



(L'opposition avait appelé à manifester à Conakry, ainsi que dans plusieurs villes de l'intérieur du pays, ce jeudi 23 avril, pour contester le calendrier électoral. Elle exige en effet que les élections communales se tiennent avant le scrutin présidentiel prévu en octobre prochain.)

BURUNDI :

RWANDA :

Regional linkages top Rwanda's economic agenda

April 24, 2015/Katrina Manson/ft.com

Nakumatt, east Africa's biggest supermarket chain, had high hopes when, in 2011, it opened Rwanda's largest store in Kigali, the capital. Only a thousand shoppers visit each day, however, about two-thirds short of the target, says country manager Adan Ramata.

"We still have a small challenge in the middle class," says Mr Ramata. Nakumatt is not the only retailer stymied by the lack of a mass consumer market. Sulfo Rwanda Industries, the country's oldest and biggest domestic manufacturer with 700 workers, say its efforts to introduce skincare ranges for "more sophisticated" consumers in the past year have flopped.

"We are limited by people who want cheap products, they face inflation and have little money," says Hariharan Dharmarajan, managing director.

The IMF forecasts 6.5 per cent growth this year. Expected inflation of 3.5 per cent for 2015 is low and Rwanda aims to be a middle-income country by 2020. For now, rising domestic consumption is

driven by government spending funded by donors on infrastructure.

With a total market of only 12m people, Rwanda is pushing the agenda for integration across the East African Community, the regional trade block. “For us as a landlocked country, we see regional integration as very, very crucial,” says Claver Gatete, finance minister. “That’s why we are talking about a railway from Mombasa all the way through Uganda to here.” Rwanda is due to pay \$1.2bn of the railway’s \$13.8bn cost, but is yet to work out how.

“We have been working on how to bring in the private sector,” says Mr Gatete. The government wants it to fund at least a third of the Rwanda portion.

Rwanda has worked to cut the costs of transporting imports 1,000km from the east African coast. It has delivered reliable well-paved roads and championed smoothing out customs clearance procedures with a new region-wide single-entry system. This has reduced non-tariff barriers at checkpoints, where kickbacks were previously a feature.

Importers and retailers in Rwanda testify that goods now arrive from port to shelf within four days, compared with more than two weeks previously. “Delays have come down — now there are no formalities at the border. It has really helped us,” says Mr Dharmarajan. “Now we feel we are linked, not landlocked. It’s a good relief.”

Despite the improvements, Rwanda still suffers a cruel squeeze on its purchasing power, which is much weaker than in the east African economic hub, Kenya. Shop prices in Rwanda tend to be at least 10 per cent higher than in Kenyan stores. A variety of factors related to long-distance transport are the cause.

“We are talking about logistics, we are talking about insurance, we are talking about considering the damages, we are talking about the shelf life,” says Nakumatt’s Mr Ramata.

John Rwangombwa, central bank governor, says things are set to improve as the economy emerges from the low growth of 2013. Donors held back aid at the time over allegations that Rwanda was backing rebels in neighbouring eastern Congo.

“The economy is doing well since 2014 and we are going back to where we were before 2012,” he says. He points not only to improving growth but also indicators such as a reduction in non-performing loans (from a 7.2 per cent recent high in 2013 to a 2015 target of 5 per cent).

Despite its setbacks, Nakumatt, which has 300 employees at its two Rwandan stores, plans to open two new outlets in the capital, including in August a 24-hour shop near the airport with a gymnasium on top of it. It aims to open its first stores outside Kigali in two years’ time.

Mr Rwangombwa says the government is lobbying banks to bring down high lending rates, although bank loans to the private sector did rise 38 per cent last year. The key challenge, he adds, remains how to boost exports to deliver greater dollar flow

Kigali denies Rwandan troops crossed into DRC

by: APA/date : April 23, 2015

The government in Kigali has vehemently dismissed reports that its troops had crossed into the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and wounded a Congolese soldier. The Congolese government claimed Rwandan troops crossed into eastern DRC on Wednesday without any prior

notice and wounded a local soldier.

Congolese government spokesman Lambert Mende even went as far as saying that its soldiers fired warning shots as Rwandan troops entered Rutshuru territory in Congo's eastern province of North Kivu.

“But the Rwandan troops responded by wounding one of our troops” he said.

Rwanda's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, Olivier Nduhugirehe, came out strong on twitter on Thursday, blaming DRC for “always blaming Rwanda for all its problems”.

“This is baloney, as usual. It seems that some in the DRC can't live a single year without blaming Rwanda,” Nduhugirehe complained.

However, North Kivu governor, Julien Paluku insisted that Rwandan troops had crossed the border on Wednesday afternoon, adding that a team from the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region was being deployed to investigate the incident.

Congo's army has been conducting military operations since February against the FDLR, a Rwandan Hutu rebel group but Kigali has continuously blamed Kinshasa and the United Nations for allegedly backing the militia, which is blacklisted by the United States as a terrorist group.

The new development is set to reignite tension between the two countries which purportedly culminated in reciprocal support for rebel groups that are opposed to each other's government in the past.

RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

SOUTH AFRICA :

Discrimination a daily struggle for immigrants in S.Africa

AFP/April 24, 2015

Johannesburg (AFP) - Immigrants fleeing a wave of deadly xenophobic violence in South Africa have described how fear drove them to try to hide their nationalities even before the attacks began.

"When we're taking taxis, we switch off our phones and avoid speaking in our mother tongues," said Congolese hairdresser Aimee Bebedi, who is based in the eastern port city of Durban, where the violence erupted three weeks ago.

"At the moment we're being attacked by our Zulu brothers, but even before that, if you went to the hospital, for example, and tried to explain yourself in English, you were mistreated," she said.

Foreigners from other parts of Africa living and working in South Africa's poor townships are called 'kwerekwere', a slur mocking their languages and accents.

At least seven people have died in the violence and thousands have been forced to flee their homes. Many have returned to their own countries -- such as Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mozambique -- but others are sheltering in special camps.

There, they are trying to decide whether it is safe to return to their lives in a country where they can feel unwelcome even at the best of times.

"They tell us the violence is over, but I don't know," said Patrick, a Congolese asylum seeker who fled to Johannesburg after the attacks flared up in Durban.

"It's calm now because the police are there, but what about when they leave?"

Patrick is one of about 50 displaced foreigners staying in tents in a small charity-run camp in Johannesburg's Mayfair suburb.

The attacks have been blamed largely on a speech by Zulu king Goodwill Zwelithini, who last month accused foreigners of causing South Africa's high crime rate.

But it's a vilification that immigrants face on a daily basis, said Braam Hanekom, director of Passop (People against Suffering, Oppression and Poverty), a Cape Town charity that supports asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants.

"That demonisation goes a long way to creating an environment where such senseless targeted attacks occur," he said.

- 'You don't belong here' -

People may only become aware of xenophobia when they see deaths splashed across the newspapers, but it constantly simmers below the surface, said Trish Erasmus, head of the Lawyers for Human Rights' refugee and migrant programme.

Outside Erasmus' office, complainants lined up: some turned away from hospitals because of their nationalities, others from schools or police stations, and others by immigration officials who were meant to help process their refugee applications.

"Accessing documentation for foreign people is really hampered by a number of factors outside of their control," said Erasmus.

"The system is plagued with backlogs and serious corruption and an extremely inefficient refugee status determination procedure."

Without documents, access to basic services and work becomes a daily struggle.

But the number of tolerant people in South Africa far outnumbers those who have a hatred of foreigners, said Abdirikaz Ali Osman, secretary general of the Somali Community Board of South Africa.

A refugee who fled his country by boat in 2007 and who is now based in an area of Johannesburg nicknamed Little Mogadishu, he said his experiences in South Africa had been largely positive.

But he has not escaped the insult directed at his countrymen, many of whom own small shops in the townships: "You don't belong here."

Maybe the locals have a point, he said.

"Foreigners come here and open shops and then barricade themselves inside their shops, believing they will be killed," he said.

"There's a language barrier and they don't integrate themselves into their new communities. We need to change that."

Osman's view that most South Africans do not hate foreigners has been borne out by demonstrations against xenophobia in cities across the country.

In Johannesburg on Thursday, several thousand people marched to protest against the attacks, which have revived memories of xenophobic bloodshed in 2008, when 62 people were killed.

But at the displaced persons camp in the city, Patrick leaned forward, his elbows on his knees, his eyes wide.

"Do you believe it's really over?" he asked. "What must we do?"

Poultry state senators turn up heat on South Africa

Nicole Gaudiano, News Journal Washington Bureau/delawareonline.com/April 23, 2015

WASHINGTON – U.S. senators from poultry states are ramping up pressure on South Africa to stop imposing duties that have effectively blocked U.S. producers from a growing market.

The Senate Finance Committee this week passed a 10-year reauthorization of the African Growth and Opportunity Act – a trade agreement between the U.S. and sub-Saharan African countries – with an amendment designed to help open up the South African market to U.S. poultry producers.

The amendment by Sen. Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., would require the United States to review South Africa's policies within 30 days of enacting the law. The AGOA reauthorization would allow the United States to suspend, limit or withdraw benefits to noncompliant countries. Current law provides only for complete termination of benefits, a rarely invoked option.

"I believe passionately in AGOA's value and support its long-term renewal, but I believe it unfair and inappropriate that the country that benefits from the law the most – South Africa – continues to maintain unreasonable tariffs on American poultry," said Isakson, who co-chairs the Senate Chicken Caucus with Sen. Chris Coons., D-Del.

On Thursday, Isakson and Coons discussed other possible action against South Africa during a Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee hearing on the law.

Coons said it's likely that when the Senate takes up the AGOA reauthorization, lawmakers will debate another measure that would limit the reauthorization to three years for South Africa.

"It is my real hope that we can resolve this in a positive way," Coons said. "But it is difficult for me to go home and say that I'm giving duty-free, quota-free access to the markets of the United States when there isn't a comparable, fair attitude on the part of the most developed economy in the market."

Isakson said Thursday that during the Finance Committee meeting he withdrew an amendment calling for a three-year reauthorization for South Africa because it's a "sledgehammer." South Africa wants at least a 15-year renewal.

"I don't like to use sledgehammers, but I also don't think the South Africans should take the withdrawal of that amendment as any easing of our pressure to see to it that we have fair and equitable access to the markets of South Africa," Isakson said.

Sen. Tom Carper, D-Del., a Senate Finance Committee member, co-sponsored the Isakson amendment. Poultry is the top agriculture product in Delaware and Maryland.

Since 2000, the Republic of South Africa has subjected U.S. bone-in poultry to "anti-dumping" duties, penalties that countries impose on imports they believe are priced suspiciously low. Lack of access to the market has cost the U.S. industry millions of dollars.

South African officials have said their policy is consistent with World Trade Organization legal requirements and that U.S. and South African industry and government officials are discussing possible solutions.

A spokesman for the South African Department of Trade and Industry did not have an immediate response to Wednesday's committee vote.

National Chicken Council President Mike Brown praised the Isakson measure and said South Africa's "unfair and protectionist practices" must be addressed before Congress extends AGOA.

"It makes no sense for the United States to give special preferences to countries that treat our trade unfairly," Brown said.

Zimbabweans fleeing South Africa attacks face bleak future

23/04/2015/by AFP

ZIMBABWEAN migrants who fled a wave of anti-foreigner violence in neighbouring South Africa arrived home Wednesday to the same bleak economic prospects that sent them abroad in the first place.

Visibly dejected as they stepped out of buses at Harare's main terminus, young working men and women with babies on their backs said their dreams had been destroyed by the attacks which killed seven people and displaced thousands.

"I don't know what to do next," said Wonder Nyamutowa, who worked as a construction worker in Durban.

"I went to South Africa after being retrenched in 2012. I am a breadwinner and I could manage to send money back to my family but I won't go back."

Nyamutowa was among hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans who migrated to neighbouring South Africa when their country's economy went into free fall in the aftermath of a campaign of violent land invasions in the early 2000s.

'Ungrateful neighbour'

Thirty-year-old Wesley Jokonya did not even get a taste of the better life that so many of his compatriots seek 'down south' - he was forced to flee before finding work.

"I had been in Durban for one-and-a-half months looking for a job," he said.

"I had not yet found a job when the trouble started. Jobs are not easy to come by here [in Zimbabwe]. I don't know where to start."

Jokonya made his reluctant journey home on one of the first two buses carrying 85 people from South Africa. Four other buses crossed the border at the same time, and more were expected.

The transport was provided by the government and the International Organisation for Migration. The returnees received food packs containing beans, cooking oil and maize meal as well as blankets.

A small crowd of angry Zimbabweans who had gathered at the bus depot cursed South Africa as an "ungrateful neighbour" as they comforted their compatriots.

'Shock and disgust'

Zimbabwe hosted South African exiles during the struggle to end the racist apartheid regime, which formally ended with South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994.

"It's sad when a neighbour you once helped in a time of need turns against you," said Gift Mbare, a local community leader.

Migrants from several African countries have been targeted in a wave of xenophobic violence that started in Durban three weeks ago and then spread to the commercial capital Johannesburg.

At least seven people have been killed in attacks by mobs accusing immigrants of stealing their jobs.

President Robert Mugabe has expressed "shock and disgust" at the attacks.

An estimated one million Zimbabweans live in South Africa, making them the biggest community of foreign nationals in the country.

Hundreds of Malawians and Mozambicans have also returned home over the attacks.

TANZANIA :

KENYA :

Killer Kenyan cow caught feeding on farmer's sheep

By Ben Hooper/upi.com/April 23, 2015

Charles Mamboleo and Consepta Kerubo said the cow has been goring sheep to death and feeding on the remains.

MITI MINGI VILLAGE, Kenya, April 23 (UPI) -- A Kenyan family said their cow has developed a habit of killing and eating sheep and they fear it could move on to attacking humans.

Charles Mamboleo of Miti Mingi Village in Nakuru County said he woke up recently to discover the cow had gored a sheep to death and was feeding on the animal's meat.

Mamboleo said increasing the cow's rations of food and water did not quench its bloodthirst.

"After the first incident, we thought the cow was starving, so we increased the supply of fodder and water, but it still continued chasing after sheep," Mamboleo told The Daily Nation.

Mamboleo's wife, Consepta Kerubo, said she feared the cow could move on to seeing the couple's young children as a food source.

Albert Kabugi, an agricultural expert, said the cow may have turned carnivore because it is missing the nutrients and minerals normally found in green grass, which has become scarce as a result of recent drought.

"The dry season, which has just ended, has seen most animals lack minerals found in green grass," he said.

Kabugi said the cow was the first he knows of to develop a taste for live meat.

Kenya sacks heads of graft probe

avril 24 2015/AFP

NAIROBI — Kenya's two top anticorruption officials were suspended on Thursday following a bitter standoff with parliament and after they alleged widespread graft.

President Uhuru Kenyatta removed the chairman and deputy chairwoman of the Ethics and Anticorruption Commission after MPs voted to sanction the pair, accusing them of incompetence and abuse of office.

The crisis comes less than a month after dozens of politicians and public servants were named in a commission report that gave a damning indictment of the scale of corruption.

A total of 175 people were named, including five cabinet ministers, 13 governors and a host of public servants, MPs and judiciary members.

Mr Kenyatta had also ordered those named to step aside while they were being investigated.

Presidential spokesman Manoah Esipisu said the suspension of the commission's bosses "in no way

hinders" the body's work.

Earlier this month the commission's deputy chairwoman, Irene Keino, claimed a "clique" was trying to oust her and break up the body.

The commission's latest report, released last month, described the ministry of lands as "bedevilled with rampant corruption" and run by a "cartel" linked to minister Charity Ngilu.

James Orengo, her predecessor, is under investigation for alleged involvement in irregular land deals.

Michael Kamau, transport and infrastructure minister, is accused of irregularly awarding contracts and inflating the cost of a new railway. Other ministers who have stepped aside pending investigation are Felix Koskei, agriculture minister, labour minister Samuel Kazungu Kambi and energy minister Davis Chirchir.

ANGOLA :

AU/AFRICA :

Did Indonesia Revive the Asia-Africa Strategic Partnership?

By Prashanth Parameswaran/thediplomat.com/April 24, 2015

A look at what the 60th Asian-African Conference actually achieved.

The rhetoric coming out of the 60th Commemorative Asian-African Conference that just concluded in Indonesia has grabbed the headlines over the past few days, including calls for a new economic order as well as different visions for growth. "This is [the] revival voice of Asian-African nations that cannot be replaced by anyone," Indonesian president Joko "Jokowi" Widodo boldly declared before closing the conference, sixty years after the historic Bandung Conference was held in the midst of the Cold War.

But what exactly did the conference achieve? Did the host Indonesia as well as other attending states succeed in reviving cooperation between African and Asian nations as they had intended, and what did the shape of that cooperation look like? The conference proceedings, as well as several documents that were produced, can help us begin to answer these questions. Taken together, they reflect both the general aspirations these states had as well as the specific areas for political, economic and socio-cultural cooperation under the theme of "Strengthening South-South Cooperation to Promote World Peace and Prosperity."

In terms of general aspirations, on the surface these did include priorities that expressed dissatisfaction with the current world order that made the headlines, including a call for multilateral institutions to be more inclusive and a separate declaration issued on the Palestine issue. But a main objective of the "Declaration on Reinvigorating the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership" – building off of the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership (NAASP) issued a decade ago – was a commitment to a "stronger, more inclusive and sustainable" NAASP. The "inclusive" part of that

tagline, the declaration states, encourages the active involvement of development partners and other related stakeholders beyond just the countries of the South, and specifically notes that South-South cooperation is a “complement to, and not a substitute for” North-South development cooperation. While one could dispute how much this rhetoric matches reality, this is nonetheless worth stating because some accounts have only stressed the less inclusive parts of the NAASP.

Moving on to specific areas for cooperation, the attending states seemed to at least be attentive to potential criticism that the conference would yield little in the way of specifics. The Declaration notes that participating states are committed to “implementing ambitious goals and practical initiatives,” and calls on Ministers and officials to take the necessary actions on the eight areas of cooperation recommended at a previous NAASP Senior Officials Meeting in Jakarta in 2009, namely: counterterrorism; combating transnational organized crimes; food security; energy security; small and medium enterprises; tourism; the Asian-African Development University Network; gender equality and women empowerment. Some of these are spelt out in greater detail in later parts of the Declaration.

Other areas are also mentioned that deserve note. These include climate change, infrastructure development, democracy and good governance, and peacekeeping center cooperation, particularly since more than 87% of UN peacekeeping personnel in the field come from Asian-African countries. Some of these proposed areas clearly have Indonesia’s imprint on them, such as the paragraph on the blue economy and maritime-based economy in line with Jokowi’s global maritime axis (which I have written about extensively, including here, here and here) as well as the Indian Ocean in the wake of Jakarta’s chairmanship of the Indian Ocean Rim Association from 2015 to 2017.

Aside from these general aspirations and specific areas of cooperation, there was also attention given to structuring or improving the overall architecture of interactions. Indeed, one section of the Declaration says that the participating states will revitalize the NAASP by “improving its operational framework” through various means. Much of this seems to get at the problem of how to sustain cooperation through the next few years through meetings at various levels in between the Commemorative Asian-African Summits held every ten years. Indonesia also decided to establish an Asian-African Center in Indonesia that would serve as the institutional support base of the NAASP.

Another stride made was the convening of the Asia-Africa Business Summit to strengthen economic ties between these countries, which are actually still far from impressive sixty years after the Bandung Conference. As Jokowi himself admitted at his keynote speech at that summit, even though these countries together account for about 75% of the world’s population and 30% of global GDP, trade and investment had “yet to reflect their true potential.” South African Vice President Cyril Ramaphosa also offered some sobering numbers, with Asia accounting for only 26 percent of trade flow in Africa, and more than three-quarter of that trade coming in the form of oil, gas and metals. This seemed to be a concern for other countries too, as the economic section of the “Bandung Message 2015” document issued itself noted that “Asian-African intra-regional trade and investment has yet to reach its full potential.” While these figures suggest that there is a long way to go before achieving success in this realm, Indonesia and other states deserve credit for attempting to make necessary improvements.

It is still too early to tell whether the various pledges adopted at this conference will be carried out effectively and what that will mean for the state of the NAASP. But despite the limitations often cited with respect to this large and diverse gathering – such as the tendency for vague declarations, a significant number of no-shows, as well as the commitment made to human rights in spite of the inclusion of dictatorships like Zimbabwe – participating states as well as Indonesia as the host

nation seemed cognizant about these challenges and sincere about addressing some of them to the extent possible. In that sense, even if some might argue Jakarta and others did not 'revive' or 'reinvigorate' the NAASP to the extent that they could have, they have at least tried to institute a few reforms and set out some specific priorities to improve how they advance their strategic partnership in the coming years.

Guinée: des manifestations contre le calendrier électoral font un mort

Par RFI /24-04-2015

L'opposition avait appelé à manifester à Conakry, ainsi que dans plusieurs villes de l'intérieur du pays, ce jeudi 23 avril, pour contester le calendrier électoral. Elle exige en effet que les élections communales se tiennent avant le scrutin présidentiel prévu en octobre prochain. Mais jeudi soir, l'opposition déplore l'usage de la force par les autorités pour empêcher ce rassemblement qu'elle juge « pacifique ». Une manifestation dans la ville de Labé a fait un mort.

Selon des témoins, les commerces étaient fermés ce jeudi. Les forces de l'ordre étaient déployées dans plusieurs carrefours de la capitale. Il n'y a pas eu de rassemblement massif en un point, mais dans plusieurs communes de Conakry. Les leaders de l'opposition affirment avoir été empêchés de participer à ce rassemblement, leur domicile étant, selon eux, « sous haute surveillance par les forces de l'ordre ».

Les incidents les plus significatifs ont été constatés à Labé, où selon des témoins, un militant de 28 ans serait mort au cours d'affrontements avec les forces de l'ordre, qui auraient fait usage de leurs matraques. Une source hospitalière affirme que ce jeune homme est « décédé des suites de coups reçus de manière répétée ».

Au total, l'opposition déplore une trentaine de militants interpellés et une quinzaine de personnes blessées par balle. De son côté, le conseiller spécial à la présidence, Rachid Ndiaye, souligne que l'opposition a mené ces manifestations sans autorisation et conteste leur ampleur. « Les forces de l'ordre ont, explique-t-il, pris des mesures techniques pour prévenir contre des actes de violence. » Concernant le bilan humain, le gouvernement parle de six personnes blessées, dont des forces de sécurité. Ces dernières, assure le conseiller spécial à la présidence, « n'utilisent pas des balles contre les populations ».

Désaccord sur la date de l'élection présidentielle

L'opposition était donc dans la rue car elle conteste le calendrier électoral : elle souhaite que les élections communales se tiennent avant la présidentielle programmée pour octobre prochain. Cellou Dalein Diallo, le leader de l'Union des Forces démocratiques de Guinée (l'UFDG) est ravi de la mobilisation : « Toute la Guinée s'est mobilisée. Là où les citoyens ont pu marcher, ils ont fait une marche. Là où ils n'ont pas pu le faire en raison de la présence massive des forces de l'ordre, de la répression qui les attendait, ils ont fait de la journée une ville morte. »

Cellou Dalein Diallo rappelle néanmoins la nécessité pour le gouvernement de changer son calendrier électoral : « Nous devons travailler pour le respect des lois, pour le respect des échéances surtout quand il y a un accord politique ou un code électoral, explique. Et la Constitution qui précise les dates auxquelles ces élections doivent être organisées, il faut qu'on les respecte. Lorsque vous savez que tous les élus locaux, les mandats sont échus depuis décembre 2010. Alpha Condé a systématiquement refusé d'organiser des élections, mais en plus il a remplacé tout le monde par des hommes de son parti. Donc nous sommes dans une inégalité absolue. »

Le pouvoir rejette toute contestation

Pour le gouvernement guinéen, la marche de l'opposition est un échec : dans l'ensemble des villes et points de rassemblements où l'opposition a tenté de mobiliser ses militants, les forces de l'ordre étaient présentes pour sécuriser les lieux. Quant aux requêtes de l'opposition, Rachid Ndiaye, le conseiller spécial du président Alpha Condé estime que le calendrier électoral ne changera pas, dans la mesure où il est fixé par un organisme indépendant : « Pour le calendrier électoral, je ne sais pas sur quelle base peut se faire la contestation, parce que d'abord, premièrement, le calendrier électoral n'est pas fixé par le gouvernement, mais par une Commission nationale indépendante (Céni), composée sur la base paritaire. Dans cette commission, il y a à la fois dix membres de l'opposition et dix membres de la majorité politique. »

Et de rajouter : « En même temps, la contestation porte sur la tenue de l'élection présidentielle à partir du programme indiqué par la Céni. L'organisation de l'élection présidentielle relève de la Constitution donc on ne peut pas à la fois dire que l'on participe à des institutions et qu'en même temps on ne reconnaît pas leur légitimité. » De son côté, le président guinéen, Alpha Condé a cette semaine rejeté tout changement de date de la présidentielle. L'opposition entend se mobiliser de nouveau et lancer des recours auprès de la Cédéao.

ECOWAS Parliament Condemns Xenophobic Attacks In South Africa

Jonathan Nda-Isaiah, Tunde Oguntola/leadership.ng/Apr 24, 2015

The Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS Parliament, has condemned in strong terms the xenophobic attacks in South Africa, describing it as barbaric and un-African.

The Parliament spoke through its Speaker, Senator Ike Ekweremadu yesterday.

The Speaker who also doubles as the Deputy President of the Nigerian Senate, said the attacks were criminal disrespect for the brotherhood Africans share and therefore a gruesome story, which should never have been heard among the peoples of the continent.

Continuing, Senator Ekweremadu said: "I received the news of the xenophobic attacks in the Republic of South Africa with rude shock and sadness. It is a tale of shame and betrayal that has no root in our ways of life as Africans and is certainly in dissonance with the 21st Century realities where globalization, international treaties and charters on human rights and economic integration hold sway.

"The attacks are both barbaric and violate those things that hold us together as members of the African Union. They are a banal demonstration of ungratefulness for the collective sacrifices by the African people to end apartheid in South Africa.

Senator Ekweremadu, therefore, called on the Government of South Africa to take concrete steps to end what he termed "man's inhumanity to fellow man".

"Those involved in this criminality must be fished out and punished accordingly to deter others and to demonstrate in practical terms that Africa cannot afford to dismantle one form of apartheid only to replace it with yet another brand of the same or worse evil", he emphasised.

Root out electoral graft, Buhari

24 Apr 2015/Sam van der Staak & Sam Jones/mg.co.za

His promise to tackle corruption in Nigeria should begin with political party funding.

Early this month, Muhammadu Buhari was elected Nigeria's new president on the twin promise of increasing security and lowering corruption.

With the world focused on countering terrorism, Buhari now has to show that he can also deliver quickly on rooting out political corruption.

Cleaning up political party financing would be a good start. This will show voters that he is determined to take on high-level political interests and lead by example.

Although Boko Haram led the news on Nigeria's recent elections, it was really money that dominated the polls. Although no one knows exactly how much was spent, indications are that media expenditure alone was \$25-million. Expenditure on rallies, hand-outs, bribes and buying votes have been said to be many times that amount.

Nigeria has a history of high election spending. It has been argued that the 2011 election campaign spending explains the 58% increase in car imports just before the elections. The Central Bank of Nigeria expressed fears at the time that the campaign would lead to significant inflationary pressures.

Things were hardly different in this year's polls. Last September, the Central Bank suspected that spiralling inflation was being exacerbated by politicians amassing war chests in United States dollars. A soaring demand for dollars linked to the election was reported by moneychangers in Abuja and Lagos.

Formally, campaign money goes on posters, media ads and attending rallies. In reality, a lot goes on buying votes. Envelopes of cash distributed to voters during the campaign is a common phenomenon, as well as hand-outs, such as bags of rice. Bribes to police and electoral officials have also been reported.

A lot of money is spent earlier on, when no one is looking.

Months before the campaign, during the candidate nomination phase, prospective candidates need to pay large sums of money to secure a party's backing. To enter the 2015 presidential race, the nomination fee for the All Progressives Congress (APC) was \$136 000, and the losing PDP charged \$110 000.

The civil society group, Enough is Enough Nigeria, estimated that just the nomination to run for a PDP governor was \$54 000 and for the APC \$27 000. The price for contesting a senate seat ranged from \$15 000 to \$20 000 and the House of Representatives about \$10 000.

After the exorbitant nomination fees have been paid, candidates have to spend thousands more on securing the vote of party delegates during the party primaries. Only after that the election campaign begins.

To make such investments, running in elections becomes either limited to the rich or to those willing to take out loans that can be recovered once elected, often through the spoils of office.

The increasing influence of money in elections is a pervasive trend around Africa. Economies from

Namibia to Uganda and from Ghana to Kenya suddenly pick up speed and experience additional inflation as a result of high campaign spending. Primaries are often the main battleground, since getting a party ticket for an uncontested “safe seat” is the surest way to get into Parliament.

Anonymous donations

In about half of African countries anonymous donations are legally allowed, which opens doors for black money to be laundered. Nigeria is no exception.

The trend is apparent in the world’s emerging economies. India, Brazil, South Africa and Mexico experience opaque electoral spending, and political corruption – one of the main threats to stable governance – is leading to middle-class revolts in many Brics (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) countries. In recent months, Brazilians have participated in massive anticorruption street protests, and India has voted in a party that has a strong anticorruption agenda.

Buhari would be wise to heed this.

In cleaning up politics, he should start by strengthening the laws that regulate money in elections. He should quickly introduce the most obvious bans, such as one on anonymous donations to candidates and a ban on donations from government-owned companies.

Nigeria furthermore needs to tackle existing donation loopholes. Its \$5,000 donation limit for candidates should also be applied to political parties. If not, candidates can spend unlimited amounts, as long as they receive it through the party. A similar loophole needs to be closed by introducing spending limits on parties and candidates.

Second, to ensure transparency, reporting on income and expenditure should start earlier, cover more and be submitted sooner.

Early campaigning this year started with expensive advertising by support groups, similar to the notorious superpolitical action campaigns in the United States. These purportedly independent action groups allow candidates to sidestep the rules on spending and reporting of campaign funds. Reporting should, therefore, include spending by third parties and begin earlier.

Nigeria’s political parties should also hand in their audited income and expenditure reports sooner. Currently parties can do so six months after the elections, when it can become politically impossible to fine or imprison vested incumbents.

All this will need to happen early in the life of the new National Assembly, because its members will find it increasingly difficult to adopt reforms the closer they get to the 2019 elections.

Third, Buhari should give Nigeria’s electoral commission the teeth to enforce strong regulations and apply sanctions. In this year’s elections, as in previous ones, the existing regulations regarding campaign funding were widely ignored by parties and candidates and weakly enforced by the under-resourced electoral commission.

Political will needed

Nigeria is not alone in this respect. The International Institute for Democracy and International Assistance’s 2014 handbook on political finance found that the gap between regulations and enforcement is Africa’s top priority.

Last, all meaningful reform starts with political will. This has to come from the top.

Buhari won elections with the promise to increase transparency and fight corruption. He would do well to start reforming his country's political spending practices from the outset. Doing so would mean honouring the trust that Nigerians gave their new president to fight corruption with as much fervour as his fight against terrorism.

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UN/AFRICA :

Asia, Africa leaders call for U.N. Security Council reform

Kyodo/japantimes.co.jp/Apr 24, 2015

JAKARTA – Asian and African leaders on Thursday called for “a comprehensive reform” of the U.N. Security Council so it can better represent the realities of the international community in the 21st century.

“We call for continued efforts to reform the United Nations, including the revitalization of the General Assembly and a comprehensive reform of the Security Council,” the leaders said in a declaration adopted at the end of the two-day Asian and African Summit in Jakarta.

Such reform “corresponds to the collective interests of developing countries,” while a reformed Security Council would “significantly increase representation of Asia and Africa,” said the Declaration on Reinventing the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership.

Japan is a leading advocate of Security Council reform, with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe saying last month, “With pride quietly in mind at having built up a record of one achievement after another, Japan stands ready to take on the role of a permanent member of the Security Council.”

In collaboration with Brazil, Germany and India, Japan is pushing for expanding the number of both permanent and nonpermanent members of the 15-member Security Council, especially because this year marks the 70th anniversary of the United Nations' founding.

Indonesian President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo, who chaired the summit, said Wednesday that people suffer because the United Nations “becomes powerless” in the face of violent acts taking place across the globe in the absence of a mandate to effect change.

Calls have been made by many countries for U.N. reform since the late 1990s. No consensus, however, has been reached among its member countries.

Speaking at the end of the summit, Jokowi said the Asian and African leaders have come up with concrete steps to develop a new world order that is more just and peaceful and to encourage mutually beneficial cooperation in order to bridge the development gap.

“The voices expressed in the summit were the awakening voices of the Asian-African nations. Therefore, our voices and decisions can't be ignored by anyone,” he told the delegates of more than 100 countries from the two continents.

“The conference has sent a message to the world that the condition of the world is still imbalanced

and far (from) justice and peace,” he said later in a news conference.

The leaders also condemned extremism and terrorist acts in the name of religion and underscored the need for dialogue among people of different cultures and religions, according to Jokowi.

Regarding economic development and cooperation, the leaders “agreed to foster trade and investment as the engine of growth,” and that maritime cooperation “will become one of the main pillars of the new strategic partnership of Asia and Africa,” he said.

The leaders welcomed Abe’s announcement Wednesday of Japan’s assistance in the training of 350,000 people in Asia and Africa over the next five years as part of efforts to ensure “quality growth” and eradicate poverty in the two areas, according to the strategic partnership declaration.

The declaration contains an action plan to implement the Bandung Message 2015, a separately adopted visionary document.

Another document adopted at the summit focuses on the Asian-African countries’ support for the struggle of the Palestinian people and their independence.

The summit was the second of its kind since the Asian-African Conference was held in April 1955 in the West Java provincial capital of Bandung. The first took place in April 2005 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of what is commonly known as the Bandung Conference.

US/AFRICA :

CANADA/AFRICA :

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

The ‘Bandung Divide’: Australia’s lost opportunity in Asia?

24 April 2015/theconversation.com

Indonesia is hosting delegates from dozens of countries this week to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the 1955 Asian-African “Bandung” Conference. Indonesians celebrate the conference as the country’s highest achievement in foreign policy.

By contrast, for most Australians, the Bandung Conference shows Australia’s ambiguous identity in the region. In 1955, Indonesia did not invite Australia even though it was geographically part of Asia. The Australian government was also not interested in taking part.

At the time, the Menzies government regarded the conference as an act of revenge against Australia by the newly independent countries. On April 16 1955, The Sydney Morning Herald wrote that Australia was excluded because admission was based on “colour” rather than common economic

interests.

Subsequently, Australia's official history of foreign policy barely mentions Bandung – even though it was a transformative event in world history taking place just across the Timor Sea.

As we look to the future, Australia should overcome this “Bandung Divide” if it wants to build an enduring partnership with Indonesia and other neighbouring countries.

Why Bandung mattered

The Bandung Conference mattered profoundly for world politics for three reasons.

First, it produced one of the earliest and most systematic statements against colonialism. European imperialism was already doomed after World War II. But the gathering of newly independent countries hastened its demise.

The conference attendants did not only target European imperialism. Some pro-Western states criticised the Soviet Union's domination of Eastern Europe. The final communiqué criticised colonial rule “in all its manifestations”.

Second, the conference marked Communist China's arrival as a world power. Mao Zedong had favoured closing off China. As he put it, the priority was “to have the house swept first and invite the guests in”. Zhou Enlai, however, said the door to China “should not be kept closed ... we should walk out”.

Many Asian states were suspicious and fearful of the rise of China. Of 29 countries that attended the conference, 22 had no diplomatic relations with China. Zhou Enlai allayed these fears by finding common ground and emphasising peaceful co-existence.

Third, in seeding the Non-Aligned Movement, Bandung paved the way for a radically different form of security diplomacy from that which defines Australian foreign policy. Whereas Australia was transitioning from one senior ally (the UK) to another (the United States), countries like Indonesia had an alternative vision that was more independent and self-consciously internationalist. Australia's absence at Bandung

Indonesia did not formally invite Australia to the Bandung Conference. But the Indian prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, one of the sponsors of the event, made it known through diplomatic channels that Australia could have been invited if it signalled its willingness to participate.

The conference included staunch American allies, such as Japan, Pakistan and Turkey. Australia's commitment to the US would have not been a barrier to participation.

The opposition leader, Herbert Evatt, lobbied the Menzies government hard to seek an invitation. Even the US State Department sent a cable encouraging Australia to attend. But to no avail.

Australia was officially a no-show at Bandung in 1955. But Australian observers, journalists, scholars and undercover agents attended.

Australia's absence at Bandung was unsurprising given the perennial perceived tension between its geography and its (European) history. By declining to participate, Australia confirmed its status “as a nation in the region but not of it”, to borrow a phrase from Australian historian David Walker.

In defiance of Nehru's challenge that Australia “come nearer to us and be part of Asia”, Menzies

ostentatiously doubled down on Australia's commitment to the Anglo-sphere after 1955.

This arguably led to Australia being further estranged from China and India (and to a lesser extent, Indonesia) for a generation. It also fuelled suspicions about Australia's commitment to Asia, which have lingered ever since.

Australia's no-show at Bandung strengthened its tendency to seek security from Asia rather than within Asia. This legacy of early post-war ambivalence and estrangement has complicated later efforts to re-engage the region, even though Australia subsequently embraced immigrants from Asia and has sporadically spearheaded regional cooperation.

Better late than never?

Sixty years on from the Bandung Conference, Australia is invited as one of 16 observer countries at this week's commemoration. This should prompt Australians to reflect on the country's place in Asia.

Australia has a distinct history and identity from the states now celebrating the "Bandung spirit". They were newly decolonised countries forging a new internationalism of "the South".

The way Australia seeks security is also different. Indeed, counter-factual reasoning suggests that Australia's foreign policy would not have been radically altered even if Australia had accepted Nehru's invitation.

But the "Bandung Divide" is not unbridgeable. The "Ten Principles" in the final communique included ideals that resonate with Australians as they do with Indonesians. These include: respect for fundamental human rights; recognition of the equality of states and peoples; non-aggression in external relations and peaceful settlement of disputes.

Other than a prohibition on collective defence involving "any of the big powers", these principles are compatible with the UN Charter. We could argue that the 1955 conference anticipated the "responsibility to protect" framework widely adopted by states since 2005.

The delegates of the 29 countries understood that sovereignty did not only come with a right of non-interference. It also generated obligations to assist others in building a more just world order.

The growing complexity of security threats today, from transnational terrorism to government atrocities, compels Australia to have closer security cooperation with its neighbours. Peace in the region also demands that India and China re-discover the principled and cooperative leadership that was evident at Bandung.

The world has changed in fundamental ways since 1955. But the "Bandung spirit" of Afro-Asian solidarity and non-alignment still fires imaginations in many countries – most particularly Indonesia.

Recognition that this history is both distinct and yet oriented towards the universal values laid out in the UN Charter can help Australia to better appreciate the foreign policy outlooks of Indonesia and other countries in Asia now reshaping the global order.

EU/AFRICA :

UK and France to seek UN mandate to attack smugglers • Malta to host EU-Africa summit
Miriam Dalli/maltatoday.com.mt/23 April 2015

Prime Minister Joseph Muscat: 'Lives will be lost at sea just the same but, in the short-term, we need to show criminal networks that they will be brought to justice'

The European Union has agreed to step up cooperation against smuggling networks through Europol and by deploying immigration officers to third countries, while High Representative Federica Mogherini has been tasked with proposing actions in order to capture and destroy smugglers' vessels before they can be used.

The United Kingdom and France, members of the United Nations Security Council, will kick off discussions in an attempt to obtain a UN resolution mandating the destruction of boats used by smugglers.

The emergency European Council on the migration crisis, following the tragic death of over 650 refugees and asylum seekers, also saw the EU leaders pledging considerably greater support including vessels, aircraft and experts. The resources allocated to Frontex's Triton border mission will be tripled to €9 million and its operational capability enhanced.

The EU said it had agreed to reinforce its political cooperation with African partners at all levels in order to tackle the cause of illegal migration and combat the smuggling and trafficking of human beings. The EU will raise these issues with the African Union and the key countries concerned, with whom it will propose the holding of a summit in Malta in the coming months.

Addressing a press briefing with the journalists at the European Council, Prime Minister Joseph Muscat said Malta will be rediscovering its "natural vocation" as a bridge of getting together "the souls of this huge humanitarian crisis".

"We look forward to a genuine debate on an exceptionally thorny issue," he said, adding that human rights NGOs will play a huge role in the summit.

Muscat said that the conclusions of today's meeting – which lasted four hours – was "a lot of what we expected" with the consolidation of previous ideas. "The notable exception is the very clear political signal that Europe is ready to act against the criminal network managing illegal migration flows and profiting from innocent lives," Muscat said.

He said that the action against the criminal networks would be in accordance to international law. "The obvious preferred option is one that would require a UN resolution but there are other avenues," he said, referring to a possible approval by a Libya government of national unity – once this is formed.

Muscat said he was heartened by the fact that there appeared to be a renewed realization by EU leaders that this was a humanitarian crisis and everyone agreed to step up their efforts.

"Whether the efforts and resources are enough is a different question and the obvious answer is no. It will never be enough and this wasn't a groundbreaking summit. The most crucial part was sending a strong message to the criminals that the game has now changed. We will go after the criminals and this will not be about the genuine Libyan people but about the minority of different nationals who profit from people's suffering."

On Operation Triton, Muscat said its level of engagement have drastically increased.

The EU leaders however failed to provide a suitable alternative to Mare Nostrum, the Italian operation, because while the funding for the EU's search and rescue mission have trebled, the rules of engagement have not changed. "Lives will be lost at sea all the same. The high number of displaced people is huge and the solution lies in the democratization, economic development and stability in the countries of origin. But these are long-term solutions. For the short-term, we need to stop smugglers putting migrants on rickety boats... but last week's tragedy will not be the last," Muscat said.

Migrants: l'UE va tripler le budget de son opération de sauvetage en Méditerranée
afp/le jeudi 23 avril 2015

International

Les chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement des 28 Etats membres de l'Union européenne ont décidé jeudi soir de tripler le budget de l'opération de surveillance des frontières maritimes Triton, ramenant les montants au niveau de l'opération de sauvetage des naufragés Mare Nostrum. L'augmentation du budget de Triton semblait acquise dès avant le début du sommet. Le président de la Commission européenne Jean-Claude Juncker a proposé de tripler, plutôt que doubler, les montants alloués à Triton.

Avec 9 millions d'euros par mois pour surveiller les frontières maritimes - et secourir les migrants qui lanceraient un appel à l'aide - le budget revient au niveau de celui de l'opération Mare Nostrum, organisée par l'Italie entre octobre 2013 et octobre 2014, avant que Triton ne se substitue à l'opération de sauvetage.

La Belgique a soutenu la proposition de M. Juncker, a souligné le Premier ministre Charles Michel. Tous les pays européens n'étaient pas aussi convaincus de l'opportunité de cette mesure.

Outre l'augmentation des moyens financiers, les dirigeants européens ont également convenu de renforcer la position en mer Méditerranée, en fournissant à l'opération Triton des navires et des moyens humains supplémentaires. La Belgique mettra ainsi le navire Godetia à disposition. La Grande-Bretagne, la France et l'Allemagne notamment ont aussi annoncé l'engagement de navires en Méditerranée.

"La France prendra sa part" en accueillant "entre 500 et 700 Syriens"

Le président français, François Hollande, a indiqué jeudi à Bruxelles que la France prendrait sa part de l'accueil de réfugiés syrien, à hauteur de "500 à 700" personnes.

"Lorsque le chiffre de 5.000 a été rendu public, la France a dit qu'elle en prendrait sa part, c'est-à-dire entre 500 et 700" réfugiés syriens, a déclaré M. Hollande lors d'une conférence de presse, à l'issue d'un sommet européen extraordinaire consacré aux migrants en Méditerranée.

CHINA/AFRICA :

INDIA/AFRICA :

Security pact with South Africa

Charu Sudan Kasturi/telegraphindia.com/Friday , April 24 , 2015

New Delhi, April 23: India and South Africa are planning to ink a key defence and security-driven agreement focused on the strategically critical Indian Ocean, expanding on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent attempts at reasserting New Delhi's clout in the region.

Foreign minister Sushma Swaraj is expected to oversee the signing of the pact with her South African counterpart Maite-Nkoana Mashabane in Pretoria on May 18, South African ambassador to India F.K. Morule told The Telegraph today.

"The Indian Ocean is strategically very important," Morule said, in an interview at the high commission located in south Delhi's Vasant Vihar. "And we expect to strengthen our defence and security cooperation with India during the coming visit by the Indian minister. That will be a key part of the talks."

Sushma's visit - her first as foreign minister to Africa - will follow a three-nation island-hopping trip by Modi last month to Seychelles, Mauritius and Sri Lanka, all aimed at reviving a fading Indian footprint in what the country has long considered its backyard.

But while the Modi government has articulated a policy to become a "net security provider" in the Indian Ocean, Sushma's visit is an important signal because no minister in the current Union government has yet travelled to mainland Africa.

Sushma will be visiting South Africa for a meeting of a bilateral joint commission that will address a "wide-ranging" set of mutual issues and concerns, Morule said. The foreign minister is also likely to visit Tanzania

India is already assisting South Africa's public sector hospitals' transition to "paper-less" services through information technology. Sushma and her South African counterpart are also expected to discuss the possibility of New Delhi exporting solar panels and other technology for generation of renewable energy, Morule and two Indian officials independently told The Telegraph . But defence and strategic ties will be the centrepiece of talks when Sushma visits.

South Africa had helped India during the Kargil war with artillery and ammunition. But in 2005, India blacklisted South African defence major Denel over allegations that the firm paid kickbacks to secure a deal in 2002.

The ban was lifted last August after the Modi government came to power. "The Indian government has concluded the allegations were unsubstantiated," Morule said. Now, the high commissioner said, South Africa plans to participate in India's 2016 defence expo with "many companies".

"They will manufacture in India," Morule said, before referring to Modi's plan to try and transform India into a manufacturing hub. "We are 100 per cent in agreement with Make in India."

BRAZIL/AFRICA :

EN BREF, CE 24 Avril 2015... AGNEWS/DAM, NY, 24/04/2015