



[Pretoria, South Africa (CNN) -- Oscar Pistorius's hard-hitting defense lawyers will try Monday to rattle one of the most unflappable witnesses to testify so far against the track star accused of murdering his girlfriend, cover girl Reeva Steenkamp. A security guard at the estate where Pistorius lived -- and Steenkamp died -- produced some of the most potentially damning testimony against the athlete on Friday as the first week of the trial came to a close. "Security, everything is fine," Pistorius told Pieter Baba when Baba called to check reports of a shooting in the neighborhood.]

BURUNDI :

RWANDA :

Rwanda Govt and Microsoft Partner to Boost Education

By Kamau Mbote/allafrica.com/10 March 2014

The ministry of education in Rwanda and Microsoft has signed an agreement dubbed 'Education Transformation Agreement' with the plan of improving learning innovation and skills development for both teachers and students.

According to The New Times the project to be initiated through Microsoft's Partners in learning initiative and is necessitated by the growing need to give more access to ICT in primary and secondary schools as well as tertiary and vocational education

"The Ministry of Education is open to embracing new approaches to teaching and learning to further education quality and the use of technology is at the centre of these approaches," said Dr. Vincent Biruta, Minister for Education, after signing the agreement in Kigali.

The minister said he believed that the initiative would enhance the country's capacity to address most issues in Rwanda's education quality.

The agreement stipulates that the education ministry will together with stakeholders come up with effective strategies while Microsoft has the role of spearheading these strategies through provision of its products such as Office 365 among other programmes and services.

RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

Uganda's gay people fear daily for their safety

by Agency Staff/Reuters/mars 10 2014

WITH a World Bank scholarship and top grades in the first year of her master's degree in agriculture, 27-year-old Cleo Kambugu should be well on the road to her goal of an academic career in Uganda.

Instead, she's working out how to leave after the passing of a law that toughens prison sentences for homosexuality and a tabloid campaign to "out" gays.

"There is no hope right now," said Ms Kambugu, still legally a man despite a sex change in the past year that is not recognised by Uganda, a nation now with some of the toughest antigay laws on a continent where 37 states ban homosexuality.

She worries about her safety after the newspaper Red Pepper slapped her picture on its front page under the headline "How we became homos". The paper said such articles were in the public interest.

The bill, signed into law by President Yoweri Museveni on February 24, has forced embattled gays deeper into the shadows by threatening life in jail for "aggravated homosexuality" and a seven-year term for "aiding and abetting homosexuality".

It has broad backing from politicians and the public, while many popular churches preach against gay sex.

Many gay Ugandans are now torn about what to do next: stay in Uganda and risk going to jail or seek asylum abroad. Some have already chosen to go.

Gays report being harassed — one was even beaten. Beyonce Karungi, a transgender activist, was punched and kicked by a mob in January.

Passing the law has come at a cost. The World Bank and donors — Sweden, Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands — have withheld aid or loans worth more than \$118m. Uganda's currency has tumbled on fears of further cuts to this vital source of hard currency. Investors are nervous.

The US, a big donor, has called the legislation "atrocious" and compared it to anti-Semitic laws in Nazi Germany and apartheid in South Africa. It says it is reviewing ties. But for Mr Museveni the popular law could help shore up support before a 2016 election.

Only two MPs in the 260-seat parliament have publicly criticised the bill.

"If you are a homo and you are destroying our society, you should be stopped," said legislator David Bahati, author of the bill that had initially sought the death penalty for those considered the worst offenders when he introduced it in 2009.

Uganda officials have also brushed off western criticism, saying threats to cut aid are tantamount to blackmail. Uganda will instead turn to China, Russia or India for loans or investment, as that support won't come with strings, they say.

Homosexuality has been banned in Uganda since independence in 1962 from Britain.

An official at the US embassy in Kampala said senior Ugandan officials repeatedly assured US ambassador Scott DeLisi they would "manage" the bill but urged the US and other donors not to make a fuss so it could be quietly scrapped.

But when Museveni first suggested he planned to sign the law on February 14, it drew a swift response from US President Barack Obama, who declared any such move a "step backward" for Uganda. About a week later Museveni signed the law. He said: "We're sorry to see that you (the West) live the way you live, but we keep quiet about it."

The chorus of antigay voices is not restricted to parliament. Influential pastors often openly denounce homosexual acts.

The huge stage at Kampala's Watoto church is one place where the message is delivered in spectacular style, with smoke machines, disco lights and the throbbing beat of a gospel choir. On a Sunday in March, Canadian pastor Gary Skinner told worshippers not to "sexually sin against their own bodies".

The church has hosted Scott Lively, president of the Abiding Truth Ministries and prominent antigay campaigner. Gays say US evangelical churches encourage Uganda's antigay clerics.

"The West says it's a human right. Africa says it's a human vice," said Martin Ssempe, a firebrand Ugandan pastor with links to US evangelical groups.

He said he will launch mobile "rehabilitation" clinics for gays across Uganda, a nation with 34.5-million people.

Those with a different message can barely be heard. Former Church of Uganda Bishop Christopher Senyonjo, the country's only openly pro-gay clergyman, delivers his sermons in the cramped garage of a small house on the edge of the capital.

Kicked out of the church for pro-gay views and stripped of his pension after nearly half a century of

service, Mr Senyonjo said the law has silenced voices who support gays.

"We are gagged," Mr Senyonjo said inside his simple office. "I think people will not speak out unless they are ready to sacrifice themselves, and not many people will do that."

Rights activists say they will contest the law in court, though that will not address the issue of entrenched public opinion that sees homosexuality as wrong.

"The law did not bring homophobia to Uganda," said Ms Kambugu. "The law will not make it disappear."

Reuters

Ugandans abroad to engage donors on aid cut

Date: Mar 10, 2014/By Henry Sekanjako/newvision.co.ug

The NRM Diaspora League has taken the lead in improving Uganda's image abroad after President Yoweri Museveni assented to the Anti-gay law recently.

The NRM UK and Ireland chapter are explaining Museveni's decision to sign the controversial Bill into law and why there is no justification for withdrawing and cutting off aid to Uganda.

The group on Sunday met the Uganda High Commissioner in London, Prof. Joyce Kakuramatsi Kikafunda and briefed her on their efforts to meet and mutually address government's critics.

The delegation which included executive members of the NRM diaspora league like Lillian Busingye, Geoffrey Odur was led by the secretary Patrick Asiimwe.

"The NRM Diaspora League has already written to the fierce critic of the Anti-gay law in the House of Commons, Margot James, a Conservative Party Member of Parliament representing Stourbridge, seeking an appointment to correct the negative campaign being conducted from an uninformed standpoint that fails to take into account mutual respect for Uganda's sovereignty and cultural values," said Asiimwe.

The NRM UK Chapter argues that the campaign to withhold aid will directly hit and hurt the ordinary people.

According to Asiimwe, Margot James, while appearing on Channel 4 News in London recently, said he would lobby for a travel ban on selected leaders who have been advocating for the anti-gay law.

The Chairman of the Diaspora League, Abbey Walusimbi, is due in London next month to participate in more meetings with the critics of the law in Sweden and Scandinavian countries to explain to them more about Uganda's signing of the anti-gay law.

Uganda's High Commission welcomed any efforts that improved the image of Uganda and hailed the Chapter for championing the task to engage with critics so that they get to appreciate the appropriate mindset of the Bill.

SOUTH AFRICA :

Security guard to take stand against Oscar Pistorius in murder trial

By Richard Allen Greene, CNN/March 10, 2014

Pretoria, South Africa (CNN) -- Oscar Pistorius's hard-hitting defense lawyers will try Monday to rattle one of the most unflappable witnesses to testify so far against the track star accused of murdering his girlfriend, cover girl Reeva Steenkamp.

A security guard at the estate where Pistorius lived -- and Steenkamp died -- produced some of the most potentially damning testimony against the athlete on Friday as the first week of the trial came to a close.

"Security, everything is fine," Pistorius told Pieter Baba when Baba called to check reports of a shooting in the neighborhood.

But Baba could hear Pistorius was crying, the security shift supervisor said, and he knew everything was not fine.

Baba arrived at the house in time to witness Pistorius coming down the stairs carrying Steenkamp.

"I was so shocked, I couldn't think for a few moments," Baba testified.

Pistorius has pleaded not guilty to one charge of murder and a firearms charge associated with Steenkamp's killing on Valentine's Day 2013 as well as two gun indictments unrelated to her death.

Pistorius, 27, has admitted killing his 29-year-old girlfriend, but says it was a tragic error after he mistook her for an intruder.

Of the witnesses called so far, Baba was the earliest to arrive on the scene. He was still on the stand Friday and will be first up Monday, when the defense will have more time to cross-examine his story.

Gun by his bedside

Another witness who testified Friday, former Pistorius girlfriend Samantha Taylor, said their relationship ended when he cheated on her with Steenkamp.

Prosecutor Gerrie Nel asked Taylor if she was ever at Pistorius' house when he thought there was an intruder. Taylor said yes.

Taylor said Pistorius once heard something hit the bathroom window and woke her up to ask if she'd heard it, too, before taking his gun and going to investigate. Taylor said Pistorius woke her up other times when he thought he'd heard a noise.

Taylor also testified that Pistorius slept with a pistol on his bedside table or on the floor beside his prosthetic legs and once became so angry after a traffic stop that he shot a gun through the sunroof of a car.

Taylor said she met Pistorius in 2010, when she was 17, and they started dating the following year. She said they broke up twice, the second time on November 4, 2012, after he took Steenkamp to a sports banquet.

Defense attorney Barry Roux asked if Taylor admitted in two e-mails to cheating on Pistorius. Taylor says she's never admitted to cheating on him but admits she had a relationship with another man after they broke up the first time.

Roux also asked Taylor for details about the time he supposedly shot the gun out of a car sunroof, but Taylor could not remember the name of the highway or the location in South Africa.

Taylor testified that Pistorius was angry and irritated after the traffic stop, even though he was not driving. She said he joked around about firing a shot and then laughed after he fired.

Finding inconsistencies

Nel put four neighbors of Pistorius on the stand during the first week of the trial, all of whom described hearing screaming and loud bangs they thought were gunshots the night of the killing.

Roux then tried to find inconsistencies or uncertainty in their stories. The defense goal is to prove there is a reasonable doubt about the guilt of the accused.

One of the most dramatic witnesses was a neighbor, Johan Stipp, who rushed to the track star's home the night he shot Steenkamp.

Pistorius broke down in court Thursday as Stipp said he saw Steenkamp lying on the floor, her brain tissue mixed with blood and Pistorius praying for her to live.

"I remember the first thing he said when I got there was, 'I shot her, I thought she was a burglar and I shot her,' " Stipp told the court in Pretoria.

Although Stipp is a prosecution witness, his testimony may bolster the defense case, CNN legal analyst Kelly Phelps said after Thursday's gripping testimony.

Prosecutors appear to have been trying to demonstrate that Pistorius and Steenkamp had a loud argument before the shooting, suggesting it's the reason he killed her.

But the defense is proposing that what neighbors thought was Steenkamp screaming in fear for her life was in fact Pistorius when he realized what he had done.

Pistorius and at least two neighbors made phone calls to security after the shooting, allowing the defense to use phone records to establish a timeline of events.

Stipp's version of events appears to coincide with the defense case, said Phelps, who teaches law at the University of Cape Town.

Steenkamp's screams?

Stipp on Thursday described the grisly scenes when he tried to save the athlete's girlfriend after the fatal shooting.

He said he had arrived and found Steenkamp's body lying at the bottom of the stairs. Pistorius was bent over her body with his left hand over her right groin and two fingers of his right hand in her mouth as he tried to clear her airway.

Stipp tried to assist and said he found no signs of a pulse in her neck, no peripheral pulse and no breathing movements.

As the doctor described the details of her injuries to the court, Pistorius broke down with his head in his hands. He was also seen convulsing but then recovered and wiped his face and nose with a handkerchief.

The doctor was later cross-examined by defense attorney Roux, who said Steenkamp could not have been the one screaming at the time Stipp heard the cries of a woman out of her mind with fear.

Roux had consulted three specialists and the autopsy and asked Stipp: "That person after the shots would not have been able to scream. That person would be nonresponsive; does that make sense to you as a medical doctor?"

"It does," Stipp replied.

The prosecution interjected, saying Steenkamp could have screamed after the first shot. Earlier in the week, Nel, the prosecutor, reading a report from an expert, told the court that of the four bullets fired toward Steenkamp "the fourth bullet hit her in the head. She then died."

Pistorius sat impassively during the exchange between Roux and Stipp. He leaned forward, his head down in his hand, as his attorney asked Stipp if the athlete had wanted Steenkamp to live.

"He definitely wanted her to live, yes," Stipp replied. "He looked sincere to me. He was crying; there were tears on his face."

After the court later adjourned, Pistorius was in tears as his sister consoled him. She wrapped an arm around his shoulders and held him close while the room emptied out Thursday.

Trial may last three weeks

Judge Thokozile Matilda Masipa will decide whether Pistorius is innocent or guilty. South Africa does not have jury trials.

In South Africa, premeditated murder carries a mandatory life sentence, with a minimum of 25 years. Pistorius also could get five years for each gun indictment and 15 years for the firearms charge.

If he isn't convicted of premeditated murder, the sprinter could face a lesser charge of culpable homicide, a crime based on negligence, and could be looking at up to 15 years on that charge, experts said.

The trial is expected to take at least three weeks.

Pistorius and Steenkamp were a young, attractive, high-profile couple popular in South Africa's social circles.

Pistorius, whose "Blade Runner" nickname reflects the special prostheses he uses while running, won six Paralympic gold medals and became the first double-amputee runner to compete in the Olympics, in London in 2012.

Steenkamp, a model who was soon to star in a TV reality show, was on the cusp of becoming a

celebrity in her own right at the time of her death.

TANZANIA :

Tanzania: We Are Not Aware of Tazarabujumbura Plans - Mwakyembe
10 March 2014/Tanzania Daily News (Dar es Salaam)

TANZANIA is not aware of the ongoing discussions between Zambia and Burundi on plans to extend the TAZARA line to Bujumbura, the Minister for Transport, Dr Harrison Mwakyembe has said.

Dr Mwakyembe told the 'Daily News' in an interview that the matter reported by media in Zambia had not been brought in the council of ministers which is the supreme policy organ of the Tanzania Zambia Railway Authority (TAZARA). "I am not aware of that.

I am totally ignorant...I cannot comment on something I am ignorant about," he told 'Daily News' in an interview in Dar es Salaam yesterday. The 1,992-km rail line, owned by the governments of Tanzania and Zambia, runs from Dar es Salaam to the Zambian town of Kapiri Mposhi. It was constructed in the 1970s with the assistance of the Chinese government.

The Times of Zambia reported last week that plans were underway to extend TAZARA also known as the Great Uhuru Railway to Burundi through the port of Mpulungu to enhance trade between the two land-locked countries.

It quoted the Zambian Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr Wylbur Simuusa as saying that deliberations by Zambia and Burundi governments over the project had advanced and soon, a budget would be tabled to pave way for a feasibility study and subsequent construction of the railway line.

The project would be funded on a 50 per cent basis by each of the two governments and the railway line will run from the port of Mpulungu to the port of Bujumbura.

Mr Simuusa said the railway link between Zambia and Burundi would be a catalyst for enhanced trade in products such as cement and sugar.

"The governments of Zambia and Burundi are pursuing this project actively as the lack of a direct trade link has created business gaps between the two countries. "The plan is to extend the TAZARA railway line through Mpulungu to the port of Bujumbura so that goods are exported by rail," Mr Simuusa said.

It was not clear where the extension would pass from the port of Mpulungu to the port of Bujumbura. TAZARA's Head of Public Relations, Conrad Simuchile declined to comment as the discussions were on the government to government level.

"Indeed, we have seen the news item in the Times of Zambia. However, these are government to government discussions. At this stage, we are not in a position to comment as TAZARA," he told the Daily News.

The Rukwa Regional Commissioner, Engineer Stella Manyanya said they had held discussions to explore possibilities of extending the Tazara railway line to Lake Tanganyika to create a link with

the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Burundi.

However, the discussions held at the regional level, had yet to be implemented. The idea to explore possibilities of extending the railway line was aimed at exploiting opportunities to enhance trade and investments in the region and the neighbouring countries, she said.

According to her, they had discussed the idea with Chinese investors who visited the region last year and they were impressed.

KENYA :

African dream fading for Kenyan tourism

March 10 2014/By Aymeric VINCENOT/Sapa-AFP

Mombasa - On a golden beach near the coastal city of Mombasa, the mood among locals whose livelihoods depend on foreign sunseekers is gloomy as Kenya's neighbours are stealing away price-conscious tourists.

“Business is bad. There are not many tourists, I haven't sold anything for two weeks,” complained Kazungu, a 27-year-old who touts boat excursions and souvenirs on the golden sands of Nyali beach.

The beach is full of Kenyans, but few foreigners. At the Nyali International Beach Hotel, a 170-room luxury facility, a handful of tourists are at the bar while a couple are sunbathing beside the pool, but the hotel is evidently not busy.

“For the last three years it's been very low,” admitted Tsuma Ndune, a 38-year-old kitesurf instructor who works further down the beach. He said business was roughly a third of what it had been during Kenya's better days.

In Mombasa, a local cooperative making handicrafts, Akamba, has also seen its turnover halved since 2007, the year when Kenya - once seen as a beacon of stability in East Africa - took a turn for the worse and erupted into violence following disputed elections.

“Most tourists have gone since 2007 and the election unrest, business just hasn't been the same,” said Akamba's director Jackson Mwaniki, adding that the global financial crisis had combined to provide a perfect storm for Kenyan tourism.

“Most of the tourists that are coming to Kenya are saying that they have been hit... the purchasing power to them has also gone down,” he said.

The post-election violence of 2007 to 2008 resulted in a 30 percent drop in tourism over the following year before recovering three years later, according to official figures.

But business dropped in 2012 and appears to have continued its downward trend - amid security fears linked to the war in Somalia and kidnappings along the coastline by Somali gunmen, fears of renewed political violence during the 2013 elections and the Westgate shopping centre attack later in the year.

Tourism is crucial part of Kenya's economy: according to the most recent figures from 2011, the sector directly or indirectly accounted for 14 percent of gross domestic product and roughly 700 000 jobs, or 12 percent of the workforce.

For Tomas Garcia Hertz of Vintage Africa, a Kenyan tour operator offering safari and beach packages, the country has failed to adapt to a punishing international business climate.

“The overall economic situation in our overseas market is not the best. In a way we tend to forget that the economic crisis is still very much alive and many people around the world are scared about their jobs,” he said.

But he said costs and overheads in Kenya have continued to rise - such as a sales tax rise and hikes in national park entry fees - and that competition was tough, especially Tanzania where the Serengeti reserve and island of Zanzibar are cheaper alternatives to the Masai Mara and Mombasa's beaches.

“Clients worldwide are definitely price sensitive, and when you're offering them a safari adventure in Tanzania for much less money than Kenya then it obviously becomes a major criteria.”

Park entry fees in Tanzania are now lower than in Kenya - \$60 (about R600) per person per day for the Serengeti compared to \$80 for the Masai Mara, which is just across the border.

“If you look at a family of four who wish to stay in the park, you're talking about a huge amount of money even though you haven't yet even travelled to the country, you haven't stayed anywhere, you haven't eaten, you haven't been transported,” he said.

Hertz also complained the Kenyan government appeared oblivious to the troubles in the tourism sector.

“One would think that the government is very much aware that this Kenya destination needs a lot of support. I think they have just lost contact with reality on the ground and nobody is taking any measures to correct that,” he said.

“Kenya is making things difficult... to sell Kenya as a destination”. - Sapa-AFP

Governance row threatens devolution in Kenya

By BERNARD MOMANYI/capitalfm.co.ke/March 10, 2014

NAIROBI, Kenya, Mar 10 – Constitutional experts warn that attempts by members of the Upper House of Parliament in Kenya to remove Governors from key financial committees could harm efforts to introduce a system of devolved government.

They are warning that a recent move by the Senate to ignore a court order and impeach a county Governor could further undermine the rule of law.

Devolution was introduced after the March 2013 election in which Governors were elected to Kenya's 47 counties. Those appointed to this new post were granted powers designed to enhance decision-making at the local level and open up new economic opportunities across the country. (See Kenya's Devolution Squabbles)

The Constitution puts the Upper House, the Senate, in charge of overseeing this devolution process

and protecting the interests of county administrations.

But Senators have been embroiled in a long running battle with Governors, who argue that they are not accountable to the Upper House.

The latest row was triggered by a Senate decision to impeach the Governor of Embu County, Martin Wambora, on accusations that he had misappropriated public funds.

The Senate unanimously passed a motion to impeach Wambora in mid-February despite a court order blocking it from taking any action against him. Wambora successfully applied for this court order after members of the Embu County Assembly accused him of failing to spend public money in line with procurement regulations.

In a preliminary ruling on March 5, a three-judge panel ruled in Wambora's favour, but it has not yet reinstated him.

After the Senate impeached Wambora, its finance committee summoned a further nine Governors to explain questionable expenditure in their areas of responsibility.

The nine Governors obtained their own court order preventing the Senate from taking any action until the Supreme Court rules whether Senators can summon Governors to answer questions relating to finances and expenditure.

Responding to the court orders, Senators accused the Judiciary of making rulings that were not consistent with the constitution. They argued that in issuing court orders, the Judiciary had overstepped its mandate.

Kenya's president, Uhuru Kenyatta, said that it was right for Senators to hold Wambora and other Governors to account.

"I am also accountable to Parliament. Why should Governors refuse to be accountable to the senate as required by law," the President said.

Raila Odinga, the leader of the opposition Coalition for Reforms and Democracy (CORD), accused Kenyatta of failing to respect the courts and "attempting to kill devolution".

The stand-off prompted Senators to seek a role for themselves on the county finance committees, an intervention that some constitution experts say could jeopardise the devolution process.

Under Kenya's three-year-old constitution, members of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament represent the Legislative Arm of Government while Governors are part of the Executive.

Peter Kagwanja, chief executive of the Africa Policy Institute, told IWPR that the involvement of Senate and Lower-House lawmakers in county affairs would take Kenya back to an "archaic situation".

"There is oversight mechanism," Kagwanja said, underlining that Senators are not part of the Executive. For them to take a role on county committees on expenditure would thus be "a conflict of interest", he said.

"I am not saying Governors are guilty or not (of financial impropriety); I am simply saying let each institution do their work," Kagwanja added.

Other experts on the Kenyan constitution also called for a clear distinction to be maintained between the Legislative and Executive arms of government.

James Aggrey Mwamu, head of the East Africa Law Society, questioned the motives of senators who were pushing to be involved in county-level committees.

“If the Legislators want to sit in the Executive, then they must be driven by some interests. It is money,” he said.

Finance committee officials are paid additional allowances.

Mwamu said legislators should stop passing laws driven by “their interests”, as this would undermine the independence of key institutions.

He warned that besides the county administrations, the country’s judiciary was also under threat.

Charles Nyachae, chairman of the Commission for the Implementation of the Constitution, said court orders must be honoured.

“Where any person has obtained an order not to comply with such summons (by Senators), that order must be respected and should not be the basis of animus and antagonism,” Nyachae said.

While Senators are legally justified in questioning Governors about their public expenditure, Mwamu said, they should not act in breach of decisions handed down by the courts. He said their actions reflected their attitude to governance, and a view that they “don’t want to be questioned in any way”.

“They are even dragging the Judiciary into this mess; they want to interpret laws which are the work of the Judiciary,” he added, citing Article 165 of the constitution which gives the High Court powers to hear any complaints regarding the interpretation of the constitution.

Mwamu criticised a decision taken by Senators last week to cut the judiciary’s funding. On February 26, the Upper House approved a cut of Sh500 million (\$5.8 million) to the Judiciary’s annual budget.

Mwamu said the decision stemmed directly from the dispute over court orders protecting the county governors.

“When the courts issue orders that overturn (Senators’) decisions, they (Senators) resort to pass laws that affect the Judiciary operations like they did in slashing Sh500 million budgeted for the construction of courts,” Mwamu said.

He questioned the motivation behind the Senators’ actions, pointing out that they were half-way through their two-year mandate and would soon be seeking re-election. He believes they do not want the electorate to see them being undermined by the Judiciary.

“[Senators] are not driven by the desire to serve Kenyans; their time is also coming, because the constitution provides for a recall of a (lawmaker) after two years,” he said.

Meanwhile, the majority leader in parliament’s lower house, Aden Duale, tabled a motion to discuss the conduct of Governors whom he described as “rogue leaders who don’t respect the rule of law”.

Since they were elected a year ago, Governors have come under fire for being greedy and abusing their status.

“We are going to strip them of the ‘His Excellency’ titles and the use of national flags on their vehicles, because it appears they are drunk with power,” Duale said.

The chairman of the Council of Governors, Isaac Ruto, who is Governor of Bomet County, accused the government of embarking on a “smear campaign against county chief executives”.

He said the Jubilee coalition government was plotting to undermine devolution and the progress that has been made on it over the last year.

“The situation as it is shows that the Jubilee government has removed its mask and is now openly fighting devolution,” Ruto said.

ANGOLA :

Ethiopia: Dr. Tedros Meets the President of Angola

7 March 2014/allafrica.com

Foreign Minister, Dr. Tedros Adhanom on a visit to Angola met the President of the Republic of Angola, Jose Eduardo Dos Santos, on Thursday (March 6). Dr. Tedros delivered a message to the President from Prime Minister Hailemariam regarding actions that might be taken to strengthen cooperation in the field of bilateral air services between Ethiopia and Angola.

President dos Santos said he believed economic relations between Angola and Ethiopia should be developed further to match the excellent political relationship between the two countries. He told Dr. Tedros that Angola was undertaking a major airport infrastructure expansion project which would be completed in the next few years. He said that while attempts would continue to meet the request for increased air services to Angola, the completion of this project would be instrumental in accommodating the need for expanded bilateral air services with Ethiopia and other countries.

Dr. Tedros said he had been very impressed with the fast pace of development taking place in Luanda. It was a testimony to the realization of the vision of the founding father of Angola, Dr. Agostinho Neto, as well as of President Dos Santos. He added that Ethiopia was considering opening an Embassy in Luanda to facilitate and enhance bilateral cooperation. The meeting was attended by Angola's Foreign Minister and members of the Ethiopian delegation.

Prior to the meeting with President Dos Santos, Dr. Tedros and his delegation visited the Antonio Agostinho Neto Memorial Center which has a Mausoleum, monument, library and public park in honor of Dr. Agostinho Neto and one of the best known African freedom fighters of his generation.

Ethiopia and Angola have always enjoyed excellent relations on a political level, but economic relations have fallen short of their potential. The economic growth that both countries have been experiencing for the last ten years has created trading and investment opportunities that are now available for business people from both countries to develop. Air transport is a crucial element in fostering economic relations and Ethiopia attaches great importance to the development of cooperation in the field of bilateral air services.

AU/AFRICA :

UN/AFRICA :

US/AFRICA :

CANADA/AFRICA :

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

EU/AFRICA :

CHINA/AFRICA :

INDIA/AFRICA :

India, Africa asserting rightful places on global economic landscape: Anand Sharma

Source: IRIS /10-MAR-14

India and Africa are taking their rightful places in the emerging world order, said Anand Sharma, Minister of Commerce and Industry, Government of India. He said that the 21st century will be the century of India, Asia and Africa.

Sharma said the India-Africa partnership is distinct and different, exemplifying the spirit of South-South Cooperation. He urged the present generation to revisit the pages of history to remind itself of the greater goals that drive the India-Africa partnership. India has committed over USD 10 billion to Africa for infrastructural and development projects since the holding of the first and second India

Africa Forum Summit meetings in 2008 and 2011, and is partnering in establishing 70 pan-African and regional institutions across Africa.

Sharma cited agriculture and food security, healthcare and life sciences, infrastructure, energy and energy security, mining, and SME development as the priority areas for India-Africa partnerships. He made a special mention of the Buyers Credit that was introduced by his ministry for supporting Indian companies' participation in African infrastructure projects.

Speaking about India's technological progress, Sharma said that India is now a global leader in frugal innovation and a major R&D hub for Fortune 500 companies.

Referring to India's key contributions to Africa's healthcare sector, he said that India will stay committed to making available new generation life science products to Africa. India is also a world leader in the production of finished generics.

Rt Hon Motsoahae Thomas Thabane, Prime Minister of The Kingdom of Lesotho, said that India's development model is most appropriate to African economies. He cited education and training, science and technology, infrastructure development, and agriculture and food security as areas that offer immense scope for India-Africa partnerships.

Thabane said that while the concessional lines of credit extended by the Government of India to Africa have played a key role in Africa's development, there is a need for innovative ways to fully utilize the lines of credit to meet Africa's future development needs.

Thabane also said the lines of credit should be structured according to the development stage of each recipient country, and he urged India to increase the grant element and extend the repayment period.

Yaduvendra Mathur, chairman & managing director, Export-Import Bank of India, said, that India's role in Africa's capacity building will increasingly focus on areas like agriculture, private sector development, infrastructure development and manufacturing growth.

Mathur said that about USD 5 billion worth of projects have been planned under the Buyers Credit that was introduced by the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India. He also said that EXIM Bank of India is in dialogue with the African Development Bank for the sharing of project development expertise.

India's revenues from Africa can grow four times: McKinsey
IANS /2014-03-10

New Delhi, March 10 (IANS) — India can aspire to quadruple its revenues from Africa to \$160 billion by 2025 by developing its presence in sectors where it has a unique value proposition in areas such as IT, agriculture, infrastructure, pharmaceuticals and consumer goods, says a McKinsey report released Monday.

“We believe India's strengths and experience of operating in similar capital constrained conditions will be of great value to Africa. Africa needs constructive foreign investment and holds the promise of long-term business for India,” said Noel Tata, chairman of CII's Africa Committee, while releasing the report.

India can aspire to capture almost 7 percent of the IT services market, 5 percent of the FMCG

space, 10 percent of the power sector, and 2-5 percent of the agri-allied services business in Africa, says the report — “Joining Hands to Unlock Africa’s Potential A New Indian Industry-led Approach to Africa”, released at CII’s India-Africa Conclave.

But the report pointed out that to be a true solutions partner, Indian industry needs to continually engage with governments and businesses, proactively surface opportunities through sector and country studies, build an open consortia of interested companies in advance and use funding from low cost countries (like Japan) for large projects where Indian cost of funds is a disadvantage.

Barnik Chitran Maitra, partner at McKinsey, said: “In a partnership of equals, Indian industry could build relationships with African governments and businesses, identify opportunities through sector and country studies, develop an open consortium of interested companies in advance and ensure cost-efficiency through funding from low-cost countries like Japan for large projects.”

The report notes that as African nations continue to grow, they need constructive foreign investment. Indian industry, as a solutions-partner to African nations, could greatly contribute to their development – creating employment, spearheading talent and skill development, and developing infrastructure.

To do so, India can leverage its strengths, such as the experience of setting up successful distribution for fragmented consumer markets, and the entrepreneurial mindset required to navigate ambiguity. IT services, consumer goods, pharmaceuticals, automotive, agriculture and infrastructure are sectors where African nations’ opportunity can be complemented by the Indian industry’s strength.

The report said Africa poses multiple challenges to Indian companies looking to invest there. Challenges in Africa are inherent to any emerging market and include a fragmented opportunity with unfamiliar risks, infrastructure bottlenecks, lack of talent and a nascent financial services sector.

Apart from the sector specific initiatives, Indian companies will need to adopt 10 common imperatives identified by studying successful and unsuccessful MNC businesses in Africa:

- Prioritise early – Identify priority sectors and countries quickly and set up strong business organisations there

- Go granular – Understand local nuances and adapt business models accordingly. Africa is one continent with 55 different countries, each with its own culture, customs and behaviours

- Expect to iterate – Customise approach based on continuous learning. There are no fixed answers to succeed in Africa; hence, companies should be ready for initial disappointments and tune their business model accordingly

- Choose distribution channels carefully – Understand and control the route to market for success in such a fragmented geography. This is a challenge which Indian companies have mastered on the home turf, and must now face in a geographically larger context

- Build brands aggressively – In Africa, brands are considered to be the clinchers in making purchase decisions. Hence, brand building, especially in the consumer goods sector, is critical.

- Deliver value across price segments – Innovate to meet the entire range of needs as the landscape is still open for brands and whole categories. In the consumer goods sector, Indian companies can

meet this challenge with their wide product ranges

-Think long term – Business in Africa cannot be built quarter-to-quarter-companies must be willing to invest for the long term, spend effort on setting up the business' roots in the country, and only then achieve success.

-Involve locals and insiders as partners – This is necessary to get local insights, benefit from regulatory know-how and develop relationships. The ultimate aim must be to become the insider

-Partner with local governments – Governments in most African nations play an important role in business development, and partnering with them is crucial to creating opportunities.

-Invest in building local talent – Given the relative lack of local talent, developing talent will play a critical part in scaling up any business, and must be invested in proactively.

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