



(Nairobi, Kenya, is gearing up for President Obama's coming visits, and the people there have high hopes that the visit will pave the way for more tourism.)

BURUNDI :

Jour d'élection au Burundi dans un climat très tendu

Le Monde.fr avec AFP /Le 29.06.2015

Après des semaines de campagne électorale émaillées de violences, le Burundi s'apprête à voter lundi 29 juin, dans un climat extrêmement tendu, pour des élections législatives et communales. Une première étape d'un processus électoral controversé, que les autorités ont refusé de reporter malgré les pressions internationales. Les opposants à la candidature du président Pierre Nkurunziza à un troisième mandat, que ses adversaires jugent inconstitutionnelle, manifestent quasi quotidiennement depuis deux mois, malgré une violente répression.

Avant l'ouverture du scrutin, plusieurs centres de vote ont été attaqués durant la nuit, à Bujumbura et en province, mais les assaillants ne sont pas parvenus à endommager le matériel électoral, a annoncé la police lundi matin.

« Un simulacre électoral »

L'opposition a annoncé qu'elle ne prendrait pas part à « un simulacre électoral » et la société civile a appelé les électeurs à boycotter les urnes. Opposition et société civile, acteurs de la contestation contre un troisième mandat jugé inconstitutionnel de M. Nkurunziza, estiment que le climat politique et sécuritaire au Burundi ne permet pas des élections libres et transparentes.

L'ONU, l'Union africaine et les pays de la région leur ont donné raison sur ces derniers points, estimant aussi que les conditions requises pour des scrutins crédibles n'étaient pas remplies. L'organisation panafricaine a confirmé dimanche qu'elle n'observerait pas les élections lundi. La communauté internationale dénonce notamment un climat d'intimidation et de peur, entretenu par la

ligue de jeunesse du parti au pouvoir – les « Imbonerakure », qualifiés de « milice » par l'ONU – et l'absence de médias indépendants. Les radios d'information privées ont été détruites lors d'une tentative de coup d'Etat militaire mi-mai et sont depuis empêchées de recommencer à émettre par les autorités. Nombre de leurs journalistes ont fui le pays ou se cachent, affirmant être menacés.

Mais le camp présidentiel est décidé à organiser ces élections, malgré la suspension d'une partie de l'aide des bailleurs et un regain de violences depuis la mi-juin, quand la police est parvenue, après un mois et demi de manifestations quasi quotidiennes à Bujumbura et dans quelques localités de province, à étouffer la contestation dans la rue. Depuis, plusieurs attaques à la grenade ont fait au moins 5 morts et des tirs sont régulièrement entendus la nuit dans Bujumbura. Dimanche soir, encore, à quelques heures de l'ouverture du scrutin, des tirs nocturnes d'origine inconnue étaient audibles à travers la capitale.

En signe de contestation, plusieurs personnalités de premier plan de la scène politique burundaise ont cependant fait défection, notamment le second vice-président du Burundi, Gervais Rufyikiri, qui comme M. Ntavyohanyuma s'était opposé au sein du CNDD-FDD, le parti présidentiel, aux velléités de troisième mandat du président Nkurunziza.

Crainte du retour de violences à grande échelle

Quelque 3,8 millions de Burundais sont inscrits sur les listes électorales. Les citoyens burundais doivent élire 100 députés, auxquels viendront s'ajouter trois membres de l'ethnie ultraminoritaire twa (1 % de la population) ainsi que, si nécessaire, un nombre variable de députés cooptés au sein des listes en lice pour parvenir aux équilibres prévus par la Constitution, l'Assemblée devant compter 60 % de députés hutu (environ 85 % de la population), 40 % de députés tutsi (environ 15 %) et 30 % de femmes.

Ces équilibres ont été consacrés par l'accord d'Arusha, dont la signature en 2000 a ouvert la voie à la fin de la guerre civile ayant opposé entre 1993 et 2006 l'armée, alors dominée par l'élite tutsi, et des rébellions hutu. Les subtils mécanismes de partage du pouvoir de cet accord ont apporté dix ans de paix au Burundi, à l'histoire post-coloniale ponctuée de massacres. Les observateurs craignent que la crise actuelle ne provoque le retour de violences à grande échelle.

Plusieurs centres de vote attaqués dans la nuit au Burundi

lesoir.be/29/06/2015

Les dégâts sont limités, à en croire la police burundaise.

Plusieurs centres de vote ont été attaqués au Burundi durant la nuit, à Bujumbura et en province, mais les assaillants ne sont pas parvenus à endommager le matériel électoral, a annoncé la police lundi matin, jour de scrutins législatifs et communaux.

Le Burundi vote lundi, dans un climat extrêmement tendu, émaillé de violences, pour des législatives et communales marquant la première étape d'un processus électoral controversé, après deux mois de contestation de la candidature du président Pierre Nkurunziza à un troisième mandat, que ses adversaires jugent inconstitutionnel.

AU: Burundi polls will not be free

June 29 2015/Reuters/By Clement Manirabarusha

Bujumbura - The African Union stood down its election observers in Burundi on Sunday, saying

Monday's parliamentary election would be neither free nor fair, as the speaker of parliament said he had fled after being threatened and heavy gunfire echoed across the capital.

Residents of the capital Bujumbura reported hearing the sound of grenade explosions and heavy machinegun fire in northern and southern districts, after a night in which at least three people were killed.

Burundi has been in turmoil since April, when President Pierre Nkurunziza said he would seek a third term, exacerbating months of protests and triggering an abortive military coup last month.

Opposition parties are boycotting Monday's vote and the presidential election on July 15 in protest at Nkurunziza's move, which they say is unconstitutional, and at rising political violence.

"Noting that the necessary conditions are not met for the organisation of free, fair, transparent and credible elections... the AU Commission will not observe the local and parliamentary elections," Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, the commission's chairwoman, said in a statement.

The European Union and the influential Catholic Church have already stood down their observers for the same reasons.

Dlamini Zuma appealed to the government and all other parties to "take a full measure of the dangers threatening their country".

Parliamentary speaker Pie Ntavyohanyuma said he been threatened after opposing Nkurunziza's bid for a third term.

"I was forced to quit the country due to the unrest caused by the president's insistence on seeking a third term, which is illegal, which is unconstitutional," he told France 24 television from Belgium.

"I personally advised President Nkurunziza to drop his plan for a third term, but his answer was to threaten me, to humiliate me."

The government was not immediately available to respond to his remarks.

Nkurunziza's opponents say his decision to stand again violates the constitution as well as a peace deal that ended a civil war in 2005. Nkurunziza cites a constitutional court ruling saying he can run again, although the court's vice-president, another of those who have fled, said he and other judges had been pressured to rule in favour of Nkurunziza.

Dozens have been killed in months of unrest, including an opposition leader, and the UN refugee agency UNHCR says 127 000 have fled Burundi.

Last week, Second Vice-President Gervais Rufyikiri also said he had fled to Belgium, Burundi's former colonial ruler. In May, the vice president of the election commission fled.

Overnight in Bujumbura, a police officer shot and killed a 25-year-old university student walking in the Jabe neighbourhood, his brother told Reuters on Sunday, giving his name only as Alexis because he feared for his safety.

Visibly in shock, he said he had seen the shooting, adding: "Patrick was stabbed with a bayonet by the same policeman."

Also in Jabe, a man was killed in a suspected grenade attack, while in the Kanyosha neighbourhood, one soldier was shot dead by another, residents said. Police could not be reached for comment.

A Reuters correspondent in Bujumbura heard explosions and gunfire through Saturday night and early Sunday.

Residents said the shooting and explosions resumed on Sunday night in Mutakura and Cibitoke in the north of the city and Kanyosha in the south.

They said a policeman had been injured in a grenade attacks in Cibitoke, and a polling station in the district of Kamenge had been attacked by gunmen. No official comment was available.

Many of the capital's inhabitants shut their businesses and went home earlier than usual, and by 7pm many areas were deserted.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who has called for the polls to be postponed, issued a statement of concern.

The European Union has said it might impose sanctions on those responsible for pre-election violence and consider other steps against Burundi, which depends heavily on foreign aid.

The United States, the European Union, the Netherlands and Belgium have already cut some aid.

RWANDA :

Karake arrest tests UK, Rwanda relations

Sunday, 28 June 2015/independent.co.ug

Relations between Rwanda and the United Kingdom have come under pressure following the arrest of Rwanda's intelligence chief, Karenzi Karake, in London.

Gen Karake, 54, was arrested at Heathrow Airport on June 20 and remanded in custody. He was arrested by Metropolitan police officers under the European Arrest Warrant.

Gen Karake is director general of Rwanda's National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS).

Nicknamed KK, the Rwandan government hails him as one of the people who stopped the genocide. He went on to be deputy commander of the country's first UN peacekeeping mission in Darfur before returning to his role as spy chief.

Karake is wanted in Spain for war crimes. He is accused of ordering massacres while head of military intelligence in the wake of the 1994 Rwanda genocide.

Gen. Karake is also accused of ordering the killing of three Spanish nationals working for Medicos del Mundo.

During the genocide an estimated 800,000 people were killed between April and June 1994 by ethnic Hutu extremists.

Most of the dead were members of the minority Tutsi community and politically moderate Hutus.

The killings ended when the RPF, a Tutsi-led rebel movement that entered Rwanda from Uganda, seized control of the country.

But Human Rights Watch reported that in their drive for military victory and to control the population, the RPF killed thousands, including government troops, members of the militia and some civilians in numerous executions and massacres.

In 2008, a Spanish judge indicted Karake for alleged war crimes along with 39 other current or former high-ranking Rwandan military officials.

But the Rwandan government is said to be puzzled by the timing of Gen Karake's arrest, as he had travelled to the UK several times since the indictment was issued.

Williams Nkurunziza, Rwanda's High Commissioner to the UK, called the arrest "an insult".

"We take strong exception to the suggestion that he's being arrested on war crimes," he told the BBC World Service.

"Any suggestion that any of our 40 leaders are guilty of crimes against humanity is an insult to our collective conscience."

Louise Mushikiwabo, Rwanda's foreign minister called the arrest "an outrage".

International outrage

According to the BBC, Phillip Gourevitch, a leading writer on Rwanda, told Newsnight that Gen Karake's arrest was the equivalent of the head of the UK's MI6 or the US's CIA being arrested.

He said the Spanish indictment had been criticised as highly politicised by many, including U.S. diplomats.

In a statement the British High Commission in Rwanda said the arrest was a "legal obligation" carried out on behalf of the Spanish authorities but stressed the UK had a "close relationship" with the Rwandan government.

"We co-operate closely on a growing range of regional and international issues," the statement said.

"Her Majesty's government greatly values the close relationship with Rwanda and is committed to that relationship for the long term."

Andrew Mitchell, former secretary of state for international development, told the BBC he thought the arrest was "completely wrong".

"I think it is reprehensible that the European Arrest Warrant is being abused in this way," he said.

"It's being used for political reasons and not judicial ones."

He added that he agreed with the American view that the indictments were "un-researched, politically motivated and lacking in facts."

Tension with BBC

The arrest of Karake adds tension to the uneasy relation between Rwanda and the UK which was sparked by the BBC's airing of a controversial documentary on Rwanda in October 2014.

Titled 'Rwanda's Untold Story', the broadcast sparked controversy by allegation it made against top Rwandan official including President Paul Kagame.

It also quoted US researchers who suggested that many of the more than 800,000 Rwandans who died in the 1994 genocide may have been ethnic Hutus, and not ethnic Tutsis as the government maintains.

Kagame accused the BBC of "genocide denial" in the documentary, which he said it had chosen to "tarnish Rwandans, dehumanise them".

A committee appointed to investigate the broadcast concluded that it "made a litany of claims and assertions that are problematic in a number of ways and which we consider to violate Rwandan law, the BBC's own ethical guidelines and limitations to press freedom.

"We also find the documentary to be minimising and denying genocide, contravening domestic and international laws. Moreover, the denial of genocide is a criminal offence in a number of countries around the world."

The BBC defended its decision to air the documentary, saying it had "a duty to investigate difficult and challenging subjects". It added that the film made "a valuable contribution to the understanding of the tragic history of the country and the region".

RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

SOUTH AFRICA :

Global recognition for South African lab

29 June 2015/Source: SAnews.gov

The National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS) has been nominated by the Swiss Institute for Quality Standards (SIQS) and the Socrates Committee for the prestigious international award in European Quality in the health care category.

"The nomination serves as recognition and affirmation of the NHLS' position as a leader in pathology and diagnostic services on the African continent," said the NHLS.

The awards will be presented at Montreux, Switzerland, during the International Excellence in Quality summit, which will run from 30 June to 2 July 2015.

These awards aim to spread the Swiss Quality concept and implement advanced quality standards. For the NHLS, the nomination is in recognition of its safe and effective treatment methods, highly professional medical staff, and services quality in accordance with the European standards.

"It is with great honour and pride for the NHLS to be nominated for this prestigious award, as it not only represents the organisation, but depicts the great strides and continuous improvements which the South African health care landscape has made over the years, and also attributes to the overwhelming dedication and commitment of the NHLS staff," said Joyce Mogale, the interim chief executive of the NHLS.

The International Excellence in Quality summit is an annual gathering of the top regional goods and services suppliers and professionals in quality improvement. Held over three days in Montreux, the International Forum is an opportunity for 100 leaders and experts worldwide to meet, learn, share local knowledge and recognise the best quality experience.

The event aims to empower and encourage all participants to be actively involved in quality practice presentations and discussions.

The Swiss Institute for Quality Standards was founded to promote Swiss quality concepts in order to improve products and services.

This nomination is not the first international recognition for the NHLS. In 2013, it won the Business Initiative Directions International Star Award for quality.

That award was presented to the service for its demonstrated and proven commitment to quality and for its continuous quest for excellence through attention to products and services.

South Africa names Brics bankers

29 June 2015/SAinfo reporter

The Brics New Development Bank is expected to be up and running by the end of this year, according to the National Treasury.

The Cabinet had endorsed the nomination of Leslie Maasdorp as vice-president of the bank, while Tito Mboweni had been appointed as the non-executive director to the board of the bank, Finance Minister Nhlanhla Nene said on 26 June.

"It is also a pleasure to announce that the Agreement on the New Development Bank and the Treaty for the establishment of a Brics Contingent Reserve Arrangement have been ratified by our Parliament," he said.

The bank was expected to be operational by end of 2015, and the process to establish the African Regional Centre was under way. As soon as the bank opened for business, the centre would also be open to consider projects on the continent.

The inaugural meeting of the Board of Governors of the Brics New Development Bank will take place on 7 July in the Russian city of Ufa, when the management will be formally appointed.

Brics – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – represent 40% of the world's population and a quarter of its economic output. They decided in 2013 to create their own development bank to step up lending for the infrastructure projects needed to close the gap with the industrialised world.

The bank will have its headquarters in Shanghai and is expected to have up to \$100-billion (R1.2-trillion) in capital.

Maasdorp recently left AdvTech, where he was chief executive. He was previously the president of Merrill Lynch for southern Africa. In 2002, he was the first African to be appointed as international adviser to Goldman Sachs International. From 1999 to 2002, he led the privatisation programme for the government when he served as deputy director-general. In 1994, he was appointed as special adviser to Mboweni, who was the minister of labour at the time.

Mboweni was the eighth governor of the South African Reserve Bank and the first black South African to hold the post. He previously served as the minister of labour, as professor of economics at Stellenbosch University and as chairperson of AngloGold Ashanti Limited. He is the independent non-executive chairman of Nampak.

TANZANIA :

KENYA :

Kenya is spending millions to make the country presentable for Obama's visit
by theGrio / June 28, 2015

Nairobi, Kenya, is gearing up for President Obama's coming visits, and the people there have high hopes that the visit will pave the way for more tourism.

Visitor numbers for Kenya have plummeted, down 25 percent just the first five months of this year, with many people cancelling trips and safaris because of security concerns, especially with recent attacks from the militant group Al Shabaab. In April, 147 people were killed in an attack on Garissa University College, near the Somali border.

Officials say the local government will spend around \$2 million in an effort to clean up the city and give off their best impression for the president.

The president will be speaking at the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Nairobi and meeting with Kenyan president Uhuru Kenyatta. The summit being held in Kenya "underscores the fact that Africa, and Kenya in particular, has become a center for innovation and entrepreneurship."

Although there have not yet been any plans announced for the president to visit the village where his father was born, his relatives, who still live there, hold fast in their belief that he will come.

"According to our culture and his tribe — his roots — it is not good if he comes here to Kenya and does not visit his village," said Benjamin Sadiki, who is from the same village.

South Sudan President, Rebel Leader Hold Direct Talks in Kenya

by Paul Richardson/bloomberg.com/June 29, 2015

South Sudanese President Salva Kiir and rebel leader Riek Machar held direct talks in Kenya on Saturday to discuss the 18-month-long conflict in the oil-producing nation, Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta said.

Five hours of discussions took place in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, at Kenyatta's instigation, according to a statement e-mailed by the presidency on Sunday.

"President Kiir and Dr Machar expressed their full commitment to the on-going peace processes and reaffirmed their commitment to securing peace for their people," Kenyatta said.

Fighting between government and rebel forces that erupted in South Sudan in December 2013 has left tens of thousands of people dead and more than 2 million displaced, according to the United Nations.

Kenya, Zambia seek to strengthen bilateral relations

BY Graham Kajilwa/standardmedia.co.ke/Monday, June 29th 2015

NAIROBI: Kenya and Zambia have concluded negotiations that will see the two countries increase volumes of trade between them. Foreign Affairs and International Trade Cabinet Secretary Amina Mohamed said there are plans to remove trade barriers to ensure specific goods from Zambia access the Kenyan market and vice versa. Speaking after conclusion of the ninth Joint Permanent Commission of Co-operation (JPCC) in Nairobi over the weekend, Ms Mohamed noted that despite the long relationship between the two countries, the trade remained very low. "We have had the issues of technical barrier to trade, where some products that would have sold very easily in the Zambian market as well as the Kenyan market have been excluded because of the barriers that we have had. We are not doing too well and that is the reason we are having these meetings," she said. MUTUAL RELATION She said relations between the two countries are set to be strengthened as they would be learning from each other. "Kenya can learn a lot from Zambia in the mining sector while Zambia can borrow a leaf from Kenya in the tourism sector," she said. Ms Mohamed said there is going to be a series of programmes that will facilitate exchange and sharing of knowledge as well as experience in various sectors of development. "This will provide an opportunity for both technical experts and senior officials from respective countries to strengthen co-operation in political, socio-economic and cultural sectors," she added. Zambia was represented by a delegation led by Foreign Affairs Minister Harry Kalaba at the 9th session of the JPCC held in Nairobi from June 25 to 27. Kalaba, while applauding the bilateral relations, decried obstacles that have led to the dismal trade relations between the two countries.

"Despite the fact that we are both Comesa members, trade relations between our countries have always been rated as very low due to our different technical structures," he said. Mohamed announced that President Uhuru Kenyatta will be visiting Zambia next month for further discussions on how to implement some of the agreements.

ANGOLA :

AU/AFRICA :

Collaborating to Fight Terror in East Africa

By Somalicurrent / Jun 28, 2015

Uganda's soldiers have seen war and peacekeeping in all its forms and on many terrains. We delivered defeat to the once-potent Lord's Resistance Army, of Joseph Kony infamy. These days the LRA is in tatters, most of its leadership dead or in custody. That fight prepared us for the next one: the spread of global terrorism to our region.

This fight began in 1998, when al Qaeda introduced East Africa to its breed of terrorism with the gruesome attacks on the American embassies in Tanzania and Kenya. Since then, we have battled varying forms and perpetrators of this evil. In recent years the chief perpetrator has been al-Shabaab, the Somalia-based terrorist group with ties to al Qaeda.

A joint mission of African Union troops has been operating in Somalia since 2007. We confronted a situation that much of the world had written off as hopeless—much of Somalia was under al-Shabaab's control. But our forces have made tremendous gains toward restoring security, routing al-Shabaab from most areas that it previously occupied.

But al-Shabaab's terror persists elsewhere in the region—as we saw most recently with the horrific attack in Kenya at Garissa University College on April 2, when 147 students were murdered in cold blood.

We in the region—with the support of our global allies, including the U.S.—must redouble our efforts to combat al-Shabaab and others of similar creed. The militaries and the political leaders of the African continent have a responsibility to their people, who deserve to live in security, free from this hateful, senseless terror. The threat will not dissipate on its own.

To succeed against the terrorists, however, we must choose our approach carefully. Looking at the war on terror across the globe, we have seen what works and what does not. Brute force alone isn't going to do the job. Nor will antagonizing and alienating our Muslim countrymen.

We need to up the ante with an African security and counterterrorism architecture that mandates the creation of a regional-security support mechanism for armed forces and security agencies. It would borrow from the successes Uganda has had with its counterterrorism efforts, where strategies are organized and actions are coordinated. Such an arrangement would include developing—in consultation and partnership with regional and international experts—uniform, best-practice training programs to be provided to forces across East Africa. A standardized, integrated approach is required to fight terrorism, with everyone studying from the same script so that knowledge, skills and experience can be shared between forces.

The goal would be to establish a base for coordinated tactics among militaries, security officials, border control and financial authorities. This would allow rapid responses to immediate threats and establish solid lines of intelligence-sharing. It would also encourage the development of systems to trace suspected terrorists and their affiliates, supporters and finances across borders.

The fight against terror cannot be tackled by any one country or military alone—no matter how powerful. All nations in the region must work in consort, too. Uncoordinated efforts will be ineffective.

Fortunately, East Africa is home to a strong coalition of the willing, including Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti. Political leaders in our neighborhood don't shy away from the fight. We are a community of nations that have proven unflinching and vehemently intolerant of terrorism. There is a genuine understanding of what is at stake: It is all of our shared future, security and well-being that we're working to safeguard, together. It is time to turn that willingness into organized and cohesive action.

Lt. Col. Ankunda is Uganda's spokesman for Defense and the armed forces.

Digital migration deadline is illegal

Sunday, 28 June 2015/By Isaac K. Ssemakadde/independent.co.ug

Switching off analogue television transmission may not have complied with requirements

For some 30 African countries, including the technologically advanced North African giants Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and Egypt, the deadline for digital migration is 2020. But Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) has insisted and implemented the digital transition on June 17, 2015 for Kampala and surrounding areas.

According to UCC, this deadline is justifiable because Uganda is one of many African countries which committed to digital migration by June 2015 in the Geneva 2006 Agreement of the International Telecommunication Union's Regional Telecommunication Conference.

Furthermore, UCC is mandated by Section 5(1)(i) of the Uganda Communications Act (2013) to set national standards and ensure compliance with national and international standards and obligations laid down by international communication agreements and treaties to which Uganda is a party.

However, I submit that this deadline is not only unlawful but also arbitrary and unjustifiable, and thus null and void.

Uganda is a dualist country – its domestic law does not automatically incorporate public international law.

Accordingly, the Geneva 2006 Agreement – which UCC purports to be implementing – does not have legislative effect in the local context because appropriate legislation has never been passed to transform the norms and standards laid down by that treaty into rules and regulations having legal force in Uganda.

This could easily have been achieved by invoking Section 93 of the Uganda Communications Act (2013) which empowers the ICT Minister, after consultation with UCC and with approval of Parliament, by statutory instrument to make regulations for better carrying into effect the provisions of the Act, including Section 5(1)(i) mentioned above.

Section 16 of the Interpretation Act requires every statutory instrument to be published in the Uganda Gazette before it can be enforced. Unfortunately, this was not done for the digital migration deadline being enforced by UCC from June 17. Therefore, it cannot be the basis for interfering with people's freedom of information in this country.

At Legal Brains Trust, we urged UCC to delay the switching off of all television sets and stations that may not have complied with digital broadcasting requirements on June 17 for at least two

years.

This period is necessary for the making and implementation of a digital migration law tailored to the circumstances of Uganda and its people.

As keen followers of the digital migration project, we regret to report that UCC failed to adopt an open, transparent and participatory approach to regulation of digital migration contrary to Uganda law and international best practice.

For instance, UCC did not conduct a public consultation. It did not seek the input of crucial stakeholders such as the consumers, consumer protection agencies, suppliers and sellers of digital decoders and digital signal transmitters, and proprietors of licensed TV stations, content providers, among others.

Besides the occasional radio jingle and newspaper advert, which were mainly in English and targeted at urban and sophisticated audiences, UCC did not offer sufficient public information, education and a structured campaign to raise awareness concerning the digital migration policy so as to enable the highest possible number of consumers to switch to the digital platform consensually.

On May 5, 2015 our communications chief, Marvin Saasi, submitted to UCC a dozen requests for information relating to progress of the digital migration project as at April 30, 2015, but in vain.

The silence of UCC confirmed our suspicions that UCC does not have the data to justify the switching off of noncompliant operators and subscribers on 17 June. For instance, UCC does not know the exact number and location of active TV subscribers that successfully completed the digital transition.

UCC's refusal to answer these tough audit queries signifies its failure to effectively and efficiently monitor, inspect, supervise and regulate the digital migration project. Consequently set-top boxes were prohibitively priced until the eleventh hour. We have not yet installed enough digital signal transmitters to cover the whole country, among other blunders.

Lastly, I submit that the timing of the switch is not proper as the country is in a crucial stage of the electioneering period. Enforcement of this deadline will reduce the television subscriber base and hinder millions of citizens from following civic education and other important matters of public interest related to the forthcoming general elections, e.g. legislations, government policies, etc.

Isaac Ssemakadde is an Advocate of the High Court of Uganda and the CEO of Legal Brains Trust, a Kampala-based human rights watchdog.

UN/AFRICA :

US/AFRICA :

CANADA/AFRICA :

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

EU/AFRICA :

CHINA/AFRICA :

Brazil, China, India, South Africa in push for climate financing

June, 29 2015/AFP

NEW YORK — Brazil, China, India and South Africa have voiced disappointment over the failure of rich countries to come up with billions of dollars needed to help them sign on to a landmark climate change deal.

Ministers and top negotiators from the four key countries met in New York to close ranks as talks on the climate deal head into crucial months before a Paris conference in December.

In a joint statement on Sunday, they expressed "disappointment over the continued lack of any clear roadmap for developed countries to provide \$100 billion per year by 2020, as well as on substantially scaling up financial support after 2020".

The world's developed countries agreed in 2010 to mobilise \$100 billion a year by 2020 to help poorer nations adapt to the impacts of climate change and reduce their emissions.

Those commitments have fallen short by about \$70 billion, according to the World Bank.

"There is still a clear expectation and so I hope the developing countries can fulfil their commitment before the Paris meeting," China's envoy for climate change Xie Zhenhua told reporters.

World governments will try to forge a new global deal to address climate change at a UN climate conference in December, with both developed and developing countries committing to cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

Financing to help developing nations cut emissions and adapt to climate change remains a key issue.

South Africa's Environment Minister Edna Molewa stressed that "the four countries sitting around this table have been, on our own, doing a lot of work" on climate change.

"It is important that this scaling up happens," she said. "Adaptation requires a lot of money."

Technology for the south

India's chief negotiator Ravi Prasad emphasised the need for developed countries to share emissions-cutting and clean-energy technology with poor nations to bring them onboard the global effort to address climate change.

"Without the concomitant flow of technology support, for many developing countries and poor economies, it will be impossible to move on to any such trajectory in the near future," said Prasad.

While pressing demands for climate financing, the four countries stressed that they will be working closely together in the months ahead to help clinch a deal in Paris that they said was urgently needed.

Brazil's Environment Minister Izabella Teixeira said the four countries were committed to work hard to avoid a repeat of the 2009 Copenhagen climate conference that ended in failure.

"We cannot postpone this agenda, this agreement," said Teixeira.

China's Xie said negotiations were achieving progress.

"We are eliminating differences. We are very positive and very hopeful for the success of the Paris meeting," he said.

China, the world's biggest greenhouse gas emitter, has joined forces with India, the third largest emitter, along with Brazil, which ranks among the top 10 and South Africa, which boasts the continent's most developed economy.

INDIA/AFRICA :

BRAZIL/AFRICA :

EN BREF, CE 29 Juin 2015... AGNEWS/DAM, NY, 29/06/2015