones to recognise as much. Those in the sporting department at the club should also take responsibility for their actions and decisions."

"Finally, I think that when you speak about players, you should have to give names. If you don't, you're dirtying everyone's name and encouraging things which are said which are not true."

Abidal had said: "Many players



Lionel Messi

were not satisfied or working a lot [under Valverde] and there was also an issue with internal communication."

"The relationship between the

coach and the dressing room was good, but there are things that an ex-player can smell. I told the club what I thought and we reached a decision."

Messi was one of a number of players who had always stood behind Valverde. Sources explained to ESPN in the wake of his dismissal that the support from the dressing room was one of the main reasons president Josep Maria Bartomeu hadn't pulled the trigger after last year's Champions League defeat to Liverpool.

Messi's frustrations off the pitch have been heightened by his struggles on it. ESPN revealed earlier on Monday that he's been suffering from a thigh problem for a few weeks, although his form has not been hit massively and the club are optimistic about managing the discomfort.

Amid all this, there remains a clause in Messi's contract that would allow him to walk away for nothing at

the end of the season, even though his deal runs until 2021.

"Negotiations have started with the president and [CEO] Oscar Grau and the idea is to sign a longer deal than one that gets renewed every year," Abidal added in his interview.

"I am [optimistic Messi will extend]. We have the best player in the world and we shouldn't lose him. We have to be optimistic. I think Messi is happy here, he's enjoying his job. He's showing his best level, breaking records."

"We, as a club, want to make him happier. And, for that, we have to give him the best teammates, improve the team each year and be in with a chance of winning titles. We'll try to do that well and I think we'll reach a deal with Leo. He knows that Barca need him."

(Agencies)

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Africa's transfer window: The diamonds and the duds

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 18



Special Olympics athletes, who represented Tanzania in this year's Pan African Games, which were hosted by Egypt recently, feature in early morning exercises in Cairo to shape up for the games. PHOTO: SPECIAL OLYMPICS TANZANIA

EATV THURSDAY

MORNING @ 11:00

DADAZ.

11:00 DADAZ LIVE
12:00 MPYA
12:30 Bongo Hits
13:00 Masi Kifani (r)
13:30 Kati Za Wana
14:00 Ujenzi (r)
14:30 DK10 Za Maangamizi
15:00 Funguka
15:30 Wagonga Ulimbo (r)
16:00 Ubongo Kids (r)
16:30 #HSHTAG
17:00 SSELEKT
17:55 Kurasa
18:00 eNewz
18:30 Music/Soap
19:30 EATV SAA 1
19:45 MJADALA
20:00 DADAZ (r)
21:00 Kibishara Zaidi

DADAZ A show that explores social and political issues from a feminine perspective.

eastafrica RADIO

06:00 Supa Breakfast
10:00 MAMAMIA
12:00 Kipenga Xtra
13:00 Planet Bongo
16:00 EA Drive
20:00 Kipenga
21:00 The Cruise

88.1FM DAR ES SALAAM

Simba SC players should step up performance, says coach

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

SIMBA Sports Club's head coach, Sven Vanderbroeck, has said he still has a lot of work to do for his club to reach the level he wants.

The Belgian gaffer issued the statement in a post-match interview after his side had to come from behind to beat Polisi Tanzania 2-1 in a thrilling Vodacom Premier League encounter, held at the National Stadium in Dar es Salaam on Tuesday.

He said despite winning, Simba are not playing compact and well coordinated football, a situation which is making it difficult for strikers to score more goals.

The outfit's defense has also been allowing more attacks in the process, he noted.

The coach said the game against Polisi Tanzania was the best teacher and disclosed that he and the rest of his team's technical staff are concentrating on solving the problems.

"We have won today (Tuesday) but the team has some coordination problems, our strikers are not scoring more goals and the defense is also allowing many attacks, we will talk with the players on how to solve the problems," he said.

In the Tuesday clash, coach Vanderbroeck used central defenders Kennedy Juma and Tyrone Santos, who played in place of regulars, Erasto Nyoni and Paschal Wawa, who are nursing injuries.

The coach has guided his side to nine Premier League games and two Federation Cup matches.

In Vodacom Premier League games, Simba, under Vanderbroeck tutelage, have scored 22 goals and conceded seven goals.

Commenting on the game against Polisi Tanzania, coach Vanderbroeck said despite the win his side made life difficult for themselves in the first half.

He, however hailed the fighting spirit in his side.

"We played well, our opponents were also best and physically ready for the match, but I think we made our life difficult especially in the first half when we allowed our opponents

to control the game and score the goal," he noted.

"The good thing is that I have players who can rise to the occasion and they gave us the desired results," he said.

Polisi Tanzania controlled proceedings of the game in the first half and scored their goal on the 22nd minute through striker, Sixtus Sabilo.

Simba equalized on the 56th minute through forward, John Bocco, and midfielder, Ibrahim Ajibu, scored the winning goal during the added on time of the clash.

On his remarks, Polisi Tanzania head coach, Malale Hamsini, blamed

the loss on lack of experience by his side.

He said his charges played well but could not score more goals due to their inexperience.

"I'm satisfied with the level of commitment and attitude shown by my players, everyone saw that we played well but I think lack of experience has cost us, I'm sure we will come back stronger in our next games," he said.

Polisi Tanzania have completed its 2019/2020 season's first round Premier League games with 30 points and are positioned seventh in the league log.



Simba Sports Club's head coach, Sven Vanderbroeck.

Special Olympics athletes win praise

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

THE Special Olympics Tanzania (SOT) has said the country has athletes that have what it takes to win medals at any international event.

The body's Director, Charles Rays, issued the statement when reacting to the country's Special Olympics team's performance at the just ended Pan African Special Olympics, which was held in Egypt last week.

The squad won 11 medals in the maiden games. At the just ended Egypt event, over 1000 athletes competed in athletics, basketball, bocce and football.

Tanzania fielded five players in 200m, 400m and 4x100m relay races and won six gold medals, three silver medals and two bronze medals.

Rays said at the Egypt games, the squads athlete Khalfan Jihad won two gold medals and one bronze medal.

Hidaya Vuai won one gold medal, one silver medal and one bronze medal, Nerverson Minja (one gold and one silver) and Elizabeth Kisaka (one gold and one silver), and Salama Kheri one gold medal.

Rays hailed the five athletes for putting up a gallant fight and making the country proud.

"Our athletes are very good, they have been competing at many international events and are bringing home medals," he noted.

"They can win medals at any international event, in the Egypt for example, we collected 11 medals and the same can happen in any event, all they need is good preparations," he said.

He said after the Egypt games, the focus now is on preparations for National Championships which will be held next year.

The competition, he noted, will be used to select athletes who will represent the country at the second Pan African Games slated for 2022 in Kigali, Rwanda and the 2023 World Championships to be hosted by Germany.

Rays stopped short of disclosing the number of athletes the country will send to the Kigali Pan African Games and World Championships, saying he is yet to receive more communication.

He also disclosed that SOT will not organize National Championships this year due to financial constraints.

"Last time we hosted the National Championships in Zanzibar, our aim is to host National Championships every year, but we are failing due to lack of sponsorship and we are, thus, appealing to stakeholders to help us with finances," he said.

Meanwhile, Rays disclosed that SOT is doing all it can to see to it that all special needs people in the country are involved in sporting activities.

"We are active in all regions of the country, with the exception of Manyara, Katavi and Shinyanga regions, but plans are underway to see to it that SOT is present in those regions," he noted.

"We want people to know that SOT is a true advocate of sports for all and believes in the power of inclusion," he said.

Bavuma hits out at double standards in transformation debate

CAPE TOWN

TEMBA Bavuma hopes his eye-catching innings in South Africa's seven-wicket victory over England in the first one-day international at Newlands on Tuesday will end the debate over whether he deserves his place in the side.

Batting at number three, Bavuma's excellent 98 comes after a difficult month in which he was temporarily dropped from the test side for a home series against England that South Africa lost 3-1.

His axing stirred debate on social media about whether his place in the team was deserved or whether he was only being picked because of efforts to redress imbalances from the country's apartheid era.

Cricket South Africa targets the inclusion of two black African players and four from the mixed-race and Indian communities in each team, averaged through the year.

"It has been hard. It's not so much the dropping part, all players get dropped, everyone goes through slumps of not scoring well," Bavuma told reporters.

"The awkwardness and discomfort from my side is when you are thrown into talks of transformation.

"Yes, I am black, that's my skin. But I play cricket because I love it.

"I'd like to think the reason I am in the team is because of performances I have put forward in my franchise side, and also for the national team, whenever I have been able to."

The 29-year-old, who has been a top performer across all formats in domestic cricket over the past few years, has hit out at what he saw as double standards in the transformation debate.

"The one thing that irks me is when you are seen through the eyes of transformation," he said.

"When you do well, transformation is not spoken about but when you do badly transformation is thrown at the top of the agenda. I have a serious problem with that.

"We've got to be able to take the good with the bad. If transformation is bad when black African players are not doing well, then when we are doing well, let's also recognize transformation for what it's done."

The diminutive batsman said he is not taking his place in the team for granted.

"I don't think I have nailed my spot in the side. This was just my third game and I am just happy to be on the field," he added.

"I don't know what's going to happen after this series or next week. It's just to enjoy the little moments I have."

REUTERS

Flexibles by David Chikoko

