

[The First Pan African Conference on Sustainable Tourism Management in African National Parks was opened Monday this week in northern Tanzania's tourist city of Arusha, with commitments from African governments to develop responsible tourism. UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Secretary General Dr. Taleb Rifai said in his opening speech that Africa needs concerted efforts to develop tourism through nature conservation and involvement of local communities in tourist areas. He said Africa remains a growing and most attractive destination today, based on the rich natural resources available, mostly nature, that includes wildlife, which still attracts many tourists from other continents.]

BURUNDI:

EAC : Le Burundi au 2e rang dans la lutte contre la corruption

Mardi 16 octobre 2012/Xinhua

BUJUMBURA (Xinhua) - Le Burundi est passé de la dernière position à la deuxième place en matière de lutte contre la corruption dans la Communauté est-africaine (EAC) dont les membres comprennent aussi le Rwanda, la Tanzanie, l'Ouganda et le Kenya.

Ce classement est contenu dans le rapport de "Indice 2012 de la corruption en Afrique de l'Est", selon lequel l'indice de corruption pour le Burundi est évalué à 18,5%, juste derrière le Rwanda (2,5%).

Lors d'une réunion gouvernementales consacrée à l'examen de ce rapport tenue lundi, le premier vice-président burundais Térence Sinunguruzza a invité les hauts cadres de l'Etat à capitaliser les conclusions du rapport.

Pour M. Sinunguruzza, cette performance réalisée par le Burundi doit constituer pour les hauts cadres de l'Etat "un nouveau départ " pour arrêter des stratégies de maintenance et d'amélioration des performances dans les secteurs comme la santé, l'éducation, la fourniture en eau, la justice, la police, l'administration locale et les services de collecte des taxes.

"Tout en félicitant tous les acteurs qui ont oeuvré pour cette performance, mais sans verser dans l'autosatisfaction, nous voulons que ces services servent d'exemple l'année prochaine ; et qu'ils deviennent les modèles à suivre pour le reste de l'administration", a-t-il déclaré en substance.

Le ministre à la Présidence chargé de la bonne gouvernance et de la privatisation, Issa Ngendakumana, a souligné qu'il n'est pas temps de crier victoire sur les avancées faites en matière de lutte contre la corruption, mais plutôt de prendre acte des résultats du rapport "East Africa Bribery Index 2012" et échanger sur les voies et moyens de les capitaliser en vue d'améliorer le score pour les prochaines années.

"Nous ne devons nous faire des illusions, car il reste encore beaucoup à faire pour réduire sensiblement le fléau de la lutte contre la corruption dans les différents secteurs de la vie nationale", a-t-il fait remarquer.

Burundi : une ONG anti-corruption dénonce un scandale financier de 3 millions USD

Mardi 16 octobre 2012 /Xinhua

BUJUMBURA (Xinhua) - L'ONG anti-corruption burundaise, l'Observatoire de lutte contre la corruption et les malversations économiques (OLUCOME), a dénoncé lundi un scandale financier de plus de 4,5 milliards de Fbu (près de 3 millions USD) relatif aux fonds destinés à financer un projet de reboisement et de plantation des arbres fruitiers.

Selon l'OLUCOME, le scandale concerne la surfacturation et la fourniture fictive de plus de 3 millions de plants qui devraient s'acheter à 1,2 milliard de Fbu (800.000 dollars) et dont les accusés de réception totalisent un montant de 4,5 milliards de Fbu, soit un manque à gagner de 3,3 milliards de Fbu (environ 2,2 millions de dollars), a révélé le président de l'OLUCOME, Gabriel Rufyiri, au cours d'une conférence de presse.

Ce scandale s'est produit dans la province de Kayanza (nord-est) alors que la distribution s'est faite dans 16 provinces du pays, raison pour laquelle l'OLUCOME a demandé qu'une enquête soit menée dans les 16 provinces.

L'OLUCOME a aussi demandé des sanctions à l'endroit des personnes qui se seraient rendues coupables dans ce scandale, citant entre autres tous les 7 administrateurs de la province de Kayanza.

RWANDA:

Rwanda: German Delegation Impressed By Rwanda's Progress

15 October 2012/News of Rwanda/allafrica.com

President Paul Kagame hosted a 30-member delegation from the German state of Rhineland-Palatine at the village of Urugwiro, last weekend.

The German delegation, led by Roger Lewentz the Internal Affairs and Sports Minister of the Rhineland- Palatinate, was impressed by the President's courtesy and fortitude. The delegation was on a one week visit to the country to celebrate 30 years of partnership with Rwanda.

President Kagame passionately welcomed the delegation, acknowledging Rwanda's strong relationship with the German state, saying that such partnerships based on mutual respect, beneficial activities and valuing one another, is what everybody wants.

"It's self evident, the results speak for themselves. Our intention is to welcome and work with you, as much as we can to take the relationship forward and strengthen it", the President addressed the delegation.

"We are not only making good progress with support from friends like you and others elsewhere but also building on the desire and the energy of Rwandans who really want to make a difference in their lives. Our efforts focused on empowering people so that they are not spoon fed. It's about empowering women and the youth for future development, it's about entrepreneurship and allowing people to do things that enrich them, creating the kind of infrastructure that will allow people to create and innovate.", he added.

Speaking to Journalists shortly after meeting the President, Roger Lewentz, the head of the delegation, said he was impressed by the progress Rwanda has made in a very short period and looking forward to building a stronger partnership.

"We are committed to strengthening our partnerships and we want to expand our collaboration in the areas of education, health, and infrastructure among others," Lewentz said.

Thanks to the resilience and determination of the Rwandan Patriotic Front that stopped the Genocide and embarked later at the end of July 1994 on establishing a government of national unity; Rwanda has achieved the extra-ordinary feat to claim a significant position among the community of nations. The RPF has journeyed down the rough road of nation-building and will be celebrating 25 years in December this year since its inception in 1987. Eighteen years since the genocide that shook the world, Rwanda is now well known for her rapid socio-economic reforms that have earned international accolades.

Delighted by the inspiring record of Rwanda-German cooperation, the Rhineland Palatinate administration pledged to invest in technical and vocational education and exchange programmes for both countries. They will also invest in energy, with a focus on renewable energy at the grassroot level. Other areas of partnership include urbanization of Kigali city and affordable housing technology.

Rwanda: Kagame Receives U.S. Global Aids Coordinator

By Frank Kanyesigye/The New Times/ 16 October 2012

President Paul Kagame yesterday at Village Urugwiro received Ambassador Eric Goosby, the US Global Aids Coordinator who was in the country to launch the Human Resources in the Health sector programme.

The health sector initiative is an innovative programme that plans to increase the quality and number of health workers through partnering with some of the best American schools.

Speaking to journalists shortly after meeting the Head of State, Goosby said that, the health care programme aims to improve the skills of the Rwandan medical personnel to be specialists in various medical fields.

"We visited President Kagame to brief him about the Human Resources Initiative because it's an important programme that brings together medical personnel from about 14 best universities in the United States to train Rwandan doctors, nurses, laboratory technicians among others," he said.

The US Global Aids Coordinator said President Kagame welcomed the programme but he asked critical questions regarding its sustainability and accountability.

"He is very concerned of the quality of care that is delivered through this system and wants it to be monitored and show that indeed it improves the lives of the Rwandan people," noted Goosby who is also the Managing Director of the US President 's Emergency Plan for AIDS relief.

The programme supported by the former US President Bill Clinton through his organisation , the Clinton Health Access Initiative(CHAI) seeks to address the challenge of Human resources in the health sector through the Ministry of Health.

CHAI has been assisting Rwanda in discussions and negotiations with the US government and Global Fund to implement the national strategic plan for Human Resources for Health.

Close to 100 US faculty members in various medical fields will be coming to Rwanda for one year placements for a period of seven consecutive years.

"The US faculty members will partner with Rwandan government to upgrade the skills of the medical teachers and students," said Vincent Biruta, the Minister of Education who accompanied Goosby delegation to the President's office

He stated that the Head of State expressed gratitude towards the initiative but emphasised the need to ensure its sustainability in the country.

The Human Resources in Health sector scheme is part of Rwanda's strategic plan to improve health care system and consolidate on what has been achieved in previous years.

Rwanda's outstanding health care delivery system has seen the country achieving various Millennium Development Goals in the health sector.

The Minister of Health, Agnes Binagwaho, commented: "We appreciate this programme because it will improve the skills and knowledge of our medical staff."

Rwanda: 600 Varsity Students Circumcised in HIV Campaign

By Jean Pierre Bucyensenge/The New Times/16 October 2012

A weeklong campaign against HIV/AIDS that was concluded at the National University of Rwanda left at least 670 students circumcised while 360 underwent voluntary testing and counselling.

The campaign which was held under the theme: "youth, let us join efforts in protecting ourselves and others against HIV for a brighter future", was part of activities to wrap up an anti-HIV/AIDS Campaign which began last week.

While concluding the campaign, the Minister of Health, Dr Agnes Binagwaho, challenged varsity students, and the youth in general, to make every efforts to rid their communities of HIV/AIDS.

Binagwaho told the students that they have the ability to champion for an HIV-free society.

"Together, we can build a generation free of HIV, and many things depend on you," she told students at the oldest and biggest institution of higher learning.

She reminded students that the country expected a lot from them, thus advised them to strive for good health.

"We have already invested so much in you, and your parents and guardians, plus yourselves invested much from Primary school to where you are today.

"You are the elite of this country; protect yourselves from HIV AIDS. And, for those of you who have been infected, get care and treatment".

The seven-day exercise conducted at the Huye based university sought to increase awareness among the youth, especially students and those in the surrounding communities, on ways to protect them against HIV.

Activities which marked the week included male circumcision, sensitisation gatherings through sport competitions and entertainment and Voluntary Testing and Counselling (VTC).

Male circumcision is being used globally as one strategy to reduce the numbers of new individuals acquiring HIV AIDS.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has recommended male circumcision as a tool to reduce the risk of acquiring HIV/AIDS.

Studies show that circumcised men have around 60 percent-risk free chances of not acquiring the virus during sexual intercourse.

But, Binagwaho cautioned students against believing that circumcision was a magic bullet to avoiding contracting the disease.

"Circumcision is not enough, you still need ABC," she said, in reference to Abstinence, Be Faithful and Condom.

"Circumcision reduces the risks [of contracting HIV] but it doesn't prevent it," she clarified as she called for continued joint efforts to "reach the three zeros: zero new infection, zero deaths due to HIV/AIDS, and zero stigma"

Prof Silas Lwakabamba, the university rector observed that the campaign was needed for the university community to remain aware of the consequences of unprotected sex.

He remarked that the university has a highly sexually active age group; something which he said could expose them to risks of contracting AIDS.

There have been cases of unwanted pregnancies at the university, he said but efforts to establish the figures were futile by press time.

Lwakabamba noted that the University was also involved in the fight against the pandemic but called for support from other partners, including the ministry of health.

At the closure of the campaign, students were entertained by local musicians Urban Boys, Dream Boyz and R&B songbird Knowless.

RDC CONGO:

RDC: Yamina Benguigui visite un camp de réfugiés près de Goma
(AFP)/15102012

GOMA — La ministre française de la Francophonie Yamina Benguigui a visité lundi après-midi le camp de déplacés de Kanyaruchinya, situé à une dizaine de kilomètres de Goma, dans l'est de la République démocratique du Congo.

Le camp de Kanyaruchinya accueille 57.000 personnes, dont de nombreuses femmes et enfants, arrivés au cours de plusieurs vagues.

Les déplacés viennent du territoire de Rutshuru, frontalier du Rwanda et de l'Ouganda. C'est dans cette zone que le Mouvement du 23 mars, un nouveau groupe armé composé de mutins, opère depuis mai. Les combats avec l'armée, qui connaissent une accalmie relative ont fait plus de

300.000 déplacés ou réfugiés.

"Il faut et on espère vraiment qu'un jour ce camp disparaîtra. Il faut que la paix revienne au Nord-Kivu (Est), il faut absolument que toutes les forces se mobilisent, y compris l'Union européenne mais aussi très fortement la RDC", a déclaré la ministre devant la presse.

"Ces familles, déjà très pauvres, ont laissé derrière elles leurs champs et leurs outils de production. Totalement démunies, privées de leur seule source de nourriture et de revenus, ces déplacés avaient (et pour certaines ont toujours) un besoin urgent d'assistance alimentaire", a souligné le Programme alimentaire mondial (PAM).

Le PAM a distribué des rations alimentaires, des biscuits énergétiques et des bons d'achats qui ont permis de nourrir à Kanyaruchinya 55.000 déplacés entre juin et octobre, mais ses opérations d'urgence dans l'Est concernent au total 1,2 million de personnes.

L'agence onusienne a besoin de 66 millions de dollars (51 millions d'euros) pour cette mission d'urgence. Yamina Benguigui a officiellement annoncé une contribution de la France de 1 million d'euros. Selon le PAM, plus de 1.000 tonnes de céréales ont été achetées avec ce don.

Mme Benguigui, qui a entamé lundi matin une visite humanitaire à Goma, devait rejoindre Kinshasa dans l'après-midi, d'où elle devait s'envoler pour Paris, selon une source diplomatique.

La ministre, qui s'était rendue à Kinshasa à l'occasion du sommet de la Francophonie réuni ce week-end dans la capitale congolaise, devait également s'entretenir avec le gouverneur de la province du Nord-Kivu, Julien Paluku, et visiter l'hôpital Heal Africa, qui prend notamment en charge des victimes de violences sexuelles.

D'autre part, Mme Benguigui a annoncé la signature d'une convention avec l'hôpital de Heal Africa. "La somme que j'apporte ici de 420.000 euros, pour les différentes ONG, il y a aura un total de 2 millions d'euros", a annoncé la ministre. Ces 2 millions seront remis à des ONG de l'Est et d'autres régions du pays.

UGANDA:

Uganda: Travel Firms Bleed After Flopped Mecca Pilgrimage

By Shamim Saad/The New Vision/ 15 October 2012

Over 31 hajj and several travel companies stand to lose billions of shillings in refunds to clients for whom they had booked hotels and airfare. This follows cancellation of travels to Mecca and Medina.

The devastating news comes after the Saudi Arabian government declared on October 11 that Ugandan Muslims who had planned to travel to Mecca would not go due to an earlier outbreak of Ebola haemorrhagic fever in the country.

The Uganda hajj mission chairman, Sheikh Ibrahim Kiirya, said the Saudi Arabian government barred all Ugandan pilgrims from getting visas to Mecca because it got the report from Uganda's Ministry of Health, declaring the country Ebola-free late after finalising this year's hajj arrangements.

"We had booked Naas Airlines, which cost \$120,000. Others were Emirates, Ethiopian and Qatar Airlines, in addition to the \$65,000 for accommodation," Kiirya said.

The Uganda Hajj Mission has made an appeal to all intending pilgrims to go to their respective offices and find out the status of their applications and the way forward.

However, Sheikh Nuhu Muzata, the owner of Muzata Hajj Company, said he is willing to compensate Muslims who had registered with his company although not at full cost because his firm had spent a lot of nonrefundable dues on hotel bookings.

"We shall refund their money after deducting the money used for hotel bookings. Whoever wants his money back will get it, but those who want to leave the money with us for next year's pilgrimage will do so.

However, there is still hope for people to be compensated," he added. The Uganda Hajj Mission also appealed to the Ugandan Government to write to the Saudi Arabian government to either refund their visa money or reconsider the for the 2013 pilgrimage.

Uganda: Dr. Kizza Besigye Sued for Defamation

By Andante Okanya/The New Vision/ 15 October 2012

Outgoing FDC party president, Dr. Kizza Besigye has been sued by a UPDF officer Lt. Col. Atwooki Ndahura for defamation, stemming from a July 2009 interview published by the Observer newspaper that linked the officer to a murder.

In the suit filed on October 11 at the High Court in Kampala, Besigye is jointly sued with the newspaper publisher Observer Media Limited plus its editor. The East Africa Standby Force chief of planning claims his reputation has been tarnished.

"The said publication has caused the plaintiff a lot of embarrassment, right from his family and at work, and they have injured his reputation as a parent as well as a senior public servant and a professional member of the armed forces both locally and internationally," the plaint states.

In the contentious interview titled 'Court will disband EC, says Besigye' in the newspaper publication dated July 27-29, 2009, Besigye claimed Ndahura was responsible for the earlier murder of one Johnson Baronda in Rukungiri, during the 2001 general elections.

Through Kafeero and Company Advocates, Ndahura is seeking an apology, damages, and costs of the suit, plus an order permanently restraining the defendants from publishing any material deemed defamatory to him.

Ndahura claims his professional associates consider him risky and dangerous to deal with. He states that the defendants knew the statements were untrue and defamatory.

The officer asserts that the Besigye's statements implied that he is a murderer, criminal, partisan, unethical, and not fit to serve in the prestigious UPDF.

"The plaintiff shall contend that the defendants actions were careless, callous, wanton, and were made without regard to plaintiff's character," the plaint notes.

Ndahura states that his lawyers sent a mandatory notice of intention to sue, with a demand for an apology but was snubbed. He is now demanding an apology with the same prominence given to the contentious interview, and his own dictated wording of the apology.

Court is yet to order the defendants to file their defences. A hearing date is yet to be fixed.

SOUTH AFRICA:

Rand Gains for First Day in Three as Commodities, Stocks Rally

By Robert Brand/bloomberg.com/Oct 16, 2012

The rand advanced for the first time in three days after better-than-expected U.S. retail sales fueled investor appetite for riskier assets, spurring gains in stocks and commodity prices.

South Africa's currency strengthened 0.3 percent to 8.7710 per dollar as of 8:35 a.m. in Johannesburg, paring a 1.6 percent decline in the previous two trading days. Yields on 6.75 percent bonds due 2021 dropped two basis points to 6.76 percent.

U.S. retail sales jumped 1.1 percent in September, compared with the 0.8 percent increase forecast by economists, the Commerce Department said yesterday. The report followed Chinese export figures last weekend that also topped estimates. Metals and other commodities account for 45 percent of South Africa's exports, according to government data.

"Global developments have turned more positive," John Cairns and Josina Solomons, currency strategists at Rand Merchant Bank in Johannesburg, said in e-mailed comments. "Commodities are taking direction from the broad rally in risky assets."

Emerging-market stocks gained, with the benchmark index rising to the highest level in more than a week. The Standard & Poor's GSCI Index of raw materials climbed for the first time in three days and the price of metals including copper, nickel and platinum advanced.

South Africa rand firms, bond yields decline

Tue Oct 16, 2012/Reuters

A new five rand coin is displayed by a South African Reserve Bank worker during its launch at the South African Mint July 27, 2004. REUTERS/ Juda Ngwenya JN/AA

JOHANNESBURG (Reuters) - South Africa's rand was a touch firmer against the dollar on Tuesday but remained vulnerable to labour unrest that has sent the currency plunging over the past several weeks.

By 0643 GMT, the rand was trading at 8.770 to the greenback, slightly stronger than Monday's New York close of 8.7841. Investors have been encouraged by some firms taking tough measures against wildcat strikers who have paralyzed parts of the mining sector responsible for about 6 percent of GDP.

Kumba Iron Ore late on Monday fired more than 100 strikers who halted operations at its giant Sishen mine and threatened to destroy equipment worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

"Long to medium term, the rand may be considered weak or under-valued, but I think with the negative sentiment out there, the vulnerable side is for the rand to weaken further," said Garth Klintworth, head of fixed income, commodities and currencies at Absa Capital.

Standard & Poor's cut South Africa's credit rating one notch after trading ended in Johannesburg on Friday, saying strikes and social tensions could reduce fiscal flexibility and hurt growth in the continent's biggest economy.

In a move that raised the stakes, striking gold miners refused the industry's latest pay rise on Monday, dimming hopes that the illegal strike in the sector will end soon.

The yields on the three-year benchmark and that for the 14-year issue were 2 basis points lower to 5.41 percent and 7.780 percent respectively.

Treasury will sell a total of 2.1 billion rand over a range of its 2023, 2041 and 2048 government bonds in the session. Results are due after the auction closes at 0900 GMT.

TANZANIA:

Tanzania: Country on the Right Path in Attracting Tourists

By Gabriel Nderumaki/Tanzania Daily News (Dar es Salaam)/ 16 October 2012

FOR over one decade or so, the country's hospitality industry has seen some big strides with new investments in hotels. Still, there is high demand for more luxurious hotels in the central business district in Dar es Salaam.

Staff writer Gabriel Nderumaki had an interview recently with Trevor Ward, a specialist consultant in the hospitality and leisure industries on a variety of issues.

QUESTION: something about yourself and your involvement in the hospitality Industry

ANSWER: I am a hotel and tourism consultant, based in Lagos, Nigeria and have worked in the industry for almost 40 years. I have a university degree in hotel management and have been a consultant for 30 years. I have lived in Nigeria for almost 10 years, travelling all over Africa advising on new development, operations and branding.

Q: Why are you visiting Dar es Salaam?

A: I am advising a client, who has asked me to undertake a market and financial appraisal of their proposed hotel project in the new central business district in Dar es Salaam. They are looking to build a new hotel with extensive facilities, to cater to the growing number of visitors to the city.

Q: Tanzania is regarded as among the top 20 fastest growing economies in the world. Yet, the hotel industry has not matched up with these economic changes. What is your comment about this and if you think the country is on the right track as far as the sector is concerned?

A: I think your observation is correct, in that other fastgrowing economies in Africa, such as Angola, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya and Ethiopia have seen a lot more activity than there has been in

Tanzania. Having said that, there has been some activity in the tourist spots, such as Zanzibar. It is Dar es Salaam that has missed out, resulting in a shortage of hotel rooms there. Partly, this is because of the crowded nature of the city centre, where finding adequately-sized plots of land for hotel building is extremely difficult. Our client appears to have the only sizeable piece of land that will allow for adequate parking and conference facilities, important facilities that some existing hotels lack. The recently concluded African Hotel Investment Forum (AHIF2012) held in Nairobi in September, proved the strength of interest in the African hotel industry in general and the East African industry in particular - more than 400 delegates met at the event, including senior executives from the international hotel chains and investors in hotels and several deals were done there.

Q: In your view, what is driving the demand for hotel rooms in Dar es Salaam?

A: The hotel market in Dar es Salaam is almost business-related, with a small amount of residential, conference and aircrew. There is a direct correlation between economic growth, particularly which is led by new investment and demand for hotel accommodation. And the more an economy diversifies, the greater the resultant growth in hotel demands. So Tanzania, with massive growth in the construction sector and in the oil & gas industry, is experiencing growth in arrivals - in 2011, there were 14 per cent more aircraft movements and 15 per cent more passenger movements at JNIA than the previous year and the majority of these passengers need hotel accommodation. New airlines, such as Turkish, are helping to generate the increase in passenger numbers, but at the end of the day it is the Tanzanian economy and of course the strength of the tourism product, in all its rich diversity that is the real cause. Hotels are an essential part of any city's commercial infrastructure and the growth in room stock can itself contribute to attracting new investment in other sectors, as investors look more favourably on the environment as a whole - so long as other infrastructure such as transportation, power, water and communications also improve. A virtuous circle, so to speak.

Q: You talk of increasing tourist arrivals as one of the key demand drives. In your opinion when did Tanzania pick up on the trade on what factors have contributed to this?

A: I think I have answered this but let me add that it happened more from mid 90s following Serena's investment in the northern game lodges and Zanzibar as it kick-started the process. Furthermore, Tanzania's reputation as a stable and peaceful country with hospitable people has also strongly contributed to the increasing numbers of visitors.

Q: It's a fact that Tanzania's neighbours like Kenya and Rwanda have made some good progress in the hospitality industry. Do you think the country is somewhere close to what is happening in the two countries in the hospitality industry?

A: Kenya is Tanzania's main rival when it comes to the leisure tourism product and has had a head start. Nairobi is a major regional hub, with considerably more flights than JNIA and that has helped the Kenyan tourism trade enormously. In addition, the Kenyan government has funded the marketing of the country's tourism product, to a greater extent than has the Tanzanian government.

The policy makers need to recognise that the tourism industry deserves public support and that investment of public money in the industry brings enormous returns, in terms of creating employment (particularly for women and for unskilled and semi-skilled workers and in areas where few other employment opportunities exist), tax revenues, foreign exchange earnings and so on. Rwanda has much more of a "special interest" tourism product than either Kenya or Tanzania, so is likely to continue to be a "niche" player. In my opinion Tanzania can, with the political will and support, easily catch up with Kenya.

Q: What do you think is the government's role to attract new investments in the hospitality industry?

A: In one word, "facilitation." Government is there to create an environment which is conducive to private sector investors, who have the option of investing elsewhere if the process is easier and the returns better. There are some useful tax exemptions and reductions in Tanzania, but the bureaucracy in obtaining permissions and permits can be overwhelming, particularly for overseas investors who don't "know the system." However, I must say that the Ministry of Tourism is very supportive of new developments and this is indeed commendable. Another role government should play is in education. The new tourism college in Dar es Salaam is completed, but has yet to commence operations in full with an appropriate internationally acceptable programme. To grow the industry, trained staff are required, at all levels, from craft skills to management. Many hotels in Tanzania rely on expatriates to fill management and other positions, whilst Kenya has relatively few foreigners in those roles.

Q: The importance of the hospitality industry cannot be more emphasized. Still, Africa is lagging behind in this sector despite the enormous benefits attached to it. What is your general comment on this and if you have any advice to African governments?

A: Historically, there has not been enough attention paid to the hospitality industry in Africa, outside of the North African region and South Africa. The same can, of course, be said for many other sectors, particularly in those countries where government has benefited from income from oil & gas and other resources and has neglected agriculture and manufacturing. But with economic growth outpacing the rest of the world, the focus is increasingly on the emerging markets, not just in Africa, but also in the Middle East, China, India and Latin America. And whilst they are not the investors, the major hotel chains are concentrating on Africa like never before - Hilton, Starwood, Carlson Rezidor, Lohr, Marriott, Accor and others have set up development offices in Africa for the first time, seeking and creating opportunities to expand their footprint. Earlier this year, we prepared a research paper on the development intentions of the international and regional (i.e. African) hotel chains and found that the number of signed deals - contracts for the hotel chains to manage hotels planned and under construction - had increased significantly, from 159 hotels in 2011 to 208 hotels in 2012. Looking at the number of rooms in the development pipeline, there were 21 per cent more rooms due to come on stream in the whole of Africa and a massive 42 per cent more rooms in sub-Saharan Africa. As far as advice is concerned, it's all about "facilitation" - helping the mind that delays of any kind only add to the costs and make a project economically unattractive.

Q: Based on your answer on the importance of the industry on the economy, how do we facilitate this process here in Tanzania?

A. In Dar es Salaam, where the most severe shortage of rooms is evident, government may want to identify land that is under-utilised and offer that land to investors for hotel development, with minimum standards required in terms of quality of construction and of the product offered to guests in addition to streamlining the whole development process.

Q: Your experience in the industry speaks for itself. How do you measure the growth level of this sector compared to some other continents like Asia & Middle East?

A. I have already remarked that Africa has been somewhat neglected for many years - it was considered too difficult, with limited demand and there have been rich pickings in the Middle East and Asia. But the economic growth of most countries in Africa, the rise of the middle class, the increasing air access, led by such carriers as Emirates, Delta, Qatar and Turkish, as well as internally by KQ, Ethiopian, SAA and Asky, the democratisation of several States and the economic

crisis hitting Europe and the USA, has meant that Africa is now firmly on the radar. So far, the growth in Africa is small compared to other regions - there are probably more branded hotels under construction in China than in the whole of Africa! But we'll get there.

Q: How do you compare Tanzania's road to prosperity in the hospitality industry with our neighbours in the next 10 to 15 years?

A: The opportunities are there, it is up to the public and private sectors to seize those opportunities. The experts say that the five countries to watch in sub-Saharan Africa in terms of future growth are Angola, Ghana, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Kenya. I have commented several times that Tanzania should be added to that list. Kenya is very well known for its safari product, but in my opinion Tanzania's Northern Circuit is more than a match for them. The North Beach in Dar es Salaam is almost totally unknown in the international market and needs greater marketing efforts. The bridge to Kigamboni will open up the southern beach areas, which could easily rival Mombasa as a leisure and conferencing resort.

Tanzania: Singida Elders Want Current Union Structure

By Orton Kiishweko/Tanzania Daily News (Dar es Salaam)/ 16 October 2012

Iramba — WITH a few reasons largely hinged on peace, brotherhood and coexistence, 73 year old Juma Isa, a retired teacher at Kaselya village, in Iramba district seems to have set the pace on what majority of those above 50 years think of the Union between Zanzibar and Tanganyika.

"The Union should go on," so seemed the refrain. As the Constitutional Review Commission collected people's views here on Wednesday, speaker after speaker gave a host of views but the need to keep the Union in place was a highlight of all the views. "The people of Zanzibar and mainland have all the rights of the Union, they can travel freely and can do business.

We should recognise the advantages of this and support the union," he said. Earlier, one of the members on the Commission, Mr Humphery Polepole had read out the 10 articles in the current constitution under which he had asked members to give views on how they want each of them shaped in the new constitution. Apart from the fact that Abdul Ibai, 34, a teacher also wanting an arrangement of three presidents with one for Zanzibar, Tanganyika and the Union, he noted that the Union had guaranteed peace, freedom and prosperity and should thus be sustained.

He said that the next constitution should highlight the advantages which have been in the country due to the Tanganyika and Zanzibar Union so that the future generation could learn from the previous historic landmark experiences. "We the youth should learn from our forefathers and become the main ambassadors who have to feel proud of the Union. So, the next constitution should highlight that," he said.

He also encouraged the government to educate people on the Union importance in order to increase its sustainability. He said they should further that association, kinship and strengthen the ties on mainland and Zanzibar. But he also called for three governments including the Zanzibar government, Tanganyika government and the union government. He added that government should maintain its stand of having no religion, a position he argued should be maintained on either side of the Union.

Giving his views, Musa Juma ,62, also a farmer at Ntekende, said the nation should uphold the Union on grounds that breaking up something which they have built for 50 years would present those who call for a break-up and 'family spoilers.' In agreement, Haki Kirumba Hakugu, 31, a

farmer at Kisonga village. Ntekete ward in Iramba district also said that the next constitution should work on the potential fractures of the Union and address those constructive critiques of the arrangement.

Calling for reforms on how elections are managed on either side of the Union, Elias Chare, a 42 year old teacher suggested that in case there is an election and the country fails to get a majority winner, the next constitution should not give provision for a run-off as that is wastage of tax payers money. "Instead, it should stipulate that we go for a government of National Unity immediately between the best two candidates and not run-offs," he said, adding, "What is important is not who gets the power but for life to go on as a nation with focus on development spending not spending on election run-offs," he said.

Another farmer, Selemani Mzee, at Kaselya said Union should stay. "Our founding fathers did what was best for us and we have been living peacefully as brothers and sisters, I propose that the Union gets upheld in the Katiba like a value we stand for as Tanzanians," he said. His view was also shared by Ramadhan Mkombo, a 50 year old farmer at Singa village, who proposed that the Union should stay but that challenges existing within the current Union framework are solved politically.

More speakers including Mariam Rajab, a 42 year old farmer said the Union should be upheld, but noted that existing sentiments should be worked on when the ongoing collection of people's views goes to both sides of the Union. Others like Sware Isa Mago, a 60 year old, farmer suggested that the Union should go on since the two sides have lived peacefully for the last 50 years.

"We would want this to continue. Instead of breaking it down, we rather build it stronger," he said. Calling it one of the special things that have happened to either side, Said Mkilya, 56, a retired teacher at Kaseyla Primary School in the area, said the Union is one of the special things Tanzania mainland and Zanzibar have to show off to the world. Ali Nguli, 64, at Kaselya also praised the Union as a symbol for peaceful coexistence.

"Thanks that the Union is secure and peaceful, for us the old, it's a blessing," he said. More like Aboubakar Sare, 55 said the Union should continue, noting that the cooperation initiated by the founders of the nation, Mwal Julius Kambarage Nyerere and Sheikh Amani Abed Karume should not be broken. "A Union that provides for justice and equity should be kept given that we have lived together peacefully. It's our challenge to go on and not to break it," he said.

However, Hamisi Kumala, a 41 year old teacher said the Union should cease to exist, noting that there has always been uncomfortable debates on the subject. "This thing may bring us problems in future, it is always on the floor of parliament with fractious debates. Let the other side go its way and form its own destiny as we also go our own way," he said.

He added that politicians from Zanzibar have always given statements which are not unifying and indicative that mainland is forcing them into a Union they don't want. He, however, threw in a supportive note for the Union, highlighting that the two sides should realize that an improving union economy will translate into better living standards across the mainland and Zanzibar.

My take is that the rallying call by these residents here come at a time when there is a global movement towards regional integration, with leaders from outside Tanzania urging that union between countries should be encouraged at these politically and economically challenging times.

On April 26, 1964, the Father of Nation Mwalimu Julius Nyerere and the First Zanzibar's President Abeid Aman Karume united Tanganyika and Zanzibar to form the United Republic of Tanzania. The Union was supported by what came to be known as the Articles of Union which were initially but

were changed to 22 in the subsequent constitutional amendments.

Tanzania: Kikwete Bring to Book Barlow Killers

16 October 2012/Tanzania Daily News (Dar es Salaam)

PRESIDENT Jakaya Kikwete has directed the Police Force to make sure it brings to book all the perpetrators responsible for the gruesome murder of Mwanza Regional Police Commander (RPC), Liberatus Barlow, who was shot and killed by unknown people at the weekend.

"The murder of the RPC is a cowardly act which should not discourage the police from executing their duties," Mr Kikwete said in the condolence message he sent on Tuesday to the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Mr Said Mwema.

A press statement issued by the Directorate of Presidential Communications, said the president was shocked by the death of the RPC, whom he described as a brave senior officer with a history in the public service that is worth emulating. "It is without doubt that the Police Force and Tanzania as a whole have lost a brave law enforcement officer," he said.

Mr Kikwete, who is also Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, also sent condolences to the family of the deceased.

The president left Dar es Salaam for a four-day state visit to the Sultanate of Oman, the first such visit by a Tanzanian head of state.

While in the Arab country, Mr Kikwete will hold talks with his host, King Qaboos bin Said, grace a meeting between Tanzanian and Omani businessmen and witness the signing of an agreement for the formation of the two countries' business council.

Meanwhile, Stephen Dassu reports from Mwanza that hundreds of residents paid their last respects to the late Barlow at the Nyamagana Stadium. The event, that was also attended by high ranking government officials, including ministers, started at around 10.50 am. There was also a one-hour mass led by the Catholic Church Clerics.

The atmosphere was filled with grief as many people, including primary school pupils, paid attention to the proceedings. The late Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) was killed on Friday night by unknown assailants at Kitangili in Ilemela District. The RPC was said to have stopped in the area to drop a female passenger.

Monday's occasion was also attended by the Mwanza Regional Commissioner (RC), Eng Evarist Ndikilo; the Director for Criminal Investigation (DCI) Robert Manumba; deputy ministers Binilith Mahenge (Water), Stephen Masele (Energy), Dr Charles Tizeba (Transport) and Minister William Lukuvi (Co-ordination and Parliamentary Affairs).

The RC told mourners at the Nyamagana Stadium that the late ACP Barlow was a highly committed, trustworthy, diligent person who sought to eliminate all forms of crime in Mwanza. IGP, Mr Said Mwema, has pledged a thorough investigation to circumstances that led to the astonishing killing of the RPC.

Eng. Ndikilo also echoed similar sentiments saying that state organs have already launched investigations into the killing. "Those who perpetrated such a heinous, barbaric act will have no place to hide," he said. The late RPC Barlow, who had previously assumed various posts within the

Police Force, such as OCD and RCO since the 1980s, was born in December 1959. He has left a widow and three children.

His body was to be flown to Dar es Salaam and later to Moshi Rural District where he will be laid to rest, according to officials.

Pan African Conference opens in Tanzania

By Apolinari Tairo, eTN Tanzania /eturbonews.com/ Oct 15, 2012

TANZANIA (eTN) - The First Pan African Conference on Sustainable Tourism Management in African National Parks was opened Monday this week in northern Tanzania's tourist city of Arusha, with commitments from African governments to develop responsible tourism.

UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Secretary General Dr. Taleb Rifai said in his opening speech that Africa needs concerted efforts to develop tourism through nature conservation and involvement of local communities in tourist areas.

He said Africa remains a growing and most attractive destination today, based on the rich natural resources available, mostly nature, that includes wildlife, which still attracts many tourists from other continents.

Addressing about 400 participants of the conference, Dr. Rifai told them that Information Technology (IT) and modern communication systems have made travel and human movement easier, thus, attracting many people to travel from one country to another country in the world.

Likewise, Dr. Rifai said local tourism would be an optional strategy for African countries to build their tourism industry base through locals.

"The future of African tourism is bright and promising. Africa has shown a great development in tourist arrivals during the past few years despite economic problems which hit European countries," the UNWTO chief said.

"Tourism is today an agent of change. It promotes environmental awareness, changes the people's know-how, it promotes wildlife conservation, and creates economic and social benefits to the local communities," Dr. Rifai added.

The tourism industry is the future of Africa's economy and, therefore, African governments should work on collaborative efforts in developing this sector, he told the delegates.

Tanzanian Vice President, Dr. Gharib Billal, said Tanzania had committed towards nature protection through establishment of national parks, game reserves, and marine parks; all supporting tourism development.

Through their presentations, delegates from various African countries elaborated case studies on the need for promotion and development of sustainable tourism with a focus to local community participation in wildlife and nature conservation.

Community-based tourism will, in the future, dominate traditional practices where tourists ordinarily ended their itineraries inside wildlife parks or beaches, far from the local communities.

Representative from Seychelles National Parks Authority, Sylvanna Antat, said the Indian Ocean

archipelago had succeeded to build tourism through protection of marine resources, while engaging the best marketing strategies to attract tourists there.

She told the delegates that the Indian Ocean Island (Seychelles) had strived to protect marine environment and encourage responsible tourism through well-designed strategies involving the government, local communities, and tourist business stakeholders.

Participants will be discussing “Challenges and Opportunities on Sustainable Tourism Management in African National Parks and Protected Areas” and will look at the balance between environmental and cultural protection and tourism development specifically on policy and management issues as well as regulatory framework in order to sustain a high-quality visitor experience.

Despite high potential for a sustainable tourism development, many of Africa’s national parks and protected areas suffer from constraints and limitations concerning public policies, integrated planning, effective governance with the involvement of the private stakeholders, management and commercial skills, scientific expertise, infrastructure and transport, tourism product development, quality, consumer image, and safety.

Various tourism experts and conservationists both locally and internationally will discuss their experiences in the fields of tourism and conservation and make a resolution on the way forward.

According to UNWTO, nature-based tourism or eco-tourism is a large and growing global industry, partially dependent upon the attributes of the natural environment and biodiversity wildlife and scenery which represent one of Africa’s strategic competitive advantages as a destination.

The Pan African Conference is targeting to encourage a professional approach to better position on “park tourism” as one of the core components of overall national park management in Africa and to acquire an overview of the current challenges in terms of the demand-and-supply chain.

Other issues to be discussed during this conference are the government policies and tourism master plans recognizing national parks as tourism destinations, “responsible tourism” approach, biodiversity management, market intelligence, segmentation, statistics, and reliable analysis.

Key speakers on Monday were Sylvanna Antat, Research Officer, Seychelles National Parks Authority, Seychelles; Allan Kijazi, Director General, Tanzania National Parks; Justus Muumba, Manager, Community Development, Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority, Tanzania; Mr. Mateus Mutemba, Gorongosa Park Warden, Mozambique; and Mr. Johnson Sipitiek, Program Manager, Conservation Development Program, African Conservation Center, Nairobi, Kenya.

KENYA:

Kenyans to Pay for DL's Using Mobile Money

By Margaret Wahito/Capital FM (Nairobi)/ 15 October 2012

Nairobi — Kenyans will soon be able to pay for renewal of driving licenses using mobile phone money transfer services, according to the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA).

KRA Commissioner General John Njiraini said the authority is currently working on the platform that will allow the implementation of the service and reduce congestion at KRA halls.

Njiraini said KRA will partner with all the mobile phone service providers to ensure all Kenyans benefit from the new service.

"In the next few months we will be able use M-PESA and the other options," said Njiraini who added that KRA will also partner with all banks to roll out the same service.

The authority is still working on where motorists will be able to get the renewal stickers after paying using the mobile phone transfer services.

KRA has already partnered with the National Bank of Kenya where Kenyans can renew their DL's at any branch of the bank.

A motorist wishing to renew their license can pay the fees and get the renewal sticker at any of the 44 NBK branches countrywide, to avoid a visit to the KRA cash office.

"Easing tax compliance leads to enhanced collection as tax payers find it easier to comply," explained Njiraini.

Njiraini was speaking during the launch of the 9th Tax Payers Week which will involve appreciating those who are committed to paying taxes, as well as creating awareness on the importance of paying tax.

"The activities will include hosting of tax clinics across the country which will provide education and support to tax payers on matters of interest to them. We will also launch a tax club for secondary schools which we will be able to provide information to students about tax issues," added the KRA boss.

KRA has however called on the Treasury to increase its funding to be able to come up with more products that will ease tax compliance.

The authority board chairman Major (Rtd) Marsden Madoka said more funds will also help KRA increase its branches across the country.

"We need to increase the number of our offices considering the coming in of the next government. We are also planning to renovate the current offices to be able to put electronic platforms for various services. We also target to improve the working condition of our staff," said Madoka.

KRA currently has branches in 27 out of the 47 counties.

Kenya: Kalonzo Assures Security for KCPE, KCSE

By Lordrick Mayabi/Capital FM (Nairobi)/15 October 2012

Nairobi — Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka has assured candidates sitting national examinations that the government will provide adequate security during the examinations period.

He said that those planning to disrupt examinations will be treated as criminals and will not be given a chance to execute their plot anywhere in the country.

Musyoka said: "The future of this country belongs to the Kenyan youth and that's why we are struggling to ensure that we give them a future full of potential and hope. So as they start their

examinations nobody should be under any illusion that the government will relent in providing security to all the candidates."

The Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) oral exams started on Monday while the Kenya Certificate for Primary Education (KCPE) examinations will kick off on December 4 and end on December 6.

Last week Internal Security Minister Katoo Ole Metito also warned members of the Mombasa Republican Council planning to disrupt national examinations in Coast province that they will be met with the full force of the law.

Musyoka who spoke while the Wiper Party launched its National Elections Board and the Appeals board said that they are still committed to a free and fair nomination process.

"As a political party our objective is to win the next general elections as we swear in our elections board, we give an assurance to all aspirants, that nobody already has a certificate in his bag or pocket," Musyoka said assuring that only the board has the powers to issue nomination certificates.

The VP insisted that his party will continue to talk to like-minded parties. He however termed as misleading, reports that he was ready to talk to Prime Minister Raila Odinga.

Musyoka said that said that those who were saying that he would enter into talks with Odinga were "putting words" in his mouth.

"Let nobody be under any illusion that this party is subservient to anybody, going forward we will continue talking to like-minded parties and other leaders," he said.

The Wiper National Elections Board is made up of nine members including Mohammed Ali Mohamed, Richard Wambura, Sammy Mbova, Leonard Opolo and Mwanamkuu Sudi. The Appeals Board members are Roy Mutisya, retired Justice Kasanga Mulwa and Judith Sijeny.

Kitui West MP Charles Nyamai who is in Parliament on Cabinet Minister Charity Ngilu's party Narc used the function to join the Wiper party terming it as the party to watch.

Kenya Expects Bumper Harvest Despite Maize Disease

By Charles Gichane/Capital FM (Nairobi)/15 October 2012

Nairobi — Despite a disease that has destroyed thousands of acres of maize in Kenya's breadbasket regions, the country is expected to produce unprecedented 38 million bags this season, according to Agriculture Permanent Secretary Romano Kiome.

Speaking at the 3rd National Agricultural Sector Development Forum (NASDF), Kiome revealed that Kenya will import just one million bags to cover for the shortfall in product, down from nine million bags in past years.

General maize production has gone up from 30 million bags and the PS noted that the demand is 38 to 39 million bags.

The high-level forum will be opened by President Mwai Kibaki on Tuesday. The forum, which ends on Wednesday, will chart a new future for Kenya's agricultural sector.

About 64,000 hectares of maize in the Rift Valley have been destroyed by the lethal necrosis disease, affecting almost a million bags according to PS Kiome.

The PS however attributed the bumper harvest to the use of improved seeds, increased application of subsidised fertilizer, and good producer prices.

"We can comfortably achieve the Millennium Development Goals of eradicating food insecurity by 2015," Kiome noted.

The development comes as the sector prepares to launch a key policy document that targets to make Kenya a food secure nation.

The National Food and Nutrition Security Policy will be launched by the President on Tuesday, where he will also launch the National Agribusiness Strategy and the National Agricultural Sector Extension Policy (NASEP), aimed at coordinating and regulating agricultural extension services.

The National Agribusiness Strategy seeks to transform agriculture from hitherto low added-value to an "innovative, commercially-oriented, international competitive and modern sector" with the theme 'Moving towards Agribusiness for a Globally Competitive Agricultural Sector'.

ANGOLA:

Angola: Speaker Announces Legislature Centred On People's Living Standards

15 October 2012/AngolaPress

Luanda — The Speaker of National Assembly Fernando da Piedade Dias dos Santos said that the 3rd Legislature opened Monday will be focussed on the implementation of the fundamental rights and especially for raising the quality of life of Angolans.

Fernando da Piedade Dias dos Santos was delivering a speech at the solemn ceremony of opening of the first session of Legislature, attended by the President of the Republic, José Eduardo dos Santos.

According to the Parliamentary leader, "the attainment of happiness of our people is also the part of mission of this legislature, because the freedom requires us a particular engagement in the implementation of fundamental rights, values and principles and, above all, raising the quality of life of all Angolans. "

The National Assembly Speaker also said that he was aware that the effectiveness of the acclaimed rights can not dissociate the idea of social justice that is the basis of sustained consolidation of peace, as a substrate of economic growth, by ensuring trust the investor and attract financial flows needed for economic and social development.

He also defended the maximization of economic growth by creating more employment, stability of inflation, external balance and ensuring freedom of all the living forces of the nation, with a view to participate loyally in defining the common future of the Angolan nation

On the other hand, Fernando da Piedade said to believe in macroeconomic stability and the mobilizing capacity of all the synergies necessary for its maintenance.

The Parliament Speaker noted that the new era that the country is experiencing, since the achievement of peace, allowed the systematic reduction of the delay in addressing the structural problems of the economy, improve consistently and sustained manner the mechanisms of the intervention of State.

He added that a new reality has also gain credibility, mobilize external investors, and especially show that this stability is not purely temporary.

Therefore, according to the National Assembly Speaker, the legislature, which begins under the sign of national cohesion, will be able to interpret the wishes of the people and strategically cooperate with the Executive.

The MPs will be engaged in an ongoing and true dialogue among all the forces represented at the National Assembly, for the sake of the nation.

In this context, the National Assembly will always be at the service of the Nation, in relentless pursuit of social justice, progress and consolidation of national unity, which has cost so much sacrifice to Angolan citizens, he said.

Angola: Bitur Changes Name After First Edition Ended Sunday
15 October 2012/AngolaPress

Luanda — The International Tourism Exchange of Angola (BITUR), whose first edition took place from 11 to 14 October, in Luanda, will be called from next year, "Okavango Salão Internacional do Turismo de Angola".

The fact was announced Monday dawn by the chairman of the Board of Directors of Luanda International Fair (FIL), Matos Cardoso, at the presence of Minister of Hotels and Tourism, Pedro Mutindi, during the closing gala of the first edition BITUR.

The official said that the intention is to promote the regional cross-border project and environmental conservation "Okavango-Zambezi" (also called KAZA).

The project is the progress and covers five countries in southern Africa, including Angola , Zimbabwe, South Africa, Botswana and Zambia.

The International Tourism Exchange in Angola, that was jointly organised by Ministry of Hotel and Tourism and Luanda International Fair (FIL), ended Sunday.

The event gathered 80 exhibitors from Angola, South Africa, St. Tomé and Príncipe, Portugal and Brazil.

AU/AFRICA:

Africa: New AU Chief Takes Office, Vows to Tackle Continent's Crises
By Tesfa-Alem Tekle/SudanTribune/15 October 2012

Addis Ababa — The new head of the African Union Commission, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, took office on Monday becoming the first female to assume the top position of the 54 member continental bloc.

A special handing over ceremony was held at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia where outgoing Chairman Jean Ping, who had been in the position since 2008, handed over the gavel - a small ceremonial mallet - to his successor.

After the inauguration Dlamini-Zuma, who has previously served as South Africa's health and foreign affairs minister, vowed to work towards solving the peace and security challenges facing the African continent.

"We will spare no efforts to try and resolve conflicts in Mali and the Sahelian region, the crisis that has the potential to spread across the region and even the continent," she said adding supporting the political transition in war torn Somalia will also be among her priorities to be addressed.

She also vowed to support economic development, ensure women's rights, and boost health and education.

Dlamini Zuma, who will take over the leadership for a four-year term, will be assisted by her deputy, Erastus Mwencha who will mainly be tasked with political and economic affairs.

Ethiopia's new Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, Boni Yayi, President of the Republic of Benin and Chairperson of the African Union, AU officials, diplomats and other regional and international representatives attended the handing over ceremony.

Dlamini-Zuma was elected as AU Chairwoman at the 19th AU Heads of States and Governments assembly held in July in Addis Ababa after a heavily contested election where she beat the incumbent, Jean Ping of Gabon.

Dlamini-Zuma, 63, is a medical doctor and a veteran of the fight against apartheid. Until her appointment as head of the AU Commission she was serving as South Africa's home affairs minister.

She is the former wife of South African President Jacob Zuma. Her appointment is a change from the custom that the AU commission is led by a politician from one of Africa's smaller nations. South Africa has the continent's larger economy.

Implementing September's deal between Sudan and South Sudan and ensuring the two sides do not return to conflict will be one of her major challenges.

AU, Somali Troops Try to Win Back Country Roads

By ABDI GULED Associated Press/October 15, 2012

WALAWEYN, Somalia

African Union peacekeepers must drive along rough dirt roads that snake through sand dunes and shrubs to reach newly won territory in Somalia's countryside, exposing themselves to possible ambushes by al-Shabab rebels.

Though the peacekeeping forces travel in armored vehicles, the guerrilla fighters can inflict

casualties. The psychological trauma of knowing an ambush can happen at any time makes life tough for the AU soldiers from several countries who battle the al-Shabab rebels allied to al-Qaida.

"They try to ambush us in such places. It's not easy. We must pass here with vigilance," an AU soldier groaned as he peered through the bulletproof glass of an armored personnel carrier.

AU troops in August forced al-Shabab out of the capital, Mogadishu. Earlier this year Ugandan and Burundian troops began taking control of suburbs of the capital. Now they are moving far to the northwest in an attempt to secure a supply line from Mogadishu to the former al-Shabab stronghold of Baidoa. Many of al-Shabab's top foreign fighters are said to have fled to Yemen already.

But the rebels remaining continue their attacks. A week ago al-Shabab fighters ambushed a convoy, wounding one soldier. As the AU area of control widens, the challenges of holding the new territory increase.

There are about 17,000 troops in the AU force, including soldiers from Kenya in the south of the country. With so few troops to control such a wide area, they are relying on public support to keep roads safe from roadside bombs.

"A friendly population is better than tanks," said Capt. Henry Obbo. "They are driving a dying horse. Public support is with us now."

Yet in rural villages, residents silently stare at troops. A soldier's wave typically gets no reaction, except from children. Insurgents often kill suspected supporters of the Somali government, so even waving can invite trouble. But executions, floggings and strict social rules cut down the militants' public support.

"Al-Shabab was in no way good for us. They conscripted our children and forcibly extorted our farms. They made life hell for us," said Abdullahi Yassin, an elder in the town of Walaweyn. He said his area has neither the security nor the aid it hoped to see from Mogadishu's weak government.

"No difference yet, except a little freedom," he said of al-Shabab's ouster.

Late last week, African Union forces and Somali troops captured the Blidogle airport, about 100 kilometers (60 miles) northwest of Mogadishu. The troops intend to open the road all the way to Baidoa, about 250 kilometers (155 miles) northwest of Mogadishu, said Hussein Arab Isse, Somalia's defense minister, speaking at the airport.

"They (al-Shabab) can't stop our brave soldiers from reaching their goals," Isse said.

Though al-Shabab is being pushed back, their deadly attacks and clashes still haunt the region.

The AU troops are visibly in control of the residential areas and roads, but the stretches of forest seem to be no man's land.

"Our operations will continue because this is not the end," said Brig. Gen. Michael Ondoga, the commander of the Ugandan contingent. "We still have some distance to go to get to Baidoa."

UN/AFRICA:

Africa: Claims for Security Council Seats Still in Limbo

By Thalif Deen/IPS/15 October 2012

United Nations — After 20 long years of negotiations on a proposed expansion of the Security Council, African countries continue to be left out in the cold - even as African leaders complain that the international community has failed to respond to their demands for two permanent seats in the most powerful body at the United Nations.

When heads of state took the podium at the General Assembly sessions last month, an overwhelming majority of the more than 40 African political leaders criticised the marginalisation of their continent.

Speaker after speaker complained about the continued absence of Africa among countries which hold the five permanent seats (P5) in the Security Council - the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia.

Africa's longstanding demand for at least two permanent seats with veto powers, and five non-permanent seats, as agreed by African heads of state back in March 2005, is still far from reality.

But there is a reason for this, says Dr. Kwame Akonor, associate professor of political science at Seton Hall University in New York, who has written extensively on the politics and economics of the continent.

"That the membership and power relations of the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) are anachronistic and inequitable, given the geopolitical realities of the 21st century, is irrefutable," he told IPS.

But any significant reform aimed at changing the membership or procedures of the UNSC will meet fierce resistance from the five veto-wielding permanent members, who are unlikely to relinquish their rights easily, said Akonor, who is also director of the Centre for African Studies and the African Development Institute, a New York-based think tank.

Addressing the General Assembly sessions last month, Joyce Banda, the president of Malawi, said Africa makes up the single largest region within the United Nations, and a very significant proportion of issues discussed in the Security Council concern the African continent.

But still, she said, Africa's longstanding demand is in limbo.

Robert Mugabe, the longtime president of Zimbabwe, was one of the most vociferous in demanding representation in the Security Council.

"For how long will the international community continue to ignore the aspirations of a whole continent of 54 countries?" he asked.

"Is this good governance? Is this democracy? And is this justice?" he asked. "We shall not be bought off with empty promises, nor shall we accept some cosmetic tinkering of the Security Council disguised as reform."

The president of Gambia, Yahya Jammeh said, "Our collective security will continue to be undermined by geopolitical considerations unless and until we find the courage to reform the Security Council."

The demand for permanent representation in the UNSC also came from several other leaders and officials from Africa, including Equatorial Guinea, Central African Republic and Tanzania.

At a meeting of African leaders in Ethiopia in March 2005, the African Union (AU), which represents virtually all of the states in the continent, adopted a resolution calling for two permanent and five non-permanent seats.

But the AU did not identify the two countries for the permanent seats because that question has remained divisive, with at least three countries making claims: South Africa, Nigeria and Egypt, among others.

The resolution laid down the following conditions: Even though Africa is opposed in principle to the veto, it is of the view that so long as it exists, and as a matter of common justice, it should be made available to all permanent members of the Security Council.

Secondly, the African Union should be responsible for the selection of Africa's representatives in the Security Council, and most importantly, the question of the criteria for the selection of African members of the Security Council should be a matter for the AU to determine, taking into consideration the representative nature and capacity of those chosen.

Akonor told IPS that for Africa, the question of representation is more fraught because it cannot seem to agree on which country (or countries) to represent it at the Security Council.

"The paralysis, amongst African leaders, when it comes to how it will be represented has contributed to the continent's marginalisation on discussions on any plausible reform measures," he said.

One solution, he argued, is for African states to take the concept of Pax Africana seriously and rely on themselves when it comes to the establishment, enforcement and consolidation of their own peace and security.

As current negotiations stand, there are four countries (G4) who are frontrunners for permanent seats (without vetoes): India, Brazil, Germany and Japan.

A longtime political observer who has been monitoring the negotiations told IPS the simple answer is that the G4 never gave the African countries a firm commitment for two African seats (with veto powers).

Subsequently, the G4 gave up their bid for veto powers, agreeing to a new category of "permanent seats WITHOUT veto power". But this is not acceptable to the African Group.

Had the Africans ever come on the side of G4, they would have had the required two-thirds majority in the General Assembly to push forward their claim for permanent seats, he added.

Rev. Gabriel Odima, president of the Africa Center for Peace and Democracy, told IPS there is no doubt the West has marginalised the African continent. But he also blamed African leaders for the status quo.

Impoverishment and conflict are the basic tools and economic forces which have engulfed the continent of Africa for years, he pointed out.

"The rampant corruption in countries like Uganda, Nigeria and Kenya provides an opportunity for

the major players at the Security Council to block Africa from occupying the two permanent seats at the Security Council," he said.

The absence of democracy, human rights abuses and poor governance continue to undermine Africa's effort to play a role on the world stage, said Rev Odima.

"How could (permanent UNSC seats) be possible when the continent has failed to prevent the massacre in the Democratic Republic of Congo, human rights violations in Uganda and the looming crisis in Kenya? How could this be possible when African leaders have failed to manage their own affairs at home?" he asked.

The international community should help Africa move from the stigma of colonial legacy to a viable society where hunger is no longer a threat to human existence, where ballots replace guns, and where dictators will be brought to justice and held accountable for their atrocities against their people, he added.

US/AFRICA:

U.S. to Help Create an Elite Libyan Force to Combat Islamic Extremists

By ERIC SCHMITT/nytimes.com/Published: October 15, 2012

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon and State Department are speeding up efforts to help the Libyan government create a commando force to combat Islamic extremists like the ones who killed the American ambassador in Libya last month and to help counter the country's fractious militias, according to internal government documents.

The Obama administration quietly won Congress's approval last month to shift about \$8 million from Pentagon operations and counterterrorism aid budgeted for Pakistan to begin building an elite Libyan force over the next year that could ultimately number about 500 troops. American Special Operations forces could conduct much of the training, as they have with counterterrorism forces in Pakistan and Yemen, American officials said.

The effort to establish the new unit was already under way before the assault that killed Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three other Americans at the United States Mission in Benghazi, Libya. But the plan has taken on new urgency as the new government in Tripoli tries to assert control over the country's militant factions.

According to an unclassified internal State Department memo sent to Congress on Sept. 4, the plan's goal is to enhance "Libya's ability to combat and defend against threats from Al Qaeda and its affiliates." A companion Pentagon document envisions that the Libyan commando force will "counter and defeat terrorist and violent extremist organizations." Right now, Libya has no such capability, American officials said.

A final decision on the program has not been made, and many details, like the size, composition and mission of the force, are still to be determined. But American government officials say they have discussed the plan's broad outlines with senior Libyan military and civilian officials as part of a broader package of American security assistance.

"The proposal reflects the security environment and the uncertainty coming out of the government

transition in Libya,” said a senior Pentagon official who spoke on condition of anonymity because the program has not been officially announced. “The multimilitia fabric that’s providing security there needs to be brought into a more integrated national security system.”

A spokesman for Libya’s new president, Mohamed Magariaf, did not respond to detailed inquiries by e-mail, and other Libyan military officials did not return phone calls. Its transitional government continues to be in a state of flux as a newly chosen prime minister prepares to appoint defense and interior ministers.

Libyan commentators have expressed hope that a Western power would help train the country’s fledgling national army, so the proposal might be well received. But it still faces many challenges, including how to get the powerful militias to buy into it while taming their influence, and vetting a force to weed out Islamic extremists.

“Over all, it’s a sound strategy, but my concern is that in the vetting they make sure this doesn’t become a Trojan horse for the militias to come in,” said Frederic Wehrey, a senior policy analyst with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace who visited Libya recently and wrote a paper last month on security in the country, “The Struggle for Security in Eastern Libya.”

Mr. Wehrey cautioned that many Libyan officers and soldiers would also need training in English to help them understand various manuals. Other officials warned that any program must be transparent to the Libyan people to avoid starting rumors of ulterior American motives for wanting to train the new commandos. Also, trainers would have to build the professionalism in the officer corps that was lacking under the government of Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi, Mr. Wehrey said.

The internal State Department budget document to Congress states that the program will also be “encouraging increased professionalism and respect for human rights.” It also proposes using some of the money to buy unspecified equipment for the commandos.

The document also describes an additional \$4 million to help Libya improve control of its borders. After the revolution, vast arsenals of the Qaddafi-era army were looted, and Western officials are particularly worried that thousands of shoulder-fired antiaircraft missiles were spirited out of the country, possibly into the hands of extremist groups.

The proposed Libyan commando force springs from an unusual partnership between the State Department and the Pentagon. Just last year, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and the defense secretary at the time, Robert M. Gates, agreed to pool resources from their departments in a fund approved by Congress to respond more quickly to emerging threats from Al Qaeda and other militants in places like Libya, Nigeria and Bangladesh.

The program, the Global Security Contingency Fund, is small as government projects go with a budget of up to \$250 million a year, mostly from the Pentagon, but it is meant to address many of the government’s counterterrorism and broader security challenges over several years.

American officials have had an eye on helping Libya since the NATO-led operation toppled Colonel Qaddafi’s government last year, and new civilian leaders began trying to bring order to the country.

In the first visit by an American defense secretary to Libya, Leon E. Panetta pledged last December that the United States “stands ready to offer security assistance cooperation once the government identifies its needs.” Mr. Panetta did not discuss the commando force during the visit, a Pentagon spokesman said.

Under Colonel Qaddafi, the Libyan Army had special forces units, but they were not particularly well trained or trusted by the government, American officials said. Members of the special forces in the east were among the first to defect, and American officials now envision a new, properly trained commando force as the core around which to rebuild the Libyan military.

The \$8 million is considered seed money to begin building and equipping the commando force. One American official who formerly served in Libya said the initial vetting would probably be conducted by American and Libyan officials, and would include screening for physical skills, mental aptitude and ties to extremist groups that were hostile to the Libyan government.

American trainers would likely focus on basic skills, like marksmanship and small-arms tactics, and then move on to more advanced counterterrorism, reconnaissance and hostage-rescue skills.

"It's basically a quick-reaction force at first," said the official, who was not authorized to comment publicly on the planning.

Officials in Washington said they were expecting a final decision on the plan by the end of the year, with trainers fielding the initial units within 12 months.

The fluid, shifting security landscape is driving both American and Libyan officials to speed up the planning.

"The bad guys are making plans and organizing," said the American official who formerly served in Libya. "It's a footrace between the extremist groups and the Libyan government that's trying to get organized."

Suliman Ali Zway contributed reporting from Tripoli, Libya.

U.S. forces on standby in North Africa, Stevens replaced
October 16, 2012/dailystar.com.lb/Agencies

WASHINGTON/TRIPOLI: Administration officials say the White House has put special operations strike forces on standby and moved drones into the skies above North Africa.

The forces will be ready to hit militant targets from Libya to Mali, if U.S. investigators can find the Al-Qaeda-linked group responsible for the death of the U.S. ambassador in Libya last month. But the officials say the administration also is weighing whether the short-term payoff of being able to claim retribution against Al-Qaeda is worth the risk that such strikes would be ineffective and rile governments in the region.

Details were provided by three current and one former administration official, as well as an analyst who was approached by the White House for help. All four spoke only on condition of anonymity.

Earlier Monday, Christopher Steven's replacement – veteran diplomat Lawrence Pope – said the United States remained committed to supporting Libya.

In his first comments since arriving in Libya last week, Pope said that the United States would "continue on the path" of Stevens.

"The United States remains deeply committed to supporting the aspirations of the Libyan people as they build a sovereign, stable and economically prosperous nation," Pope said after talks with

Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Abdulaziz.

He said the U.S. was determined to bring to justice the perpetrators of the attack which killed four Americans.

“An investigation continues with the participation of both countries and the United States is determined to bring the terrorists responsible for this attack to justice,” Pope said.

The assault forced the evacuation of U.S. personnel from Benghazi, the eastern city that was the hub for the Libyan rebel movement that, with the assistance of NATO-led airstrikes, toppled former Libyan dictator Moammar Gadhafi last year.

It also triggered a debate in Washington over whether Ambassador Stevens, and the U.S. mission in Benghazi more broadly, were given sufficient protection.

Pope came out of retirement to take up the position of charge d'affairs, the title given to a diplomat who represents a country in the absence of an ambassador.

CANADA/AFRICA:

Canada, Africa Rank Low, High on Kroll Study of Fraud

By Andrew Harris/businessweek.com/ October 16, 2012

Canada is least prone to business fraud while the nations of sub-Saharan Africa, India and China are some of the world's most risky, according to an international risk management firm survey.

Seventy-seven percent of the companies in the study doing business in sub-Saharan African countries experienced some form of fraud, theft or corruption, down from 85 percent last year, according to a 64-page report released today by Kroll Advisory Solutions, a unit of Falls Church, Virginia-based Altegrity Inc.

Just 47 percent of responding Canadian firms reported those difficulties, according to the Kroll report, which surveyed more than 830 executives in 10 different industries worldwide.

“Canada is a relatively easy place to do business,” Kroll Chief Executive Officer Tom Hartley said in a phone interview. “The rules apply.”

“That is not true in a lot of markets,” he added.

This is the sixth year Kroll has authorized the survey, which is conducted by the London-based Economist Intelligence Unit.

The study examined crimes including theft of physical assets, intellectual property, corruption, bribery, financial fraud and other wrongdoing in the Americas, Europe, Asia and Africa. Industries examined included finance, retail, health care and pharmaceuticals, travel, construction, consumer goods and technology, which includes media and telecommunications.

U.S. Companies

Sixty percent of U.S. companies reported some experience with fraud, theft or corruption. Of that, 26 percent involved theft, loss or attack upon information, 24 percent comprised physical asset theft and 16 percent stemmed from management conflicts of interest.

Russia finished on par with the global survey average of 61 percent of companies reporting some incidence of fraud and corruption. As in the U.S., 26 percent of businesses there claimed some form of information theft.

Sixty-eight percent of Indian respondents reported some prevalence of fraud, compared with 65 percent in China and Indonesia.

Fraud and theft in China fell 19 percent from last year, when 84 percent of respondents reported they were affected by wrongdoing.

“We were a bit surprised to see it drop to that degree,” Hartley said, explaining that the results did not correspond with Kroll’s business experience there.

Global concern about fraud and theft is actually declining faster than the crimes themselves, Hartley said. “When you’re hit by a fraud, you’re immediately concerned,” he said, after which businesses will spend money to defend against that threat and move on.

“They get immediately complacent,” Hartley said. “You are more likely than not to be hit by fraud pretty much wherever you are in the world. Except Canada.”

Canada's Ivanplats IPO to raise C\$300 million: source

Tue Oct 16, 2012/Reuters

TORONTO |

(Reuters) - Canada's Ivanplats Ltd, an Africa-focused miner, is pricing its initial public offering at C\$4.75 a share and is poised to raise at least around C\$300 million (\$306 million) from the listing, a source familiar with the situation said on Monday.

Ivanplats, led by one of the mining sector's most well-known and colorful figures - Robert Friedland, outlined a long-awaited plan to list on the Toronto Stock Exchange in early September.

The company's main assets include Kamoa, a high-grade copper deposit in the Democratic Republic of Congo; Kipushi, a zinc and copper mine also in Congo; and the giant Platreef platinum, gold and copper project in South Africa.

The pricing of Ivanplats offering at C\$4.75 a share comes in slightly above the lower end of the range of C\$4.50 to C\$5.40 a share that the company was seeking.

The source said the company will file its final long-form prospectus with regulators on Tuesday. The detailed regulatory filing will outline that the share offering may raise as much C\$350 million, if the banks underwriting the deal exercise their over-allotment option and sell additional shares to investors.

Ivanplats was not immediately reachable for comment.

The company at one point mulled going public a year ago and raising roughly C\$1 billion, according to sources familiar with the situation. But it moderated expectations in light of current

market conditions and a bond issue that was done earlier this year.

SENTIMENT TURNING

The euro zone debt crisis, along with a sluggish economic recovery in North America and a pullback in emerging economies has fueled market uncertainty over the last year. This has hurt the fortunes of mining companies and led to sharp declines in share prices of miners.

Investor sentiment though has begun to show some signs of turning in recent weeks, thanks to a brighter economic outlook. The U.S. Federal Reserve recently outlined plans for a third aggressive program to lift the U.S. economy, while China has given the go-ahead to some 60 infrastructure projects worth over \$150 billion.

These moves and the launch of the long-awaited Ivanplats IPO have provided a shot in the arm to the Toronto Stock Exchange and the TSX Venture Exchange that together are home to roughly 60 percent of the world's publicly-listed mining companies.

Mining stocks have now started to bounce back after falling more than 40 percent over the past year and the S&P TSX Metals & Mining Index .GTSX151040 has risen more than 20 percent since July. This has given small Canadian miners - that rely on equity financings to fund their projects - the confidence to attempt to tap equity markets once again, following a year-long hiatus.

Ivanplats itself has said it plans to use the proceeds from its share offering to advance its Kamoas, Kipushi and Platreef projects.

Earlier this year, Ivanplats said it expects to produce platinum at negative cost at its Platreef complex, a move that could well shake up an industry that has been squeezed by stoppages, rising wages and power charges.

(\$1 = 0.9806 Canadian dollars)

(Reporting by Krithika Krishnamurthy in Bangalore; Editing by Chris Gallagher and Muralikumar Anantharaman)

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA:

Tendulkar to be made member of Order of Australia

PTI/hindustantimes.com/October 16, 2012

New Delhi,

Sachin Tendulkar is set to add another feather to his already crowded cap as Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard on Tuesday announced that the iconic Indian cricketer will be conferred the membership of the Order of Australia, an honour "rarely" awarded to non-Australians. The 39-year-old Tendulkar, who is currently in South Africa playing in the Champions League Twenty20, will become only the second Indian after former attorney general Soli Sorabjee to get the honour.

Sorabjee was made an honorary member of the Order of Australia (AM) "for service to Australia-

India bilateral legal relations" in 2006.

"Cricket is of course a great bond between Australia and India. We are both cricket-mad nations. I am very pleased that we are going to confer on Sachin Tendulkar, membership of the order of Australia (AM)," Gillard, who is on a visit to India, told reporters in New Delhi.

"This is a very special honour very rarely awarded to someone who is not an Australian citizen or an Australian national. The award will be conferred on him by cabinet minister Simon Crean when he visits India," she said.

"So, a special honour and a very special recognition of such a great batsman. The honour is very special and Sachin is a very special cricketer."

Tendulkar is not the first cricketer to be made an Order of Australia AM as in 2009, West Indies legend Brian Lara was also made an honorary member.

Another West Indies legend, Clive Lloyd, is an honorary officer in the Order of Australia, having been conferred the award way back in 1985.

The right-handed Tendulkar, considered the finest batsman in contemporary cricket, has 15,533 runs in 190 Tests besides a mammoth 18,426 runs in 463 ODIs.

Rostrevor World War II veteran returns to Egypt for 70th anniversary of North Africa campaign
Emily Griffiths East Torrens Messenger/adelaidenow.com.au/ October 16, 2012

SEVENTY years ago, Bill Corey fought in a battle that changed the course of history.

The 94-year-old, of Rostrevor, is going back to El Alamein in Egypt to honour the mates who did not return.

Thinking of the brutal battle is enough to reduce him to tears.

"I remember the 23rd of October, 1942," Mr Corey said last week.

"At 2140 hours - exactly to the second - one thousand guns opened up. The noise was terrific."

This week, Mr Corey - a Rat of Tobruk - who also saw action in New Guinea and Borneo, is travelling to Egypt with 20 other veterans to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Battle of El Alamein.

Speaking before he left, Mr Corey said he was surprised but honoured to be chosen by the Federal Government to attend.

"It will be my first trip back to North Africa, so it will be interesting to see the changes," he said.

Mr Corey was a butcher when he joined the 2/43rd Australian Infantry Battalion in June, 1940.

"Joining the army was just the thing to do. Our country was at war, we were young and we saw it as an adventure. But we got more than we wanted."

Mr Corey, who knows his service number - SX5389 - by heart, said he was looking forward to

spending time with other diggers.

"Us infantry people like to think we're a bit different, so we always mix very easily," he said.

Mr Corey will visit the El Alamein War Cemetery where more than 1000 Australians are buried.

The Australian 9th Division played a key role in the battle, which was a turning point in the war.

The division lost 620 men in less than two weeks of fighting.

"I remember on the 5th of November 1942 - Guy Fawkes Day - after the German Army collapsed and was retreating, a truckload of reinforcements arrived," Mr Corey said.

"We'd already done our job so everyone was going silly, throwing rifles and flares in the air.

"But there was one last German plane in the sky and before these boys had even got off the truck it was bombed and they all died.

"And here's me - I went right through. I think I was meant to survive the war.

"That's why I feel I should share my story and those of my mates who didn't make it home.

EU/AFRICA:

Mali intervention to oust Islamist militants starts in 'a matter of weeks': France

Sapa-AFP /16 October, 2012

An African intervention to oust Islamist militants from the north of Mali will start "in a matter of weeks", French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said Tuesday.

"It's a matter of weeks, not months, weeks," the minister told France 2 television, calling the region that was overrun by the extremists this year "a terrorist sanctuary".

He however reiterated that France would "not send troops on the ground", but would provide "logistical aid" and help in planning.

Le Drian said UN guidelines for such action would have to be respected.

The UN Security Council on Friday gave a 45-day deadline for intervention, saying the plan should include "means and modalities of the envisaged deployment, in particular the concept of operations," personnel needed and a cost estimate.

The text, which was mainly drafted by France, also urges authorities in Bamako and representatives of "Malian rebel groups" controlling the north to "engage, as soon as possible, in a credible negotiation process."

In March, military coup leaders seized power in Mali's southern capital Bamako, ousting president Amadou Toumani Toure, only to see the country's north and east fall to Tuareg rebels and militias linked to Al-Qaeda.

A west African regional grouping is preparing to send an intervention force into northern Mali to wrest back control of the region, where Islamists have sidelined the Tuareg separatists and imposed sharia law.

With Europe's history, EU undeserving of Nobel Prize

Published: Tuesday | October 16, 2012 /jamaica-gleaner.com

THE EDITOR, Sir:

The news that the European Union (EU) has been awarded the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize is cause for reflection.

With the lapse of 128 years since Germany hosted the Berlin Conference, people of African descent are called upon to consider the role a united Europe has played in the continent of Africa.

In 1884, the year of the conference, my great-grandfather was 20 years old. That was the year the European countries sat at a table in Berlin and divided Africa up among themselves.

It is what these relatively rich nations have done for themselves, and not what they have done to others, that has been recognised by the Nobel Prize Committee.

It's Europe's failure to admit to the wrongness of dividing a continent and raping its resources, leaving behind an impoverished population, that is most worrying to us pan-Africanists. It could be said that we, too, have had our own European-orchestrated 'holocaust'.

To all right-thinking people, this award, placed in its correct historical context, is most unbefitting. The award was "a salute to the struggling 27-nation union for its work in promoting democracy and reconciliation since World War II".

PROSPERITY AT AFRICA'S EXPENSE

The fact is that much of Europe's prosperity has been attained as a consequence of their rapacious exploits of our continent, leaving behind in its trail African impoverishment, political instability, and massive underdevelopment. To top it all off, they have sought to interpret history, with all the wrongs they have done to Africa, by classifying us as lazy, unable to rule ourselves, and responsible for the famine and poverty in sub-Saharan Africa!

This Nobel Peace Prize is the considered tribute to the EU from none other than its fellow European country, Norway. Unlike others, Africans must not forget this episode in our history, lest others seek, at our peril, to repeat it.

BERT S. SAMUELS

Attorney-at-Law

EU greenlights military back-up for Mali

Published on 15 October 2012 /rnw.nl

European Union foreign ministers on Monday approved moves to "urgently" plan for a possible

military mission to help Mali reconquer its vast arid north from rebels and Islamist extremists.

Gathered in Luxembourg, a statement from 27 EU ministers said the bloc "is determined to back Mali in re-establishing the rule of law and a democratic and fully sovereign government across its entire territory".

A two-page document calls for "planning work on a potential military mission ... to be pursued and deepened urgently".

"The European Union has clearly committed in favour of Mali," said French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius.

"We cannot allow terrorism to take root in an area beyond all lawful control in northern Mali," said German counterpart Guido Westerwelle.

Military putschists seized power in the capital Bamako in March, ousting President Amadou Toumani Toure, only to see the north and east fall to Tuareg rebels and militias linked to Al-Qaeda.

And in Bamako last week, thousands took to the streets demanding armed intervention by a West African force to oust Islamists forcing women to wear veils and destroying ancient tombs as they impose Sharia law.

The plan being mulled by the EU will touch on "the organisation and training of the Malian defence forces, taking into account the conditions needed to efficiently fulfill a possible mission, including the full and entire support of the Malian authorities," the EU statement said.

"We have an ungoverned space under the control of terrorists, with narco-trafficking and smuggling of all kinds," an EU official told AFP. "A credible threat of force -- that is what is lacking."

Different ideas are currently under examination ahead of key talks in Bamako on Friday gathering the West African regional body ECOWAS, the African Union, the EU, the United Nations and Mali's neighbours to thrash out a political and military strategy to end the crisis.

The most likely scenario will be the quick dispatch of some 150 senior army trainers, an EU official said.

But another scenario is for sending EU instructors to work alongside the Mali military, Afghan-style, as its soldiers march north.

France has drawn up a UN Security Council resolution seeking a detailed plan within 30 days on an international military intervention following a formal request from the authorities in Bamako.

The UN Security Council approved a resolution last Friday that presses West African nations to speed up preparations for an international military intervention aimed at reconquering northern Mali.

The council asked UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to work with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union in order to submit to the council within 45 days "detailed and actionable recommendations" in preparation for the deployment of an international military force in Mali.

After details for military intervention are submitted, the 15-member council would still have to pass

a second resolution to give the green light to the deployment. That is not expected to happen before the end of the year.

EU adds sanctions over Iran's nuke program

Pioneer Press/twincities.com/Posted: 10/15/2012

Nation & World briefing

LONDON -- The European Union on Monday, Oct. 15, slapped tough new sanctions on Iran out of "serious and deepening concerns" over Tehran's pursuit of its nuclear program.

All transactions between European and Iranian banks are to be prohibited, except those with advance official permission or for humanitarian purposes. Imports of natural gas from Iran will be banned. The EU also is tightening control over exports to Iran of certain goods, including steel, computer software and shipbuilding materials.

EU foreign ministers said the new restrictions were warranted because Tehran continues to block inspectors of the International Atomic Energy Agency from making a full assessment of Iranian nuclear facilities and capabilities.

Syria's Assad orders repairs to mosque

BEIRUT -- A landmark mosque in Aleppo was burned, scarred by bullets and trashed -- the latest casualty of Syria's civil war -- and President Bashar Assad on Monday ordered immediate repairs to try to stem Muslim outrage at the desecration of the 12th century site.

The Umayyad Mosque suffered extensive damage, as has the nearby medieval covered market, or souk, which was gutted by a fire that was sparked by fighting two weeks ago. The market and the mosque are centerpieces of Aleppo's walled Old City, which is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Government troops had been holed up in the mosque for months before rebels launched a push this week to drive them out. Activists and Syrian government officials blamed each other for the weekend fire at the mosque.

Ex-Sen. McGovern enters hospice care

PIERRE, S.D. -- Former presidential candidate and U.S. Sen. George McGovern of South Dakota has moved into hospice care.

McGovern's family announced Monday that the 90-year-old McGovern has moved to the Dougherty Hospice House in Sioux Falls.

His daughter, Ann McGovern of Sioux Falls, said, "He's coming to the end of his life." She declined to elaborate but noted that McGovern has had several health problems in the past year.

25 primate species nearing extinction

NEW DELHI -- Twenty-five species of monkeys, langurs, lemurs and gorillas are on the brink of extinction and need global action to protect them from increasing deforestation and illegal

trafficking, researchers said Monday.

Six of the severely threatened species live in the island nation of Madagascar, off southeast Africa. Five more from mainland Africa, five from South America and nine species in Asia are among those listed as most threatened.

The report by the International Union for Conservation of Nature was released at the United Nations' Convention on Biological Diversity being held in the southern Indian city of Hyderabad.

Obamas voting before Election Day

WASHINGTON -- President Barack Obama won't be posing for any photos in the voting booth on Election Day -- he's casting his ballot early.

The president and first lady Michelle Obama said Monday they are voting early, a nod to efforts to encourage supporters to vote by mail or cast their ballot at an early voting site. Michelle Obama said on Twitter that she dropped her absentee ballot in the mail Monday, telling her followers, "I couldn't wait for Election Day!"

Minutes later, the president said on Twitter that he was following her example and intended to vote early in person in Illinois on Oct. 25 -- three days after the final debate. "If your state has early voting, join me," Obama said on Twitter, directing followers to a link with information about early voting.

Stockbroker held in Broadway scheme

The financially troubled stockbroker who served as the middleman in an unusual deal to help finance the ill-fated Broadway show "Rebecca" was arrested early Monday on federal fraud charges that detail a "stranger-than-fiction" story line that might be the envy of any playwright but for its outcome -- the show's spectacular collapse.

The criminal complaint in the case against the stockbroker, Mark Hotton, outlines an audacious, if clumsy, scheme that included phantom investors around the globe as well as an African safari where Hotton said he had entertained one of the mysterious backers whose later "death" led to the show's collapse last month.

In reality, prosecutors in Manhattan said, Hotton, 46, invented the investors and their supposed financial interest so as to secure \$60,000 from the Broadway producers for his help in arranging financing.

Promiscuity, HPV shot not linked

CHICAGO -- Shots that protect against cervical cancer do not make girls promiscuous, according to the first study to compare medical records for vaccinated and unvaccinated girls.

The researchers didn't ask girls about having sex but instead looked at "markers" of sexual activity after vaccination against the sexually transmitted human papillomavirus, or HPV. Specifically, they examined up to three years of records on whether girls had sought birth control advice; tests for sexually transmitted diseases or pregnancy; or had become pregnant.

Few of the girls who got the shots at age 11 or 12 had done any of those over the next three years, or by the time they were 14 or 15. The study found no difference in rates of those markers

compared with unvaccinated girls. Results were published online Monday in Pediatrics.

September ties for world's hottest

WASHINGTON -- The world this past month matched a record for the hottest September, set in 2005. It was the third time since 2000 that the world set or tied a heat record for September. In addition to 2012 and 2005, previous hot September records were set in 2003. And these records go back to 1880.

Last month's average temperature was 60.2 degrees Fahrenheit worldwide, which is 1.2 degrees above normal, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said Monday.

NOAA official Deke Arndt said it may be worth studying why September, more than other months, keeps setting world records. It might be the lengthening of the Northern Hemisphere's summer as a result of man-made global warming and continual loss of Arctic sea ice that indirectly helps cool other parts of the world, said University of Victoria climate scientist Andrew Weaver.

Putin's party wins regional elections

MOSCOW -- In local and regional elections marked by low turnout and fresh allegations of polling fraud, Russian leader Vladimir Putin's United Russia party claimed a landslide victory Sunday.

Putin's people preserved their seats in all five governor's jobs. And the United Russia party won most of the 4,848 local legislative seats and referendums up for vote in 77 regions, according to preliminary returns.

Some observers called the results a comeback for the Kremlin party after a poor showing in the national parliament election in December, when it won less than 50 percent of the vote amidst widespread accusations of massive electoral manipulation.

-- Los Angeles Times, Associated Press, New York Times

CHINA/AFRICA:

INDIA/AFRICA:

BRAZIL/AFRICA:

EN BREF, CE 16 Octobre 2012... AGNEWS/DAM,NY, 16/10/2012