



[(CNN) -- Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni is expected to sign a bill Monday that criminalizes homosexuality, a government spokeswoman told CNN. The signing is expected to take place at 3 a.m. ET. Museveni has gone back and forth about the controversial bill. Last month, Museveni said he wouldn't sign the bill, describing homosexuals as "sick" people who needed help, not imprisonment. Then he backtracked this month and said he'd sign it because scientists had determined that there's no gene for homosexuality and it was merely abnormal behavior.]

BURUNDI :

RWANDA :

A story, old and new, of Rwanda

Stephen Scourfield, Travel Editor/au.news.yahoo.com/February 24, 2014

This is a story I don't really want to write. I don't want to perpetuate that nasty coupling of two words that comes too easily to mind. For, mention "Rwanda" and the next is likely to be "genocide". But my experience of the Rwanda of today is certainly not one of danger or violence. This has long been considered perhaps the safest country in Africa.

I am here with WA touring company Travel Directors, joining a group on part of its African Dawn tour, which starts in Uganda, visits Rwanda and its mountain gorillas, and then continues through Ethiopia.

Tonight we are staying in the swish Kigali Serena Hotel, in the capital of Rwanda, and I wake in the cool night (Rwanda has a mild year-round climate) and look out of the window, to see a young woman, walking alone. Rwanda prides itself on this - that a woman can walk home in safety at 3am. Any crime against women is considered particularly abhorrent, and, reputedly, particularly to President Paul Kagame.

I don't have to dig far back for reasons behind this, to the 100 days in 1994 in which up to a million Tutsi people died at the hands of militant Hutus in a planned genocide. From a population of more than 7 million people (84 per cent Hutu, 15 per cent Tutsi and one per cent Twa) 10,000 people were murdered every day.

It is a story I didn't want to write because the Rwanda I am experiencing is safe and a welcoming and interesting place to travel. But this part of its history can't be ignored.

Tony Evans, leading the tour, clearly agrees, and he tackles the issue in an interesting, calm and respectful way, inviting the group to a meeting in the Serena's presidential suite. Tony and his Rwandan colleague, Osborn Shedruch Kinene, a Kigali resident and travel professional accompanying the Travel Directors group on the Rwandan leg of its trip, tell the history.

There had been a build-up and Tutsi women had been particularly targeted in propaganda and then in horrible ways during the genocide. Hence, any crime against a woman here has a savage echo, and particularly for President Kagame, the strict father of the nation, who led the Rwandan Patriotic Front made up from among 700,000 Tutsis who had been displaced to Congo between 1959 and 1973 by ethnic cleansing. They had already invaded the country, and then ended the genocide as the United Nations failed to respond.

President Kagame may be judged differently by some in the Western world but in 2010 he was re-elected, with a majority of 93 per cent, a role he can only hold until 2017.

"Many of us do not even want to imagine 2017 and Mr Kagame standing down," says Osborn, who was nine years old in 1994 as roadblocks were instantly erected every few hundred metres and the killing began.

It is a story told first at the Presidential Palace Museum. For here is the wreck of the plane in which President Juvenal Habyarimana, a Hutu, was travelling on April 6, 1994, and which was shot down, killing him. The genocide began within hours, primarily by Hutu extremists in the Interahamwe militia. It is thought that 200,000 people participated, and much of the planning was done in a room in this palace (so much like a Perth suburban 70s home), in armchairs now ragged and overlooking the lush gardens.

The story is completed at Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre, where 250,000 people are buried in mass graves, and where the story unfolds through pictures and personal stories. Yes, the facts are harrowing, but they are presented calmly.

One room is full of photographs of victims which are hung on wires. One has flipped so that I can just see its white back, and when I turn it over, a young man in a tracksuit looks at me, smiling.

Outside, there is a wall of names and I notice how many were called "Innocence", a common first name here.

And why would visitors want to experience all this? Perhaps because wounds heal best in the open

air. Or perhaps because of what we see in this statement by UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, speaking at UN headquarters in New York in January, marking the 20th anniversary of the genocide: "We must never forget the collective failure to prevent the Rwandan genocide. Repeating the phrase 'never again' is in itself a sign of continued failure."

He was speaking at an event called "Understanding early warning of mass atrocities 20 years after the genocide in Rwanda", which was attended by retired Canadian Lt-Gen. Romeo Dallaire, the head of the UN peacekeeping force in Rwanda at the time, who appealed in vain for the world to take action.

"If we are to prevent future tragedies, progress requires leadership and courage to speak out at every level - the kind of leadership and the kind of courage, that Romeo Dallaire showed 20 years ago," Mr Eliasson said.

He said that the UN and the international system were now better prepared to anticipate, prevent and respond to crises. "We need look no further than South Sudan today for an example of dedication and innovation in protecting people.

"When people are killed or violated in the name of religion, race or ethnicity, everybody's humanity is diminished. We are all brutalised - victims and perpetrators as well as bystanders."

And, perhaps, I feel somewhat brutalised at the Roman Catholic church at Nyamata, 50 minutes outside Kigali, where 10,000 Tutsis were killed. There are shelves full of skulls in the musty mass graves.

And where does that leave Rwanda now? Having learnt from the lesson?

In November, the Rwandan government released a security status report which showed a continuing reduction of crime, which was seen to further the report by research company Gallup the previous November that declared Rwanda the safest country in Africa.

That report, The Global States of Mind - New Metrics for World Leaders, revealed that 92 per cent of Rwandans felt safe.

Though the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade still advises travellers to exercise a high degree of caution, Rwanda wears its "safest country in Africa" moniker with pride.

And pride is a word that comes easily to mind in this East Africa country, where there is a real sense of direction and future.

Corruption is not tolerated. Indeed, there was recently an Anti Corruption Week under the slogan: "Corruption Undermines Rwandan Values".

Foreign aid famously gets to the projects for which it is given, which is certainly not the case across Africa. Ministers are given strict performance targets and it is demanded that they meet them.

Plastic bags are banned and Rwandans, including the president, come out one weekend every month to clean their country.

Its future continues to develop and in January, nearly 900 students graduated from the Rwanda Tourism University College. The Rwandan government, through the Rwanda Development Board's

Tourism and Conservation, continues to work hard to lift standards of service, which are already very good. Tourism is very much part of Rwanda's future.

We dined this evening at the Hotel des Mille Collines, where both threads of this story come together. For it was on the events at this hotel in 1994 that the movie Hotel Rwanda was based. It was where hotelier Paul Rusesabagina, a Hutu married to a Tutsi, protected 1200 people throughout the 100 days of killing.

But tonight, we dine in a fine restaurant, with balconies overlooking the glittering city. The food is sophisticated, the service excellent.

I didn't want to write this story out of some sort of blindness but because I want you to understand that Rwanda today is safe and the people welcoming, educated and happy.

"There are so many projects President Kagame has put in place to see that such things will never happen again in this country," says Osborn, a man of the future, like others I have met here (Innocence and Enoch, Augustin and Leonidas) - and who surely deserves the last word.

"We really admire our leader and his vision for the country. Many other African countries say they'd like to borrow him."

But, of course, it isn't completely a one-man show and Rwanda has by far the highest percentage of women in parliament in the world, at 64 per cent, according to the latest World Bank figures.

Their work includes Vision 2020, which has an emphasis on education, and in giving every child access to a laptop.

It includes introducing English to every school, recognising that the future has to be based on this world language, not French.

It includes instituting a fund, to which Rwandans quickly contributed millions of dollars when outside aid was cut and they were asked to take responsibility for their country's problems.

It includes the "a cow per family" scheme aimed at giving children more protein, from milk; combating their malnutrition. "This was very big," Osborn says. Once again, the president appealed to the people... "if you want our children to survive, I think this is what we should do...".

People have responded, committed to a healthy future for their country.

"For we are all Rwandans," Osborn says. And, these days, it's not allowed to ask from which tribe.

Stephen Scourfield was a guest of Travel Directors and Qatar Airways.

Rwanda, Ghana Ink Bilateral Trade Deal

By Peterson Tumwebaze in Ghana/allAfrica.com/22 February 2014

Trade and investments between Rwanda and Ghana could be boosted thanks to a new trade agreement signed between Rwanda's private sector and Ghana chamber of commerce in Accra.

The deal outlines scaling up business investments and joint partnerships in sectors such as mining, tourism, agro-processing, real estate and textile manufacturing and seeks to eliminate trade barriers

between the two countries.

Seth Adjei Baah, the president of Ghana chamber of commerce and industry, said the need to promote trade investments between the two countries is imperative not only for economic development, but also poverty reduction between the two countries.

"We know that Rwanda has become exceptional in doing business and Ghana is endowed with natural resources. Therefore, merging these two ingredients will not only foster trade between Rwanda and Ghana but also boost intra-trade across the African continent," Adjei Baah said.

He further noted that the Government of Ghana was willing to facilitate Rwandan entrepreneurs interested in conducting business with their Ghanaian counterparts.

Benjamin Gasamagera, the chairperson of the Rwanda Private Sector Federation, said the initiative will not only correct the trade imbalances that exist between the two countries but also boost socio-economic relationships between the two business communities.

"The development of the African continent will be driven by the private sector. Bringing together members of the private sectors from different regions will therefore create an enabling environment where business opportunities, challenges, and experiences will be shared and new innovations, and ideas brought to the fore," Gasamagera said.

Denis Karera, the honorary counsel, Ghana consulate in Kigali, said there is progress in conducting business between the two countries since the establishment of the consulate in 2013.

"We have at least two Rwandans travelling to Ghana on a daily basis. The number of Ghanaians arriving in Rwanda has also increased to the tune of about 67 persons per day," Karera noted.

He emphasised the need for both parties to take full advantage of the national carrier RwandAir's routine flights between the two destinations.

Experts speak out

Kingsley Karimu, the Ghanaian ambassador to East Africa, said it defies logic for African countries to foster business with the western world without first considering their African counterparts.

"There is no reason why Ghana should be importing beef from Europe when there is a lot of cattle in East Africa," Kingsley said.

Gerald Sina, the Managing Director of Urwibutso Enterprises, said the new trade agreement opens up a huge market for Rwandan products.

"Whenever there is a market opening, it is an opportunity for producers to scale up production," Sina said.

Investors also called for improvement of investor protection so as to give them assurance and confidence to invest.

Last year, RwandAir launched its flights to Accra, Ghana in a bid to boost trade between the two countries.

Rwandan entrepreneurs registered in Ghana businesses worth 50,000 dollars in agro-processing in

2013.

Rwanda: Weekly Summary - Germany Hands Down First Judgment in a Rwanda Genocide Case 21 December 2014/Hirondelle News Agency (Lausanne)

Arusha — A German court this week convicted a former Rwandan mayor, thus handing down the country's first judgment linked to the Rwandan genocide of 1994. A Paris court meanwhile continued the trial of Pascal Simbikangwa, the first trial of a Rwandan genocide suspect in France.

Germany jails Rwandan ex-mayor for 14 years:

The Frankfurt High Court on Tuesday found Rwandan mayor Onesphore Rwabukombe guilty of participating in the 1994 genocide and sentenced him to 14 years in jail. Rwabukombe, 56, was in charge of Muvumba commune in north-east Rwanda at the time of the genocide. His lawyer said he would appeal. Rwandan judicial authorities, who tried and failed to get him extradited, hailed the German judgment as a contribution to eradicating the "culture of impunity".

Former journalist accuses Simbikangwa

One of the witnesses testifying this week against Rwandan ex-intelligence officer Pascal Simbikangwa was former journalist Samuel Nshimiyimana, who said he had been tortured by the accused before the 1994 genocide. The witness said this was because of an article he had written that named Simbikangwa as a member of the "death squads". The trial of Simbikangwa, who is paraplegic, continues Monday. It is the first trial in France of a Rwandan genocide suspect.

Tripoli recognizes 2011 rape victims as war victims:

Libya on Wednesday passed a law recognizing women who were raped during the 2011 Revolution as "war victims", as well as those who were subjected to sexual slavery under the regime of Muammar Gaddafi. The law also contains measures to protect children born of these rapes and to facilitate their adoption.

Next Week:

The trial of Kenyan Deputy President William Ruto and journalist Joshua Sang is scheduled to continue next week before the International Criminal Court (ICC) with testimonies of prosecution witnesses.

A Paris court is set to continue hearings in the trial of Pascal Simbikangwa, the first Rwandan to be tried in France for suspected participation in the 1994 genocide.

Rwanda's Refugee Policies Should Be Emulated

23 February 2014/allafrica.com

The Senate has just passed a bill that will streamline the issue of asylum seekers in the country. An important aspect of the law is that a special committee will be set up to determine eligibility.

Refugees in Rwanda benefit from all social services enjoyed by nationals, without discrimination; be it education and access to health that many refugee host counties cannot match. Deprivation is not part of the national vocabulary, be they refugees or not.

Rwandans, of all people, understand the real meaning of being a refugee since a large portion of its population experienced it; the frustrations of trying to fit into a host country, humiliation of being stateless and the unending hurdles that a refugee has to navigate through.

Refugees in many countries have to undergo a gruelling waiting period to know whether and when their applications will go through, but that issue has been addressed for those seeking asylum in Rwanda.

A specific timeframe for scrutinizing and informing the applicants has been set, as well the appeal procedures in case their initial applications are found wanting.

All these mechanisms were put in place based on firsthand experience of what a refugee needs; sanctuary and a feeling of welcome. That can only be achieved if the host country welcomes them with open arms and treats them as its own citizens.

RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

Ugandan president to sign anti-gay bill

24 Feb 2014/aljazeera.com

Museveni is expected to sign a bill that sets life imprisonment as the penalty for "aggravated homosexuality".

Uganda's president is expected to sign a controversial anti-gay bill that allows harsh penalties for "homosexual offences".

The Uganda Media Center said on Monday that President Yoweri Museveni will sign the bill at 11am local time (0800 GMT) at his official residence, the Reuters news agency reported.

"The president is signing the anti-homosexuality bill today. He wants to sign it with the full witness of the international media to demonstrate Uganda's independence in the face of Western pressure and provocation," Ugandan Government spokesman Ofwono Opondo told Reuters.

The bill is popular in Uganda, but rights groups have condemned it as draconian in a country where homosexuality is already illegal.

Museveni's decision to sign the bill comes less than a week since he announced plans to put the bill on hold to give scientists a chance to prove that homosexuality could be triggered by genes and is not a "lifestyle choice".

"Aggravated homosexuality"

The law punishes first-time offenders with 14 years in jail. It also sets life imprisonment as the

penalty for acts of "aggravated homosexuality".

The bill originally proposed the death penalty for some homosexual acts, but that was later removed amid international criticism.

US President Barack Obama has urged Museveni not to sign the bill, saying doing so would "complicate" the east African country's relationship with Washington.

Uganda is a key Western ally in the fight against Islamic extremism in Somalia where Ugandan troops have formed the backbone of the African Union peacekeeping force battling al Qaeda-aligned fighters.

Uganda's President to Sign Anti-Gay Bill Monday

Associated Press/February 24, 2014

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Uganda says President will sign anti-gay bill Monday

By Faith Karimi, CNN/February 24, 2014

(CNN) -- Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni is expected to sign a bill Monday that criminalizes homosexuality, a government spokeswoman told CNN.

The signing is expected to take place at 3 a.m. ET.

Museveni has gone back and forth about the controversial bill.

Last month, Museveni said he wouldn't sign the bill, describing homosexuals as "sick" people who needed help, not imprisonment.

Then he backtracked this month and said he'd sign it because scientists had determined that there's no gene for homosexuality and it was merely abnormal behavior.

Then, last week, he said he would seek advice from American scientists before he made any decision.

Homosexual acts are illegal in Uganda. The proposed legislation passed by parliament toughens the penalties, including life imprisonment for certain acts.

Museveni said that Ugandan scientists had determined there was no gene for homosexuality.

"It was learned and could be unlearned," he said.

Shortly after his announcement, U.S. President Barack Obama warned that enacting the bill would affect relations between the two nations. He described the proposal as an "affront and a danger to the gay community" in Uganda.

The United States and Britain are among the nation's largest donors.

Placating Western donors

Then, in what appeared to be a move to placate Western donors, Museveni said he would seek extended guidance.

In a statement last week, he said U.S. scientists sent him opinions indicating "homosexuality could be congenital."

"I therefore encourage the U.S. government to help us by working with our scientists to study whether, indeed, there are people who are born homosexual," Museveni said. "When that is proved, we can review this legislation."

Years of debates

A Ugandan lawmaker first introduced the bill in 2009 with a death penalty clause for some homosexual acts. It was briefly shelved when Britain and other European nations threatened to withdraw aid to Uganda, which relies on millions of dollars from the international community.

The nation's parliament passed the bill in December, replacing the death penalty provision with a proposal of life in prison for "aggravated homosexuality." This includes acts where one person is infected with HIV, "serial offenders" and sex with minors, Amnesty International said.

The bill also proposed years in prison for anyone who counsels or reaches out to gays and lesbians, a provision that would ensnare rights groups and others providing services to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Homosexuality in Africa

Homosexuality is illegal in 38 African countries, where most sodomy laws were introduced during colonialism. In Uganda, homosexual acts are punishable by 14 years to life in prison.

But lawmakers in the conservative nation have sought tougher legislation, saying the influence of Western lifestyles risks destroying family units.

Rights groups worldwide have condemned the bill as draconian.

SOUTH AFRICA :

Desmond Tutu appelle à renoncer à la loi anti-homosexualité

23/02/14/Source: AFP

L'archevêque sud-africain Desmond Tutu a appelé dimanche le président ougandais Yoweri Museveni à renoncer à promulguer une loi anti-homosexuels, estimant que légiférer contre l'amour entre adultes consentants rappelait le nazisme et l'apartheid.

"Mon appel au président Museveni est d'utiliser le débat dans son pays sur la loi contre l'homosexualité comme un catalyseur pour renforcer la culture des droits de l'homme et de la justice en Ouganda", a dit le prix Nobel de la paix.

Il lui a suggéré de plutôt renforcer les sanctions pénales contre les auteurs de viols, de crimes sexuels contre les enfants, et "si besoin", contre ceux qui sont impliqués dans la prostitution, "acheteurs ou vendeurs". "Renforcer ces domaines de la loi protégera certainement bien plus les enfants et les familles que de criminaliser les actes d'amour entre des adultes consentants", a-t-il ajouté.

Desmond Tutu a balayé l'argumentation de la présidence ougandaise qui estime que, en l'absence de gêne de l'homosexualité, l'amour entre personnes du même sexe est un comportement qui peut se désapprendre. "Il n'y a aucune justification scientifique pour les préjugés et la discrimination, jamais. Et aucune justification morale non plus", a martelé Tutu.

"L'Allemagne nazie et l'Afrique du Sud, entre autres, en sont la démonstration". "Les êtres humains sont très différents (...) et pourtant ils sont membres d'une seule famille, la famille des hommes, la famille de Dieu. Notre diversité nous oblige à être tolérants, empreints de compassion et respectueux les uns des autres", a-t-il dit.

L'homophobie est très répandue en Ouganda, pays où le christianisme fondamentaliste protestant de style américain fait des adeptes. Les hommes et femmes homosexuels y sont fréquemment soumis à des menaces ou subissent des violences. L'Afrique du Sud n'est pas exempte de violences contre les homosexuels, notamment dans les townships noirs, mais la Constitution de 1996 les place sur un pied d'égalité pour le mariage, l'adoption et le recours à une mère porteuse.

La loi sud-africaine, en rupture avec le régime répressif d'apartheid qui interdisait l'homosexualité et les relations entre personnes de couleur de peau différentes, est une exception sur le continent. Elle se distingue aussi par rapport à beaucoup d'autres pays du monde, hors d'Afrique.

TANZANIA :

Kenyan safari tour operators denounce new agreement with Tanzania

By Prof. Dr. Wolfgang H. Thome, eTN Africa Correspondent /eturbonews.com/ Feb 24, 2014

The announcement of "progress" and reaching an agreement between Tanzania and Kenya during last week's meeting in Arusha was quickly shot down in flames by significant sections of the safari tour operator fraternity in Kenya.

"A lot of hullabaloo about fundamentally nothing new," wrote one regular source, while another

wrote, “Where is the breakthrough the media are harping on about? We were already able to drop clients in Arusha or Moshi, so that is not new at all. There are shuttle busses running between Arusha and JKIA and Nairobi again; there is nothing new about that. Key issues like the Bologonja border were again omitted for the sake of political expediency. Balala raised these issues, but since he left, his successors seem overly concerned not to ruffle feathers with their colleagues in Tanzania. Sort out Bologonja, sort out air access from Wilson to the Tanzanian parks, sort out access for our vehicles to the Tanzanian parks, and THEN talk about progress. This was just a political stage show, nothing else. Nothing has changed.”

A Ugandan source summed up their sentiments with a comment on the EATP Facebook page when writing: “In Tanzania, they don’t allow tourist guides from other countries to access their tourist sites. They ask you to use a local Tanzanian guide or tour operator. In Kenya, you pay up to \$300 per vehicle. But in Uganda, it is free entrance. What does this mean?”

Criticism was also voiced over a common logo revealed at the EAC meeting in Arusha for being unprofessional and failing to highlight the main issue, marketing the region as one tourism destination with many attractions.

“This logo is non-descript, there is a total lack of relevance and relationship to tourism. And borderless borders? Far from it, in fact. Borders are there and enforced as the other hotly-disputed issues show. As far as tourism, as far as aviation is concerned, the EAC is just a farce. Bottom line is it does not work and let me be frank, both Tanzania and Kenya are the main culprits with non-tariff barriers. We in Uganda allow their aircraft to come in, their vehicles to come in, and their guides to work here without any hindrance. No fees, no registration or vetting, nothing. Do they reciprocate us? NO WAY. It is time they reciprocate what we are giving, or it is time to shut our doors in their faces, too,” added another Ugandan source late on Sunday when discussing the matter.

Time perhaps to face reality and look beyond the flowery statements made by the politicians in Arusha, which back home have no real effect at all.

KENYA :

East Africa: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda Meeting On Tourism and Wildlife Management Issues Concludes in Arusha

20 February 2014/East African Community (Nairobi)/allafrica.com

press release

The 17 to 20 February 2014 meeting was held to discuss among others, Partner States denying entry of tourist vehicles registered in other Partner States; harassment of driver guides at the border crossings; disparities in fees charged; cross border cooperation in wildlife law enforcement; and cooperation and support in addressing multi-lateral environment agreements.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for East African Affairs, Commerce and Tourism, who is also a Chairperson of EAC Council of Ministers, Hon. Phyllis Kandie, commended the readiness of the three Partner States to meet and discuss the challenges in the tourism sector. She reiterated the commitment of the Republic of Kenya towards the EAC integration agenda.

Hon. Lazaro Nyalandu, Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism of the United Republic of Tanzania commended the Republics of Uganda and Kenya for working with the United Republic of Tanzania to resolve the issues persisting in the tourism and wildlife sectors. He noted that by resolving these challenges, Partner States would improve the standard of living for the people in the Region.

Hon. Nyalandu urged Partner States to set and honour timelines agreed upon during the deliberations and encouraged Partner States to work jointly to implement the decisions.

The Minister of State for Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities of the Republic of Uganda, Hon. Eguny Akiror Agnes expressed gratitude that the meeting was finally considering issues that had been outstanding in the sector since 2010. She reiterated the commitment of the Republic of Uganda in supporting the integration agenda.

On her part, the Deputy Secretary General in charge Productive and Social Sector, Hon. Jesca Eriyo stated that "as three founding Partner States of the EAC, you share a rich history that should encourage us rather than hinder our progress towards integration". Some of the recommendations made at the meeting are:

Treatment of Tourist Driver Guides:

In regard to the treatment of Tourist Driver Guides at the border crossings, the Ministers urged the Partner States to sensitize law enforcement officials and the public on appropriate conduct when interacting so as to reduce incidences that may frustrate the operations of the tourism sector. They also urged Partner States to build the capacity of tour operators to appreciate the importance of security while operating in the region to reduce misunderstandings between the two sectors. They also urged Partner States to engage the relevant Ministries to work out the modalities to develop frameworks to ensure smooth movement of the citizens of EAC Partner States across borders and within is improved to enhance intra-regional tourism.

Accessibility of Tourist Vehicles to Tourist sites in Partner States and Work Permit Fees for Tour Operators:

In regard to this outstanding issues, the Ministers/Cabinet Secretary noted that in the Republic of Kenya, the use of tourist vehicle sticker were under review due to changes in the Tourism Act. The Ministers/Cabinet Secretary urged Kenya to officially communicate the new changes in the regulations to all Partner States by 20th March, 2014.

And for the work permits, the Ministers/Cabinet Secretary noted that the United Republic of Tanzania (URT) had officially abolished the Carrying on Temporary Assignment Pass (CTA). They urged URT to officially communicate on this matter to Partner States by 20th March, 2014. Prior to July 2013, every non-citizen (including citizens of other Partner States) entering URT for the purpose of engaging in any lawful and gainful activities were subjected to pay a fee of US\$200 for a CTA. The United Republic of Tanzania reported to the meeting that from July 2013 a directive was circulated to Immigration Officials at all entry points not to charge a fee of US\$200 for a CTA to citizens of the other Partner States.

Entry of Kenyan and Ugandan Registered Tourist Vehicles into the United Republic of Tanzania Tourist Sites:

The Ministers/Cabinet Secretary reiterated their commitment to promote cooperation in the tourism

sector with a focus on regional integration. In this regard, they agreed to engage in bilateral arrangements by reviewing or developing agreements. In this regard, the Ministers urged the Republic of Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania to continue with the existing bi-lateral agreement on cooperation in tourism and also urged the two Partner States to meet bi-laterally to review the bi-lateral agreement on cooperation in tourism within six months.

They urged the Republic of Uganda to develop bi-lateral agreements for cooperation in tourism with the other Partner States. The Ministers/Cabinet Secretary also urged the Republic of Rwanda and Republic of Burundi to develop bi-lateral agreements for cooperation in tourism with the other Partner States.

The Ministers directed the Secretariat to coordinate the development of Regional Guidelines to manage tour operations in the EAC by July, 2014. The Secretariat was also urged to convene a regional meeting of the five Partner States involving Tour Operators Associations, Tour Guides, Wildlife Agencies, Tourist Boards, Security/Immigration, EATP and other stakeholders to consider the draft Regional Guidelines to manage tour operations by August, 2014.

The Ministers/Cabinet Secretary urged the Partner States to make additional commitments on the elimination of restrictions on the services in the Tourism sector; and as well as to expedite the liberalization of more services in the sector.

Consideration of the treatment of citizens:

The Ministers/Cabinet Secretary urged Partner States to sensitize the investors of privately owned tourist facilities to apply EAC rates; and also urged Partner States to amend current legislations to ensure that privately owned vehicles belonging to citizens of the EAC Partner States are accorded local treatment while visiting tourist sites.

Cooperation in conservation of Flora and Fauna:

The Ministers/Cabinet Secretary; urged Partner States to jointly consider regional cooperation in conservation of fauna and flora; urged Partner States to expedite the review of existing legislation to ensure that the Region's endangered wildlife resources are protected by December 2014; and included the cross border efforts in the Regional strategy to fight poaching and the illegal trade of wildlife, wildlife and forest products for consideration by the Sectoral Council Tourism and Wildlife Management.

The Ministers/Cabinet Secretary's recommendations will be submitted to the EAC Sectoral Council on Tourism and Wildlife Management for further management.

Ends

ANGOLA :

AU/AFRICA :

UN/AFRICA :

Central African Republic takes center stage at UN Security Council

Feb 23, 2014 /newstimeafrica.com

The dire situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) – where Almost 20,000 people have reportedly crossed into Cameroon since the beginning of February to avoid the violence – was the provision agenda of the seven thousand and fourteenth meeting of the UN Security Council.

Though the exact number of casualty is unknown, thousands of people are reportedly been killed in the conflict. The Secretary General estimates almost one million people have been displaced and about 2.5 million people in need of desperate humanitarian assistance.

At Thursday's meeting in New York, Secretary General Mr. Ban KI-moon urged the international community and member states to implement his six-point initiative to end the current crisis, which Mr. Ban describes as "of more disturbing magnitude that poses a test for the international community and a calamity with a strong claim on the human conscience."

Mr. Ban's six-point initiative primarily proposed the deployment of 3,000 additional troops to reinforce African Union and French troops currently in the CAR.

He also proposed \$38 million to African troops for logistic and financial support including rations, water and fuel and the reimbursement for their major non-lethal military equipment.

Vannina Maestracci, a Spokesperson for the Secretary General, issued a statement Friday in response to an enquiry on the estimated funds required for President Samba-Panza's government to function again and to help restore governance? In addition to how soon could the UN deploy a peacekeeping operation in CAR?

"I call for rapid, tangible support to the government of the Central African Republic to help it establish a minimum capacity to function. This support should include the financial assistance necessary to get police back on the streets, judges back in the courtrooms, and prison guards back on the job. I am pleased to announce that today Denmark confirmed a contribution of \$2 million to this initiative, and I intend to see these resources put to use quickly. Norway has also confirmed today that it will make a donation to this effort."

The statement continued, "The Security Council has asked for my recommendations for a future UN peacekeeping operation, and I will soon report to you on the outlines of a mission with a robust mandate to protect civilians and promote stability. But the deployment of a peacekeeping operation, if authorized, will take months. The people of the Central African Republic do not have months to wait. The international community must act decisively now to prevent any further worsening of the situation and to respond to the dire needs of the country's people."

Maestracci also referred to the office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) web page's link <http://www.unocha.org/crisis/central-african-republic> regarding the issue of humanitarian funding.

According to OCHA, the United States government is providing about \$45 million funds to support humanitarian efforts including emergency food aid, healthcare, distribution of relief supplies,

security, logistics and other humanitarian assistance.

But the Security Council meeting came almost a year after the state of CAR collapsed. The International Crisis Group (ICG) said the situation on the ground is deteriorating at a much faster pace than the international response is mobilizing. In addition, ICG stated after the international community realized it could not afford another failed state in Africa, it has abandoned months of “wait and see” policy to avoid the risk of the conflict spilling over the region.

Yet, Ambassador Smail Chergui, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security told the Security Council “We are at a crucial stage in our efforts to successfully meet the challenges in the CAR. The priority is clear: protect civilians, facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and create the conditions for a successful transition.”

US/AFRICA :

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CHINA/AFRICA :

China-Africa trade surpassed \$200 billion in 2013

Date: Feb 23, 2014/AFP

BEIJING - China-Africa trade totalled more than \$200 billion last year, Chinese President Xi Jinping said, highlighting the Asian powerhouse's burgeoning trade and investment ties with the continent.

"In 2013, Chinese-African trade surpassed the \$200 billion mark for the first time, making China Africa's biggest trading partner," Xi told visiting Senegalese President Macky Sall, adding that Chinese direct investment in Africa grew 44 percent.

"That all stands witness to the endlessly renewed vitality of Sino-African friendship, to the scale of the potential for co-operation and the excellent outlook for the new kind of Sino-African strategic partnership," Xi said at Beijing's Great Hall of the People.

Xi did not give an exact total.

But China-Africa trade has boomed in line with the Asian country's rise to become the world's second-biggest economy, which has been accompanied by a thirst for African natural resources to help fuel its growth.

Underscoring the continent's importance, Xi visited Tanzania, South Africa and the Republic of Congo as part of his first overseas tour after he became president in March last year.

But China's growing role has also sparked tensions in some countries.

In February last year, for example, the Zambian government seized control of a Chinese-owned coal company due to poor compliance with safety and environmental standards, its mines minister said. In 2012 workers at the mine killed a Chinese manager during rioting over work conditions.

Acclaimed primatologist Jane Goodall told AFP in a recent interview that China was exploiting Africa's resources just as European colonisers did, with disastrous effects

INDIA/AFRICA :

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