



(Addressing the opening of the two-day China-Africa Colloquium at University of Cape Town, Dlamini-Zuma lauded China's support to Africa in its fight against colonialism and struggle for independence.)

BURUNDI :

La Belgique met la pression financière sur le Burundi
AFP / 22/05/2015

La Belgique hausse le ton : si Pierre Nkurunziza ne renonce pas à son troisième mandat, elle interrompra son aide directe au Burundi.

La Belgique arrêtera son aide directe au Burundi en cas de troisième mandat du président Pierre Nkurunziza, averti ce jeudi le gouvernement belge.

La Belgique «exprime l'espoir que le président Nkurunziza renoncera à un troisième mandat , a indiqué le ministère belge des Affaires étrangères, à l'issue du conseil des ministres. Un troisième mandat présidentiel entacherait au plus haut niveau la légitimité de l'exécutif burundais et placerait le gouvernement belge dans l'impossibilité (...) de conclure un programme de coopération bilatéral classique».

La démarche rejoint une demande formulée hier midi, sur le plateau de La Première, par la chanteuse burundaise Khadja Nin. Car, dans le même temps, la Belgique entendant «rester solidaire de la population burundaise», a précisé le ministère. Mais le gouvernement belge prévient: «en cas de violation persistante des accords d'Arusha, notre pays ne conclura pas d'accord de coopération bilatérale classique avec le gouvernement burundais».

Signés en 2000, les accords de paix d'Arusha avaient ouvert la voie à la fin de la longue guerre civile burundaise (1993-2006). Pour ses opposants, un troisième mandat de Pierre Nkurunziza serait

contraire à ces accords de réconciliation nationale.

La Belgique «serait alors amenée à chercher d'autres formes de coopération, dans le double objectif d'améliorer le sort de la population et de renforcer les forces démocratiques», explique le gouvernement, sans autre précision à ce sujet. La Belgique est le premier bailleur bilatéral du Burundi et le troisième au total, après la Banque mondiale et l'Union européenne. En 2013, les dépenses belges totales d'aide publique au développement à son ancienne colonie se sont élevées à 47,4 millions d'euros, dont 34,4 affectés à la coopération gouvernementale. Notre pays avait déjà décidé le 11 mai de suspendre son soutien au processus électoral au Burundi et interrompu sa coopération policière avec Bujumbura.

La capitale burundaise n'en a pas moins vécu à nouveau ce jeudi au rythme des tirs nourris et incessants de la police, qui ont une nouvelle fois échoué à étouffer les manifestations contre un troisième mandat présidentiel. En soirée, les affrontements se poursuivaient dans plusieurs quartiers, prenant des allures de guérilla urbaine.

Au moins deux manifestants ont été tués par balle, selon un bilan provisoire de la Croix rouge burundaise.

Une vingtaine de morts

Les violences ont été particulièrement intenses dans le quartier de Musaga (sud), où la police était entrée en force la veille avec la claire intention d'y «restaurer l'ordre» coûte que coûte. Dans la matinée, un manifestant a été mortellement touché au dos par une balle.

Des scènes identiques ont été signalées, avec néanmoins une moindre intensité, dans les quartiers Kinindo, Rohero 2, Kibenga... À Ngagara, deux manifestants ont été blessés, et l'un d'eux, touché à la tête, est décédé peu après.

Seul le quartier de Kamenge, bastion du parti présidentiel dans le nord-est de la ville, et le centre-ville restent pour l'instant épargnés.

Plus d'une vingtaine de personnes ont été tuées depuis le début, fin avril, des manifestations contre une candidature de Pierre Nkurunziza à un troisième mandat à la présidentielle du 26 juin.

Burundi : le patron de Radio-Télé Renaissance convoqué au parquet vendredi
vendredi, mai 22, 2015/lavoixdelamerique.com

Innocent Muhozi, patron de la radio privée détruite durant le coup d'Etat manqué les 13 et 14 mai, est convoqué ce vendredi matin au Parquet de Bujumbura.

VOA Afrique a joint Innocent Muhozi, le directeur de la radio-télévision Renaissance.

Renaissance, comme les radios RPA - la plus écoutée du pays -, Insanganiro et Bonesha, n'émettent plus depuis la destruction de leurs locaux et d'une partie de leur matériel durant la tentative de coup, lors duquel elles avaient relayé l'annonce de la destitution du président Pierre Nkurunziza par le chef du putsch, le général Godefroid Nyombare.

Innocent Muhozi a indiqué jeudi à des journalistes que le motif de sa convocation, reçue jeudi après-midi, était simplement "pour enquête". Il a précisé que le numéro de dossier était celui de la tentative de coup d'Etat et qu'il hésitait à se rendre au Parquet.

"Je voulais me rendre à la convocation, mais je reçois des messages inquiétants", a expliqué M. Muhozi. "On peut me dire que j'ai diffusé le message de Godefroid (Nyombare) donc que j'ai participé au putsch. Ca veut dire que dès demain, je peux aller en prison et je n'ai pas du tout envie d'aller en prison".

M. Muhozi n'a pas exclu que cette convocation soit liée à l'enquête sur l'attaque des quatre médias indépendants et de la radio Rema, réputée proche du parti présidentiel CNDD-FDD, également détruite.

"Tous mes collègues sont en fuite", a souligné M. Muhozi, "les patrons d'Isanganiro, RPA, Bonesha, ils ne sont plus là" à Bujumbura.

La RPA avait été fermée par les autorités bien avant le coup, et les émetteurs en province de Renaissance, Bonesha et Isanganiro coupés, ces quatre stations - les quatre principaux médias d'information indépendants au Burundi - étant accusés de relayer les appels aux manifestations contre un troisième mandat du président Nkurunziza qui secouent Bujumbura depuis le 26 avril.

Les locaux de Renaissance, Bonesha, RPA et Isanganiro restent bouclés par la police - "à des fins d'enquête", selon la présidence burundaise qui a dans le même temps assuré que ces stations pouvaient réémettre.

"La présidence a fait semblant de condamner, elle a dit que nous pouvons recommencer à émettre quand nous voulons, mais c'est une vaste blague", avait dénoncé mardi M. Muhozi, interdit d'accès à ses locaux.

Le président Nkurunziza "a ordonné au ministère public une enquête urgente sur le rôle de tous les médias privés dans la crise, sur une évaluation des dégâts subis (par les médias) et l'identification des auteurs de ces dégâts", avait répondu le conseiller en communication du chef de l'Etat, Willy Nyamitwe, pour justifier la fermeture des radios attaquées.

RWANDA :

RDC CONGO :

Les minerais peuvent être exploités en respectant les droits humains, estime l'UE
le 21 mai, 2015 / radiookapi.net

Il est possible d'exploiter les minerais en République démocratique du Congo (RDC), en respectant les droits humains, a affirmé jeudi 21 mai, la députée belge au Parlement européen. Cette institution a voté la veille, un règlement visant à briser le lien entre l'exploitation des ressources naturelles et le financement des conflits armés dans les pays en développement, dont la RDC.

« Nous disons qu'il est possible d'avoir un commerce qui respecte les êtres humains mais aussi qui leur permet un épanouissement et au développement », a déclaré Marie Arena.

Elle s'est insurgée contre l'attitude « cynique » de certaines entreprises qui bravent les droits humains dans l'exploitation minière.

« Aujourd'hui nous avons les entreprises cyniques qui disent que peu importe le prix des vies à payer, nous voulons avoir accès à ces ressources », a déploré la députée belge.

Marie Arena a invité toutes les entreprises minières à se conformer à garantir la traçabilité de leurs produits.

« Toutes les entreprises qui vont produire ou vendre des produits qui contiennent l'étain, le tungstène, le coltan et l'or devront garantir une information de traçabilité de ces minerais. Si ces entreprises sont actives par le biais des filiales en RDC, elles devront garantir que ces minerais n'alimentent pas le conflit en RDC », a-t-elle souligné.

Cette mesure s'applique aussi aux entreprises européennes, a précisé Marie Arena.

« Toute entreprise européenne qui produit ces minerais ou qui vend de ordinateurs qui contiennent ces minerais devront adhérer à cette obligation d'informations depuis le début de la chaîne jusqu'au bas de la chaîne », a insisté la députée belge au Parlement européen.

UGANDA :

Obama's openly gay envoy for LGBT rights is going to Uganda

21st May 2015/ pinknews.co.uk

Barack Obama's recently-appointed special envoy for LGBT rights is heading to Uganda – where homosexuality is illegal.

The President appointed gay diplomat Randy Berry to the newly-created role earlier this year, to allow him to dedicate his time to fighting anti-LGBT legislation around the world.

One of his first assignments will not be easy, however – as Mr Berry is heading to Uganda this summer, where homosexuality can lead to life behind bars.

A representative of the State Department confirmed to Buzzfeed that the out diplomat will visit Uganda in July, where he is expected to meet with politicians and the local LGBT community.

The country passed an Anti-Homosexuality Act last year, which increased the already-harsh penalties for gay sex in the country.

The law was later struck down by the country's Constitutional Court, who found that Parliamentary procedures had been abused to pass it illegally – but lawmakers are still planning an even harsher anti-gay law to replace it.

Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni has vigorously defended his country's laws, but recently warned: "We want to protect our children from homosexuality, but we do not want to kill our trade opportunities."

Museveni has previously claimed that Uganda is a "better destination" for tourists than Spain, that

“Uganda is so rich, we should be the ones to give aid”, and that oral sex is a Western invention that is “more terrible” than homosexuality.

Fred Hutch and Uganda Cancer Institute open UCI-Fred Hutch Cancer Centre in Kampala
fredhutch.org/2015/05/22

Facility will significantly increase patient access to cancer diagnostics and treatment in Uganda while furthering global cancer research

SEATTLE and KAMPALA, Uganda – May 21, 2015 – Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and the Uganda Cancer Institute today opened the UCI-Fred Hutch Cancer Centre in Kampala, the first comprehensive cancer center jointly constructed by U.S. and African cancer institutions in sub-Saharan Africa.

The 25,000-square-foot regional cancer center is a state-of-the-art-facility that can treat up to 20,000 patients a year and includes adult and pediatric outpatient clinics, a research clinic, laboratories, specimen repository, training center, conference rooms and a pharmacy.

Uganda has a substantial cancer burden, and six out of 10 of the most common cancers there are caused by infectious diseases. In response, Uganda has invested in cancer research, training and clinical care. The UCI-Fred Hutch Cancer Centre will significantly increase patient access to cancer diagnostics and treatment while furthering the study of cancers in Uganda, particularly those that are infection-related.

“Our work in low- and middle-income countries puts us at the intersection of cancer and infectious diseases,” said Fred Hutch President and Director D. Gary Gilliland, M.D., Ph.D. “Novel approaches to research and cancer treatment learned through our work in Uganda and other countries feed back to the ongoing research taking place not only in the U.S., but worldwide.”

This new facility was a product of almost 10 years of steadily working in partnership with the Uganda Cancer Institute, said Corey Casper, M.D., M.P.H., head of Global Oncology at Fred Hutch and co-director of the UCI/Hutchinson Center Cancer Alliance. “Today, we have world experts in cancer from Seattle working side by side with our colleagues in Uganda to understand the burden and biology of cancer, and we have created the UCI-Fred Hutch Cancer Centre in an effort to translate this knowledge to reduce the cancer burden worldwide.”

Cancer increasingly is recognized as a health threat to individuals in both resource-rich and resource-poor regions. Up to 25 percent of the world’s cancers are caused by infectious diseases, with higher percentages in many low- and middle-income countries compared to high-income countries, and approximately 33 percent of cancers in sub-Saharan Africa are caused by infectious diseases. It is estimated that the global burden of cancer will increase by nearly 70 percent by 2030.

“Together with Fred Hutch, we are training a new generation of physicians and researchers who can reduce the cancer burden while elevating clinical care in Uganda,” said Jackson Orem, M.B.Ch.B., M.Med., Ph.D., director of the Uganda Cancer Institute and co-director of the UCI/Hutchinson Center Cancer Alliance.

Fred Hutch’s research in Uganda and related work has demonstrated that the cancer burden in low-resource settings can be effectively addressed. The high-impact, low-cost tools being developed by and research-based evidence produced through this collaborative effort has the potential to inform cancer prevention and treatment globally, including in the United States.

The alliance is ideally positioned to provide American and Ugandan physician-scientists with in-depth training in the treatment of infection-related malignancies. In 2008, Uganda had just one oncologist who treated more than 10,000 patients a year. In response, Fred Hutch spearheaded an extensive medical training program and has trained more than 300 Ugandans and Americans in the treatment of infection-related cancers, including physicians, nurses, laboratory technicians, pharmacists, data specialists, and experts in regulatory affairs and fiscal management. Today, the number of practicing oncologists in Uganda has increased twelvefold.

“The vision for global oncology is that every person, no matter where you live in the world, has the same chance of surviving their cancer,” Casper said. “Where you were born, where you live and where you seek care should not dictate surviving the cancer that you have. Furthermore, we believe that studying the biologic factors that cause cancer and result in different clinical manifestations of these diseases in diverse geographic settings could lead to important advances in treatment and prevention in both low- and high-resource settings.”

The relationship between Fred Hutch and the UCI dates back to 2004, and the UCI/Hutchinson Center Cancer Alliance was formally established in 2008. The program was formed to support the development of a strong biomedical infrastructure in Uganda that would contribute to the prevention, early detection, diagnosis and treatment of cancer and related health concerns.

The UCI-Fred Hutch Cancer Centre is funded in part by two grants totaling \$1.4 million from the United States Agency for International Development (through the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad program) and an \$8.6 million investment from Fred Hutch. The government of Uganda also has supported the building through the donation of land, support for personnel and equipment, and technical support.

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40 YEARS OF CURES 1975-2015

At Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, home to three Nobel laureates, interdisciplinary teams of world-renowned scientists seek new and innovative ways to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer, HIV/AIDS and other life-threatening diseases. Fred Hutch’s pioneering work in bone marrow transplantation led to the development of immunotherapy, which harnesses the power of the immune system to treat cancer with minimal side effects. An independent, nonprofit research institute based in Seattle, Fred Hutch houses the nation’s first and largest cancer prevention research program, as well as the clinical coordinating center of the Women’s Health Initiative and the international headquarters of the HIV Vaccine Trials Network. Private contributions are essential for enabling Fred Hutch scientists to explore novel research opportunities that lead to important medical breakthroughs. For more information visit www.fredhutch.org or follow Fred Hutch on Facebook, Twitter or YouTube.

SOUTH AFRICA :

Nyusi urges South Africa to punish instigators of attacks
22.05.15/thezimbabwean.co

Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi on Wednesday night urged his South African counterpart, Jacob

Zuma, to ensure that those responsible for the wave of xenophobic violence in April against foreigners living in South Africa are brought to justice.

Nyusi made this appeal at a banquet offered in honour of Zuma, who is on a two day state visit to Mozambique.

He also urged Zuma to work towards eliminating the causes of xenophobia. During the April attacks at least three Mozambicans are known to have died.

“We praise the measures taken by your government, but the Mozambican people are awaiting, with great interest the investigations that the South African authorities are undertaking”, said Nyusi. “This is a matter which concerns Mozambicans, South Africans and all people who love peace and defend human rights”.

Despite the violent attacks, Nyusi said he was pleased at the current stage of cooperation between Mozambique and South Africa. He thought the political will exists on both sides to overcome the current challenges and explore the existing potential.

South Africa is Mozambique’s largest trading partner, and South Africa occupies third position in the list of countries whose companies are investing in Mozambique

Despite this positive balance, Nyusi believed there is room to increase investment, and encourage the business people of both countries to become more creative and innovative, taking advantage of existing business opportunities.

“Mozambique has arable land and an abundance of water and energy resources”, he said. “Our potential in hydropower, coal, natural gas and renewable energies allows us to guarantee the energy security of both countries”.

To use all these resources rationally, Mozambique and South Africa should continue to work together, “promoting pragmatic and mutually advantageous cooperation”, he added.

For his part, Zuma assured his host that the South African authorities are investigating the question of xenophobia, to ensure that there is no repeat of the anti-foreigner attacks.

An inter-ministerial committee had been set up, and was looking into the causes of the attacks. “We have also met with various stakeholders”, said Zuma, “to discuss the question and guarantee that this situation does not happen again”.

Among those contacted had been the various associations representing foreign residents in South Africa.

Zuma said he was comforted by the reactions of South Africans who had vehemently condemned the attacks, and in some cases had intervened actively to stop them.

“In general, South Africans are not xenophobic”, he said. “They know that for many decades we lived and worked with the people of Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe against the apartheid regime”.

The April violence, Zuma insisted, could never wipe out the historic and political ties between Mozambique and South Africa. Instead, those ties should be improved by building economic cooperation.

He recognized that the partnership between the two countries has produced satisfactory results, expressed in around 60 bilateral agreements and memoranda of understanding, covering a vast range of areas, including security, transport, trade, investment, energy, water, the environment, agriculture and mining.

Zuma wanted the economic relations between the two countries to be further encouraged, resulting in increases in trade and investment.

Power-starved South Africa mulls sewage to solar

Paul Burkhardt, Bloomberg/22 May 2015

Plans to use in-pipe turbines to create energy from the Joburg water system.

Johannesburg, Africa's biggest financial center, is considering generating power from sources ranging from sewage to the city's water pipes in a bid to end power cuts that shutter shops and cause traffic gridlock.

The options, along with solar power and tripling output from a coal-fired plant on the city's eastern outskirts, are among those being explored as a national electricity shortage threatens to subject the city to power cuts for years. Johannesburg, home to Africa's biggest stock and bond exchanges and many of the continent's largest companies, has a population of about 8 million including surrounding areas.

The power situation is a "national issue" and must be approached in new ways, Sol Masolo, a spokesman for City Power, the city's power distribution company, said in an interview. "Now we have a clear focus on projects that we do to mitigate load shedding," he said, using the local term for electricity cuts.

Because the South African government delayed a decision on whether to allow national power company Eskom to build new power plants more than a decade ago electricity is now rationed to businesses and city dwellers with areas of the city often blacked out for four hours at a time. Lynne Brown, the public enterprises minister responsible for Eskom, has said the country can expect the situation to persist for another three years as generating plants are built.

'Zoo Poo'

The cuts shut businesses, leave residences without lighting and disrupt transport with traffic lights taken offline. That has a cost.

Eskom, which is based in Johannesburg, cuts power in three stages, according to the severity of the shortage on a given day. Stage 1 cuts 1,000 megawatts nationally, stage 2 reduces supply by 2,000 megawatts and stage 3 up to 3,000 megawatts. Stage 4 is the reduction of 4,000 megawatts.

A full month of Stage 1 costs businesses nationally about R6 billion a month (\$504 million), Mike Schussler, chief economist at Johannesburg-based research group Economists.co.za., said in a May 20 interview. Eskom has reached Stage 3 on three days this year and regularly announces stage 2 cuts.

Johannesburg Mayor Parks Tau this month announced plans to use in-pipe turbines to create energy from the citywide water system, similar to a system used in Portland, Oregon, and to convert

sewage to gas by using bio-digesters. The city zoo has a system installed that uses anaerobic bacteria to convert “zoo poo” into gas.

‘Smart Meters’

City Power has over two years installed about 30,000 “smart meters,” which warn customers to reduce consumption before potential blackouts and can limit the power they use. Consumers can then prioritize what to unplug to help curb the cuts implemented by Eskom. It plans to double the number, Masolo said.

City Power also has a control system that allows it to switch off hot water heaters in certain areas of Johannesburg and is looking to curb the installation of new units, Masolo said.

“By installing solar water heaters you’re basically killing demand for the regular ones,” he said.

While renewable energy is favored some of the most effective solutions seen by cities are more traditional ones.

The coal-fired Kelvin Power Station, owned by two Johannesburg-based banks – Nedbank Group and Investec, is currently supplying about 200 megawatts to City Power, or about 7% of the city’s needs.

“We are engaging with the private sector to secure investment in Kelvin to push its capacity to at least 600 megawatts,” Tau said in a May 6 address.

Tshwane, the municipality that includes South Africa’s capital Pretoria, has similar plans to revive two coal-fired plants and plans a 40 megawatt solar power facility.

TANZANIA :

27 dead in cholera outbreak at Burundi refugee camp in Tanzania

By Danielle Haynes /upi.com /May 21, 2015

KAGUNGA, Tanzania, May 21 (UPI) -- At least 27 people have died in an outbreak of cholera at a Burundian refugee camp in Tanzania, humanitarian workers said Thursday.

An estimated 50,000 refugees from Burundi live at a camp in the village of Kagunga, where cholera is suspected of sickening another 15 people, UNICEF said. The World Health Organization says up to 90,000 people live at the camp in the village.

More than 112,000 have fled Burundi in recent weeks during an attempted military overthrow of the government. Many are living in camps along the shores of Lake Tanganyika, where conditions are poor.

Between 500 and 2,000 people arrive each day, overwhelming the health system infrastructure where there is already limited camping space, poor hygiene, and inadequate sanitation and drinking water.

WHO says non-cholera-related cases of diarrhea have climbed to more than 1,000.

UNICEF has sent cholera treatment supplies, water, sanitation, and health and nutrition items to help fight the outbreak of disease. The organization has also assisted the Burundian Ministry of Health in reopening a cholera treatment center nearby.

"Children constitute more than half of the population on the move and are particularly vulnerable to cholera," said UNICEF Regional Director for Eastern & Southern Africa, Leila Gharagozloo-Pakkala. "Concerted action by the two counties has fast tracked the dispatch of lifesaving commodities to stem the spread of the outbreak."

Refugees in Kagunga are waiting to be transported to the larger town of Kigoma, where more resources are available, the International Committee of the Red Cross said.

Tanzanian leader says aid conditions degrading

21/05/2015/newzimbabwe.com

TANZANIAN President Jakaya Kikwete said Thursday that Western donors are setting degrading conditions for aid to the east African nation and he could be forced in time to tell them: "keep your aid".

Tanzania, one of Africa's biggest per capita aid recipients, has experienced repeated delays in payments due to donor concerns about corruption, poor governance and the slow pace of reforms.

"It is unacceptable for our development partners to use their aid stick to pressure us to do certain things or else they will cut aid," Kikwete said in a statement issued by the presidency.

"We will reach a point where we will say this is too degrading ... keep your aid."

A group of donors last year withheld nearly \$500 million in budget support to Tanzania over corruption allegations in the energy sector.

The aid freeze affected the execution of the government's budget for the current fiscal year 2014/15 and weakened the local currency.

The Tanzanian government has vowed to wean itself off donor dependency in its upcoming 2015/16 budget.

Kikwete said some Western donors had threatened to suspend aid to Tanzania over a new cybercrime law that activists and bloggers say is aimed at stifling freedom of speech ahead of a general election later this year.

The Tanzanian president said the threats would prove "counter-productive".

Tanzania said its spending in the 2015/16 fiscal year will rise by 13.24 percent to pay for infrastructure projects and a general election this year.

KENYA :

Al Shabaab attacks village in Kenya's Garissa

Fri May 22, 2015/Reuters

NAIROBI (Reuters) - Al Shabaab militants attacked a village in the northeastern Kenyan county of Garissa, the ministry of interior said on Friday.

The Somalia-based al Shabaab group, which has carried out frequent attacks in Kenya in recent years to try to force Nairobi to pull its troops out of Somalia, struck a university in the same area last month, killing 148 people.

A ministry statement said the militants entered Yumbis village, 70 km (45 miles) north of Garissa town, but were driven back. "Security forces on Thursday evening thwarted an attempted attack at Yumbis village," it said.

"Security forces swiftly mobilized and engaged the militants in a gun battle. No casualties were reported."

A police source in the area who did not wish to be named said the militants roamed Yumbis for an hour in two trucks bearing Kenyan registration plates. They hoisted their black flag on a mosque where they held prayers, before they headed out to a nearby village called Damajale.

A combined force of police and the army drove them off about three hours later, the source said.

Kenya's tourism industry, a top foreign exchange earner, has borne the brunt of the attacks, as worried tourists cancel their bookings

ANGOLA :

Image: Agricultural fires in Angola, West Africa

by Lynn Jenner/ phys.org/May 21, 2015

The Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) on NASA's Aqua satellite collected this natural-color image which detected dozens of fires burning in southwestern Africa on May 21, 2015. The location, widespread nature, and number of fires suggest that these fires were deliberately set to manage land. Farmers often use fire to return nutrients to the soil and to clear the ground of unwanted plants.

While fire helps enhance crops and grasses for pasture, the fires also produce smoke that degrades air quality. Each hot spot, which appears as a red mark, is an area where the thermal detectors on the MODIS instrument recognized temperatures higher than background. When accompanied by plumes of smoke, as in this image, such hot spots are diagnostic for fire. The smoke released by any type of fire (forest, brush, crop, structure, tires, waste or wood burning) is a mixture of particles and chemicals produced by incomplete burning of carbon-containing materials. All smoke contains carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and particulate matter or soot.

This natural-color satellite image was collected by the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) aboard the Aqua satellite on May 21, 2015. NASA image courtesy Jeff Schmaltz, MODIS Rapid Response Team.

AU/AFRICA :

Un programme pour éradiquer le paludisme dans les 15 ans

Belga /21/05/2015

Un programme pour éradiquer le paludisme, qui fait actuellement 600.000 morts par an, au cours des 15 prochaines années a été adopté, a annoncé jeudi l'OMS.

Les diplomates rassemblés à Genève pour assister à l'assemblée annuelle de la Santé, l'instance décisionnelle de l'OMS, ont entériné mercredi soir un plan visant à réduire de 40% les cas de paludisme d'ici à l'an 2020 et de 90% d'ici à 2030, a indiqué l'OMS.

Le plan prévoit également l'éradication complète du paludisme dans au moins 35 nouveaux pays ces 15 prochaines années. Pedro Alonso, responsable du programme mondial sur le paludisme à l'OMS, a déclaré à l'AFP que ces objectifs étaient «ambitieux mais réalisables», et qu'ils allaient «nous conduire tout près de l'éradication».

«Il s'agit de la stratégie la plus ambitieuse tout en étant réaliste que le monde ait adoptée depuis le milieu du XXe siècle», a-t-il dit.

Chaque année, environ 200 millions de personnes contractent le paludisme, et 600.000 en meurent.

Les enfants de moins de cinq ans représentent les trois quarts de tous ces décès, dont 90% ont lieu en Afrique.

Il y a déjà eu de grands progrès dernièrement dans la lutte contre la maladie, avec une chute de 47% de la mortalité entre 2000 et 2013, selon de récents chiffres rendus publics par l'OMS.

M. Alonso a cependant reconnu qu'il restait encore beaucoup à faire, car environ 50% des foyers en Afrique ne sont pas équipés de moustiquaires, des équipements essentiels pour se protéger des moustiques qui transmettent le paludisme par piqûre.

En outre, 60% des cas ne sont toujours pas diagnostiqués ni traités.

Pour atteindre les objectifs fixés cette semaine, les pays devront renforcer leur surveillance pour détecter tous les cas de paludisme et les traiter, a ajouté M. Alonso.

Des investissements seront aussi nécessaires pour mettre au point de nouveaux et meilleurs médicaments -en raison notamment de la résistance croissante à ceux habituellement utilisés-, diagnostics et insecticides ainsi que des vaccins prometteurs, a-t-il dit.

Atteindre ces objectifs devrait coûter environ 100 millions de dollars.

China plays important role in Africa's development: AU chief

2015-05-22 / Xinhua / Editor: Gu Liping

African Union (AU) Commission Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma said on Thursday that Africa expects China to help build "the Africa we want."

Addressing the opening of the two-day China-Africa Colloquium at University of Cape Town, Dlamini-Zuma lauded China's support to Africa in its fight against colonialism and struggle for independence.

China's assistance to Africa continued all along these years as could be demonstrated by China's timely support to West African countries during the recent outbreak of the Ebola epidemic, the AU chief said.

In addition to helping Africa with its infrastructure development, China has also trained thousands of Africans in various fields, Dlamini-Zuma said.

China also plays an important role in helping maintain peace and security in Africa, she added.

Dlamini-Zuma said that under the framework of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, Africa-China relations have developed even faster.

She said that while the AU is pushing Agenda 2063, a blueprint for Africa's future development, "there is a lot we can learn from China" in terms of industrialization, infrastructure development, human resource development, and peace and security maintenance.

She stressed that Africa wants to further its cooperation with China in building a more just and more reasonable international order.

Chinese Ambassador Tian Xuejun said at the colloquium that China-Africa relationship "is an active and dynamic factor of international relations with greater influence."

He reviewed the great developments in China-Africa relations over the past years, notably the trade volume between the two sides. In 2000, the trade volume between China and Africa was only 10 billion U.S. dollars, while last year, it topped 220 billion dollars.

During the same period, China's investment in Africa has also sharply increased from 500 million dollars to 30 billion dollars.

Tian also warned against "some malicious accusations which distort and smear China-Africa cooperation."

He said China-Africa relations will inevitably encounter some problems in the process of development, but these problems are only growing pains which should be viewed and solved in the light of development.

"China will actively practice the concept of 'sincerity, real results, affinity and good faith' in the cooperation with Africa and the balanced approach to interests and principals, which are proposed by (Chinese) President Xi Jinping," Tian said.

"China will work with African friends to build China-Africa relations into a good example of cooperation between developing countries."

UN/AFRICA :

US/AFRICA :

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AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

EU/AFRICA :

CHINA/AFRICA :

Sino-African love story takes a turn

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China appears to be taking criticism of its relationship with African countries to heart and is reviewing its approach to investment and development.

President Xi Jinping is expected to increase China's financial and development commitments to Africa when he attends his first Forum on China-Africa Co-operation (Focac) in December.

South Africa is hosting the sixth ministerial-level conference, established in 2000 and held every three years to promote political dialogue and economic co-operation between China and the continent.

China and Africa are undergoing significant changes and are redefining their relationship, giving rise to the expectation that Xi will forge a new strategy with which to engage the continent.

Furthermore, Focac 2015 comes at a time when China's biggest economic rival, the United States, is reasserting its economic influence in Africa.

Last year, President Barack Obama hosted the largest gathering of African leaders ever held in Washington. The summit, which signalled a decisive shift in US-Africa relations, attracted nearly 50 African heads of state and yielded investment deals worth more than \$14-billion for Africa, marking the start of a new economic relationship.

Increased US investment

More than 60 US companies attended the summit and pledged to increase investment in Africa over

the next few years. Among them was General Electric, a company with a century-long history in Africa. It is planning to invest \$2-billion by 2018 to train workers, develop facilities and improve supply chains.

Blackstone, one of the largest private equity firms in the world, announced a \$5-billion partnership with Africa's richest man, Aliko Dangote, to invest in energy projects across the continent. Marriot and IBM committed \$200-million and \$66-million respectively.

Despite this, US interests in Africa pale in comparison to China's, whose economic inroads have grown at breakneck pace over the past decade. China outstripped the US in 2009 to become Africa's biggest trading partner.

In 2013, China-Africa trade hit \$200-billion, a tenfold increase in the past decade, but US bilateral trade with the continent barely reached \$85-billion. The flow of China's foreign direct investment (FDI) also increased steadily, from \$392-million in 2005 to \$2.5-billion in 2012.

Moreover, although less than 1% of US global FDI goes to Africa, about 3.4% of China's worldwide FDI is on the continent.

Admittedly, there is an ongoing debate about the promised rather than realised Chinese investment in Africa. The issue demands more empirical evidence and research into the size and nature of its interests.

No-strings-attached model

Apart from the sheer numbers, China also employs a very different approach in its involvement with African countries. Long seen as pursuing a so-called no-strings-attached model, with scant regard for traditional political institutions and Western-styled economic governance, the Chinese have been criticised for taking a strictly bottom-line approach to business.

But more recent studies reveal a far more nuanced approach that also takes in Chinese economic development. The US has long attached conditions to its economic ties with Africa, which have been received with mixed reaction. The rule of law, sound political governance, democracy and anti-corruption laws typically govern the behaviour of US multinational corporations' trade deals. The building of strong institutions is at the centre of economic co-operation with the US. Despite its good intentions, African leaders by and large see this partnership as unequal and as meddling in their internal affairs.

The nature of the Chinese and US investments, and the sectors in which their companies invest in Africa, do differ. For example, in 2011, 80% of Chinese imports from Africa were raw materials, such as crude oil, copper, iron ore and agricultural products.

This has raised concerns about the exploitative nature and often unscrupulous deals associated with these transactions.

Even Obama, in a less-than-subtle swipe at China at the 2014 US-Africa summit, stated: "We don't simply want to extract minerals from the ground for our growth. We want to build partnerships that create jobs and opportunity for all our peoples that unleash the next era of African growth."

Infrastructure investment

China has invested extensively in key areas of African development such as infrastructure. Until recently, the US's priority was not the development of infrastructure.

The much-needed Chinese-built infrastructure has been criticised. The failure to hire local skilled and unskilled workers has raised tensions with people in need of jobs. The quality and long-term viability of some of the infrastructure built has also been questioned.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, during his tour of the continent last year, admitted there were growing pains in the China-Africa partnership and promised to take issues raised by Africans seriously.

Africa is one of the fastest-growing regions in the world and has vast natural resources, so it is no surprise that both the US and China see the continent as an important source of growth and opportunity.

The rapid increase in Chinese investments has boosted Africa and is certainly part of the much-anticipated “Africa rising” narrative.

Labour law

But African countries and their people have begun to question China’s approach to the continent, especially concerning its poor regard for labour laws, institutions of good governance and development that is sustainable.

Renewed interest from the US in Africa is also to be welcomed. But if it is to build trust, based on economic partnerships and not just for security reasons, the US will need to work hard at improving investments and building long-term economic and political ties, with a healthy dose of reciprocity, confidence and less suspicion.

Support for security and intelligence is important but this must be coupled with an economic interest that is evident to all Africans.

Ultimately, though, the onus lies on Africans, and African leadership in particular, to manage and balance relations with these two great powers more effectively.

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How Australia was blindsided by China and Brazil

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The global economy has handed out some blunt lessons in the ruthless disciplines of free-market capitalism to Australia in the past century and a half. But rarely has it done so with the sweet timing displayed by China and Brazil this week, when they struck a deal to shatter any illusion Australia Inc had that they could carve up the global iron ore market among themselves, write Ben Potter and Amanda Saunders.

"When profit diminishes, merchants are very apt to complain that trade decays."

- Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations

The global economy has handed out some blunt lessons in free-market capitalism to Australia in the past century.

But rarely has it done so with the sweet timing shown by China and Brazil this week, when they struck a deal to shatter any illusion that Australia Inc could carve up the global iron ore market among themselves.

China underwrote a massive expansion of supply by Brazilian iron ore giant Vale that smacked down Fortescue Mining Group chairman Twiggy Forrest and any politicians who indulged his noisy campaign for a Senate inquiry into iron ore pricing.

The deal blindsided an Australia that had turned its back on a quarter century of market-opening reform to gaze at its own navel again and consider rigging the market to handicap Australian iron ore giants BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto.

It felt like the return of Rex Connor – the 1970s Labor resources minister who wanted to seize control of Australian resources from the mining companies and develop them using "men to match my mountains".

Yet what Forrest was complaining about is all part of normal market dynamics, University of Melbourne economics professor and 1980s ambassador to China Ross Garnaut says. But Forrest's cure – creating uncertainty about Australian supply by whistling up a parliamentary inquiry targeting his biggest rivals – could have been worse than the perceived problem.
Alternative supplier

Japan, Australia's biggest iron ore customer before China, cultivated Vale as an alternative supplier in the late 1970s, partly because of anxiety about our reliability – unions gripped the supply chain in those days – and partly in an attempt to force the price down by bringing on more competition.

"The China-Brazil initiative announced this week is not new," Garnaut says.

"China has been investing in West Africa and Brazil, and this is a normal part of market dynamics that is helped and encouraged by anything that raises uncertainty about Australian supply.

"It'd be going on anyway, but anything that increases anxiety about Australian supply helps it along."

Thinking we could buck the dynamics of the global market was a habit we were supposed to have kicked long ago.

Australia's reputation as a leading free-trading nation was hard won over many years. Such reputations have a value all of their own in economic relations. But this can be compromised in a few days if rent-seeking business-folk and fellow-travelling politicians command a megaphone.

The idea that Australia Inc – governments, corporations, unions – could clump its hand on the scales and manipulate the global market to make it more fair, or to maximise profit, revenue and wages was a far-fetched throw-back to the prevailing orthodoxy in Australia for a century until the early 1980s. By that time it had led the Australian economy into a ditch and was dumped by the Hawke,

Keating and Howard governments in the 1980s and 1990s.

Harsh lessons

Those harsh lessons taught us that global capitalism was ruthless. To prosper you had to keep your eye on the ball and focus obsessively on giving your customers the best value for money you could, especially if they showed signs of wanting to cultivate alternative suppliers.

Navel-gazers could be knocked right out of the arena, or at least back in the queue. Australia's iron ore suppliers found that out the hard way in the late 1970s, when Japan responded to union supply disruptions by sponsoring Vale's entry into the north Asian seaborne trade hitherto dominated by Australia.

The lesson has been repeated in one commodity after another.

Just a day after Vale struck its stunning deal, China and Brazil struck another deal to lift their annual beef trade by \$500 million. That brought the South American giant back into the rapidly-growing Chinese market in a big way after an enforced absence because of mad cow disease.

There is nothing fair about global capitalism. This is especially true if you are a middle-sized, commodity-exporting economy and a price-taker in most of your export markets most of the time, like Australia. Natural resource riches are no guarantee of prosperity, as the history of Brazil – and parts of Australia's history – show. Nations have to earn prosperity.

The recently expired boom was the exception, not the rule. The big context for all of this is the unsustainable expansion of the Chinese steel industry in the first 11 years of this century, Garnaut says.

Australian and global miners at first underestimated the boom, and then responded to the sky-high prices that resulted from the supply squeeze by bringing new supplies and new entrants into the market.

Painful adjustment

"What we are seeing now is a painful adjustment in China and the rest of the world to market realities. Within those realities a lot of capacity that was using lower-quality resources will be squeezed out before there is any prospect of a stabilisation in prices," Garnaut says.

Hence Forrest's discomfort. Fortescue is the world's fourth-lowest-cost producer behind Rio, BHP and Vale.

Iron ore is a global commodity, freely traded in transparent markets, as Labor's resources spokesman Gary Gray noted at the height of the brouhaha.

In this environment Australia's interests are best served if we encourage our lowest-cost producers – BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto – to be as efficient and aggressive in the global market as they can be.

If they don't, others will step into the breach, as BHP chief executive Andrew Mackenzie and Rio Tinto iron ore chief Andrew Harding pointed out this week. And any loss of market share will be hard to recover, Harding says.

Mackenzie took the rare step of going on ABC Radio National to argue that the proposed inquiry would be a gift to Brazil and an expensive lesson in the economics of global trade.

China and Vale demonstrated the lesson a day later with a brutal clarity that sent Prime Minister Tony Abbott and Treasurer Joe Hockey scurrying into a face-saving retreat. Late on Thursday they canned the idea of a parliamentary inquiry.

Yet they had given succour to Forrest and his political backers only a few days earlier.
Mercantilist delusions

The mercantilist delusions of Australia's past are a virulent strain of thinking that has proven hard to eradicate. Forrest had moaned long and loud that supply expansions planned by BHP and Rio into a surplus market would force a depressed price even lower, driving Fortescue and other higher-cost, marginal suppliers to the wall. Smashing the iron ore price also cratered Commonwealth and Western Australian state revenue. What better justification could there be for the government to stick its beak in?

Forrest's argument was self-serving. Vale's deal with China exposed it as preposterous. Vale's boost to production will dwarf the combined expansions of BHP and Rio.

It came as a bit of a shock that any serious person – let alone the institution of Parliament that had presided over the economic reforms of the 1980s and 1990s – could take Forrest's campaign seriously.

Forrest's parliamentary echo chamber was led by South Australian Senator Nick Xenophon and came to include Abbott, Hockey and another independent MP, Queensland's Bob Katter.

As an independent senator Xenophon needs to stay in the headlines. Katter is a loose cannon with the same need. Abbott and Hockey should have known better.

Peter Drysdale, emeritus professor in Asian studies at Australian National University, says they have let us down.

"It should be an automatic credential for political leaders in Australia to understand these simple facts about our position in the resource trade and the economics of it," Drysdale tells AFR Weekend.
Political security dimension

"But there's also a political security dimension of it both for Asia and for us, and I'm afraid we have to learn that again and again."

Drysdale doesn't think the political culture has regressed to the 1970s. "There's more people understand it now than used to when I was a young man," Drysdale says from Tokyo.

"But the truth of the matter is, we have to get out and make sure people understand it again and again and again."

The iron ore market is a case study in trade dynamics. China did the Vale deal "to ensure S11D gets up", Credit Suisse mining analyst Paul McTaggart says.

China wants to ensure Vale remains a strong competitor to the Australian suppliers. The deal includes \$US4 billion (\$5.05 billion) in cheap credit to help fund a 90-million-tonne-a-year iron ore expansion in the Amazon forest, known as S11D. As Vale squirmed under a \$US32 billion debt pile last year, its Chinese market share had shrunk to 18 per cent, and Australian suppliers had increased their share from just more than half to nearly 60 per cent.

Vale is bent on winning back lost share. It aims to increase its production to 450 million tonnes a year by 2018, from 330 million tonnes in 2015. That expansion is several times the combined expansions of 35 million to 40 million tonnes planned by BHP and Rio.

It will help Vale – the third-lowest-cost producer – close the gap on costs with Rio and BHP, the world's lowest and second-lowest cost producers. Fortescue, which is capping its production at 165 million tonnes, is fourth-lowest.

Cut transport costs

China also invested in Vale's Valemax bulk carrier ships. The super-sized ships will help the company cut its transport costs by a quarter, helping to bridge a gulf in freight costs with BHP and Rio of \$US18 a tonne to \$US4.

The S11D deposit is also higher grade than Australia's flagship "Pilbara blend", Credit Suisse analyst Matthew Hope says, making it attractive for Chinese steel mills as the quality of their domestic iron ore falls away.

Roy Hill chief executive Barry Fitzgerald says the blended product "is direct competition for both us and the two major producers in the Pilbara and that again reminds us that we are in a competitive environment and that our market share and our position in the world will be coveted by other companies, so we need to make sure we are productive and efficient".

It's true, as Forrest complained, that BHP, Rio and Vale are expanding amid a supply glut and flat-lining – though still robust – Chinese steel demand.

The iron ore price has halved in a year to about \$US60 a tonne, but is up from a record low of \$US47 a tonne in April.

But even at that record low the big two in the Pilbara are still profitable. Their cash break-even prices are between \$US32 and \$US35 a tonne.

Vale says it can shave another \$US3 to \$US5 a tonne from costs this calendar year, paring its break-even cost to about \$US40 a tonne. When its S11D project comes online, costs will be cut further.

Vale is expected to pare costs further to about \$US33-\$US35 a tonne in the medium term, after S11D comes online. But BHP and Rio will also be racing to cut costs further.

Still, UBS mining analyst Andreas Bokkenheuser says it is "highly unlikely" Vale can catch BHP and Rio on costs. They land iron ore in China about \$US10 a tonne cheaper than the Brazilian giant.

If he is right, Australia will have prospered by letting BHP and Rio – and not Parliament – call their own shots.