



(A lot need to be done to ensure access to reliable electricity for African's citizens. However a number of complications are hindering the achievement of UN sustainable goal.)

BURUNDI :

RWANDA :

Africa: Rwanda to Host Africa Bee-Keeping Expo

27 May 2016/The New Times (Kigali)

An international expo on commercial bee keeping to be held in Rwanda in September, is expected to demonstrate how commercial bee-keeping drives socio-economic transformation through shared technologies and experiences.

The 5th All-Africa International honey industry expo will begin September 21 to 26 at Kigali Conference and Exhibition Village, formerly Camp Kigali.

The event is organised by ApiTrade Africa in partnership with National Agricultural Export Development Board (NAEB). It will be held under the theme, "Driving socio-economic transformation in Africa: the role of commercial bee-keeping".

The event will showcase bee products, bee-keeping technologies, innovations and programmes and brands intended to promote apiculture. About 5,000 delegates and exhibitors from across Africa and beyond are expected to attend.

The specific objectives of hosting the expo, according to the organisers, include improving global market linkages of bee products suppliers, as well as promoting bee-keeping as a source of employment creation and environmental protection.

Jean Marie Vianney Munyaneza, the manager of Agriculture Diversification and Product Development Division at NAEB, told The New Times, on Wednesday, that the event will be a

networking opportunity for bee-keepers and other stakeholders.

"Bee-keepers will be linked to researchers in the sector and there will be presentation of papers on the current research in honey quality and produce, as well as the sector's organisation," he noted.

So far, three Rwandan university scholars have expressed interest to make presentations on the state of bee-keeping in Rwanda, according to Munyaneza.

He also said modern beehives that can produce 30kg of honey per year, which mainly come from Kenya and Ethiopia, will be showcased.

"Traditional beehives being used by some beekeepers in the country produce between four to seven kilogrammes of honey per year," said Munyaneza, noting that there will also be study tours to at least four honey producing centres in Rwanda, including the Gishwati Forest in the Western Province.

Anselme Nzabonimpa, the president of the Federation of Beekeepers' Cooperatives in Rwanda, told The New Times that many beekeepers in the country regard beekeeping as a subsistence farming practice.

"Currently, Rwandans regard beekeeping as a source of honey to use in beer making or medicine for simple children's ailments. They do not understand that they can produce more honey for commercial purposes, and the expo is expected to be a sensitization platform," he noted.

There are about 35,000 known beekeepers in the country, an estimated 90,000 modern beehives, and 200,000 traditional beehives.

The current honey production in Rwanda is estimated at 3,700 tonnes per year, yet the honey demand is over 4,500 tonnes. The country expects to produce 7,100 tonnes of honey by 2017.

Rwanda: City of Kigali's Priority Is Affordable Housing - Mayor

27 May 2016/The New Times (Kigali)

The City of Kigali might enjoy envious fame for its cleanliness and security, but the issue of affordable housing for dwellers continues to be the Achilles heel for authorities.

City Mayor Monique Mukaruliza said, if Kigali has anything to learn from other cities across the world, it has to be how best to avail affordable housing units to the people of Kigali.

"That is our prime focus," she said on Wednesday.

Mukaruliza told a news conference that if Kigali overcomes this "burden," then cases of informal housing will be minimal, consequently enabling the city to easily align its development footprints into the conceptual master plan.

The mayor was speaking on the sidelines of the ongoing four-day seventh edition of the World Bank Metropolitan Strategic Planning Laboratory (MetroLab), which started on Wednesday at the City Hall.

The event, which is being held in Africa for the second time, has brought together several urban experts from cities around the globe to discuss sustainable development, growth and urban

management.

Since its inception, the MetroLab programme has been hosted by Rio (Brazil), Greater Paris (France), Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania), Seoul (Republic of Korea), Mumbai (India) and New York (US).

The World Bank-sponsored forum wRwf60,000 to Rwf300,000," he said.

Yasser el-Gammal, the World Bank country manager, said by Kigali hosting the MetroLab, the country, its capital and secondary cities will greatly benefit from the knowledge exchange and sharing of best practices from regions around the world, as well as showcasing the unique results achieved for sustainable urbanisation in Rwanda.

ill also provide a platform for solutions; as cities share knowledge about urban management and development through site visits, thematic presentations and case studies.

"As much as we have a lot of best practices in the City of Kigali to share with the participating urban experts, we also want to learn from them and the most needed knowledge from this is how best we can develop affordable housing for the people of Kigali," said Mukaruliza.

"We have city dwellers who live within high-risk zones, as well those who live in informal settlements. With the expertise of MetroLab participants, we expect to have a solution towards affordable housing, finding a way to check on the cost of plot of land in the city, among other key issues that will encourage formal settlement in the City of Kigali."

A recent study conducted by the City of Kigali in collaboration with the Ministry of Infrastructure and the European Union (EU) indicated that Kigali could face a housing deficit of up to 350,000 residential units in the next 10 years if nothing is done to address the current shortage.

This housing deficit arises from the growing rate of rural-urban migration, currently at about 4.8 per cent, creating need for more houses. The demand for decent homes in the city and up-country is also driven by the high rate of urbanisation, according to experts.

With urbanisation growing at 4.1 per cent, and almost 17 per cent of the population living in urban areas, like Kigali, Musanze and Huye, investments in real estate development are essential to ensure sustainable supply of decent homes countrywide.

Industry experts say, as the government targets 35 per cent rate of urbanisation by 2020, it is critical to attract more investors into the real estate sector to meet the increasing demand of housing in the country.

How to get around it

Jiyon Shin, a senior researcher at the urban planning advisory group for Korea's Capital Seoul Metropolitan, said the issue of affordable housing is even evident in developed countries-suggesting that a public private partnership can serve as the quickest solution.

"Affordable housing is an issue for Seoul as well, but we believe building proper housing for citizens-in terms of having both small units and medium units for families - will bridge the gap. We are also encouraging the private sector to invest in affordable housing for citizens by putting into consideration the minimum wage of the majority," said Shin.

He added that the Seoul government has to offer needed incentives like infrastructure to facilitate the development of affordable housing and offering Full Area Ratio Incentive (how high you can build the structure).

According to the Kigali city master plan, at least 43,436 social houses and 186,163 affordable houses will required annually, reflecting 54 per cent housing demand.

Rwanda Housing Authority's (RHA) Director General Didier Sagashya said providing affordable housing "will not happen in a day" but with ongoing projects, affordable homes in Kigali might be realised sooner than later.

"There are about 500 affordable housing units under construction in Batsida, with some other affordable units to be built in Busanza, Nyamirambo and Ndera sectors among others, totaling over 4000 affordable housing units that we hope will bridge the initial housing gap," Eng. Sagashya said.

He added that RHA is in discussion with other stakeholders to chart ways on how financial institutions can slash bank loan interests for estate developers to encourage building of affordable homes.

"Everyone belongs to a certain range of affordable house. We are looking at houses that can cater for people who pay on a monthly basis an amount between Rwf60,000 to Rwf300,000," he said.

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RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

Four Kenyans found guilty of Uganda bombing

By Fred Makana/standardmedia.co.ke/Fri, May 27th 2016

Four Kenyans were yesterday found guilty of involvement in the 2010 Kampala terrorist bombing that left 74 people dead.

The four were among eight suspects facing murder and terror charges. The same court also found two Tanzanian brothers guilty of playing a central role in the twin attacks; at a restaurant and a rugby club in the Ugandan capital. Three other Kenyans were freed after the court failed to find sufficient evidence linking them to the terror attacks. Uganda High Court judge Alfonse Owiny-Dollo convicted the four; Idris Magondu, Hassan Hussein Agade, Habib Suleiman Njoroge and Mohamed Ali of murder and terrorism. The maximum murder sentence in Uganda is death. Another Kenyan Yahya Suleiman Mbuthia (brother to Suleiman Njoroge) was acquitted after the prosecution failed to prove he was involved in the attacks.

The brothers were arrested in September 2010 in connection with the blasts. Mr Njoroge was arrested at the Malaba border trying to sneak into Uganda.

Mr Mbuthia, a journalist working for Salama FM station in Mombasa, was arrested later by the anti-terrorism police unit. DEEPLY INVOLVED “The court is satisfied that Habib Suleiman Njoroge brother of Suleiman Mbuthia (who has been acquitted) was deeply involved in the Kampala attacks and finds him guilty,” ruled Justice Owiny-Dollo.

The judge made a finding that those convicted of terrorism offences had “a meeting of minds” with the common purpose of bombing. The court also acquitted two other Kenyans; Muhammed Hamid Suleiman and Mohammed Awadh. They were acquitted alongside Abubakari Batemetyo (Ugandan) after the prosecution failed to prove that they were involved in the attacks. Isa Ahmed Luyima from Tanzania, who is said to have been the mastermind of the bombing, was the first to be found guilty of executing the terror attacks alongside Seleman Hajar Nyamandondo (Tanzanian). The twin blasts organised by Somalia’s Al Shabaab targeted football fans watching the World Cup final between the Netherlands and Spain at a restaurant and a rugby club in the Ugandan capital. The 13 suspects were charged on a range of charges, including terrorism, murder and membership of a terrorist organisation.

The trial of the 13 suspects started in March 2015, but was delayed after the lead prosecutor was killed.

SOUTH AFRICA :

South Africa passes land expropriations bill

aljazeera.com/2016/05/27

Some groups critical of bill allowing compulsory purchase in public interest that ruling ANC says will tackle injustice.

South Africa has passed a bill criticised by some opposition parties and farming groups that allows the compulsory purchase of land in the public interest.

The bill, approved by parliament on Thursday, will enable the state to pay for land at a value determined by a government adjudicator and then expropriate it for the "public interest", ending the willing-buyer, willing-seller approach to land reform.

Twenty years after the end of apartheid, most of South Africa's land is still white-owned and the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party says the legislation will tackle an injustice and put more land in black hands.

The national assembly initially passed the bill in February before it was sent for amendments and it remains only for President Jacob Zuma to sign it into law.

Tough times

Many commercial and small-scale producers in South Africa are currently facing tough times because of the worst drought in at least a century.

Experts say the bill will not signal the kind of often violent land grabs that took place in neighbouring Zimbabwe, where white-owned farms were seized by the government for redistribution to landless blacks.

"The passing of the bill by parliament is historic and heralds a new era of intensified land distribution programme to bring long-awaited justice to the dispossessed majority of South

Africans," the ANC said in a statement.

Some economists and farming groups have said that the measure could hit investment and production at a time when South Africa is emerging from drought - pointing to the serious economic damage arising from farm seizures in Zimbabwe.

They have also complained about a lack of clarity on how it will work.

The ANC says land will only be expropriated after "just and equitable" compensation has been paid.

Around eight million hectares (20 million acres) of land have been transferred to black owners since apartheid, equal to eight to 10 percent of the land in white hands in 1994.

The total is only a third of the 30 percent targeted by the ANC.

TANZANIA :

KENYA :

Closing the world's largest refugee camp in Kenya could fan the flames of terrorism

May 26 /washingtonpost.com

AS WORLD leaders gathered in Istanbul this week for the World Humanitarian Summit, Kenya's government dropped a bombshell announcement — that it plans to close the Dadaab refugee camp in six months, which with 400,000 mostly Somali residents is the largest in the world. Deputy President William Ruto said the camp is a "center for recruitment, radicalization and training and planning for terrorist attacks by al-Shabab." Kenya undoubtedly is on the front line against terrorism and has been a key ally of the United States in combating al-Shabab Islamist extremists in Somalia. But closing the camp would be not only a grave violation of international law but also a humanitarian and security disaster.

This is not the first time that the Kenyan government has engaged in reckless rhetoric about the Dadaab camp. It threatened to close the facility after an al-Shabab attack at Garissa University in April 2015, prompting protests from rights groups and governments around the world. The latest announcement appears similarly linked to current events: The European Union cut a \$3.4 billion deal with Turkey to help stem the flow of refugees coming into Europe. Earlier this month, the government of Niger asked for \$1.2 billion from Europe to keep migrants from crossing the sea to Europe. Possibly the government of Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta hopes to extract its own ransom for Dadaab's upkeep. Meanwhile as election season in Kenya heats up, the scapegoating of refugees from Somalia provides a welcome distraction from other issues, such as the government's corruption and its counterterrorism failures.

Closure would be unacceptable. Beyond the devastating human toll, shutting the camp and sending hundreds of thousands back to Somalia would be logistically close to impossible. Dadaab, which has existed for nearly 25 years, is so big that it would be Kenya's third-largest town. A significant part of its population has known no other home. Forcibly repatriating hundreds of thousands of

residents to Somalia could boost al-Shabab's terrorism. Large numbers of helpless and vulnerable people would provide a fertile recruiting ground for militants.

There is no reason for donor countries or the United Nations to give in to Kenya's blackmail. While following through on existing financial commitments of support, they should make clear that the camp's closure is a red line that would provoke a shutdown of all aid to the Kenyatta government.

However, this saga highlights a need for a more sustainable approach to supporting refugees in Dadaab. After almost 25 years, it is time for Kenya and the world to admit that the camp has become much more than a temporary shelter. Residents of Dadaab live in a constant state of unbearable limbo — banned from working legally in Kenya and unable to return safely to Somalia. The goal should be to find a way to allow Dadaab residents to contribute formally to the Kenyan economy. Figuring out a way to give refugees and camp residents greater economic and human rights would offer more of a buffer against terrorism than would throwing helpless people back into harm's way.

Kenya works towards green economy in 2030, says President Uhuru

May. 27, 2016/the-star.co.ke

President Uhuru Kenyatta has announced Kenya's plans to transition to a green economy by 2030. The commitment comes as the country moves to affirm its position as the world's environment capital.

Uhuru said Kenya's strategy is to rapidly increase its share of renewable energy and reduce reliance on fossil fuels. "As a country, we have taken steps for a resilient planet. We are seeking to harness geothermal, wind, water and in future the sun to power Kenya," he said yesterday when he officially opened the second United Nations Environment Assembly in Gigiri.

The UNEA is the world's de facto environment parliament. The first UNEA took place in June 2014 at the Unep headquarters in Nairobi. An economy is considered green enough if it promotes health, wealth, and well-being, and grows sustainably without sacrificing social justice, equity as well as the environment.

Uhuru said African countries would suffer most from the fast degrading environment. "Most countries in Africa depend on agriculture and they also have the most to gain from protecting the environment," he said.

A Unep report released last year said under a green economy scenario – with an investment of two per cent of GDP – Kenya's per capita national income would nearly double from \$499 (Sh39,897) to \$871 (Sh69,702). Under a business-as-usual investment scenario and a two per cent investment, the GDP would only increase to \$664.30 (Sh53,146) over the same period of time.

Total ivory ban

In his speech, Uhuru said Kenya will seek a total ban on ivory trade at the upcoming CITES meeting in South Africa. That stand has been opposed by Tanzania and Zimbabwe, who still want to sell their ivory stockpiles. "We torched 105 tonnes of ivory and 103 tonnes of rhino horn in April to show that ivory is worthless unless it is on an elephant," he said.

UN deputy secretary general Jan Eliasson said elevation of Unep to a global membership body has raised Nairobi's profile in the UN structure. He urged more countries to sign the Paris Agreement

that commits countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

“At last environment is being elevated to its rightful place in global policymaking,” he said. “There is a false notion that we must choose between environment protection and economic growth.”

South Korea's president to visit Kenya

By CYRUS OMBATI/standardmedia.co.ke/Fri, May 27th 2016 .

South Korea's President Park Geun-hye is scheduled to arrive in Nairobi on Monday for a three-day visit. During the visit, Park will sign bilateral agreements with her host, President Uhuru Kenyatta. Park, who is currently in Ethiopia, is on a tour of Africa. She is also scheduled to visit Uganda. While in Nairobi, she is expected to meet President Kenyatta, business leaders and deliver a speech at the UN office in Nairobi. According to Korean Ambassador to Kenya Young Dae Kwon, Park will arrive with a delegation of more than 200 people, who include businessmen and government officials. Kwon said a Memorandum of Understanding on security, health, agriculture, ICT, trade and culture will be signed. "Korea leads in e-government issues and that is what we would like to happen in Kenya because this will help in economic growth and promote transparency and efficiency. We will also have agreements on security, where we will share experience with Kenya on management of border and terrorism issues among others," said Kwon. He said Korean health and supplementary food projects will also be inaugurated. Kwon said they have a programme for health-care support, food production and cultural exchanges in Africa. Korea is also supporting an agriculture research centre in Kiambu.

ANGOLA :

Angola Yellow Fever Cases Increase 33% in Past 5 Weeks - WHO

27.05.2016/sputniknews.com

Angola has suffered 2,536 cases of yellow fever as of May 25, a one-third increase from 1098 cases in the previous report on April 19, the World Health Organization reported in a press release.

WASHINGTON (Sputnik) — Yellow fever is spread by the same mosquito species responsible for transmitting the Zika virus throughout the Americas. However, no vaccine exists for Zika while yellow fever epidemics can be brought under control with widespread inoculations.

"The outbreak in Angola remains of high concern due to persistent local transmission in [the capital of] Luanda despite the fact that more than seven million people have been vaccinated," the release stated on Thursday. "Local transmission has been reported in seven highly populated provinces including Luanda."

Since the outbreak of the Angola epidemic in December 2015, 301 people have died from yellow fever.

Outbreaks of yellow fever have been reported in more than 30 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, according to the World Health Organization.

AU/AFRICA :

Africa is the worst hit by global electricity shortfall - World Bank
africanews.com/2016/05/27

A lot need to be done to ensure access to reliable electricity for African's citizens. However a number of complications are hindering the achievement of UN sustainable goal.

Access rates are expanding in many nations, and technology and design improvement are on the way in offering opportunities for a rapid growth.

According to the World Bank, about 1.1 billion people on earth are without access to electricity, from the figure, about half live in Africa.

The Bank's Global Tracking Framework shows progress is being made to deliver electricity to those without, most of it is taking place in Asia, but in Africa, it is a different story.

The continent of Africa is barely able to keep up with its population growth, and current steady gains are not enough to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

It is an underlying assumption that access to energy is a requirement for achieving many of the UN's SDGs.

Many African countries lack comprehensive national strategies to guide their efforts.

Government, the private sector, civil society, development organizations and financiers all have an important role to play and must be given a place at the table.

Governments have a responsibility to oversee sector development, drive the electricity access agenda, provide (or arrange) financing, and ensure effective regulations and active citizen engagement.

Development partners need to understand where they can add the greatest value.

Another complication toward universal energy access in Africa are the many utilities suffering financial distress. World Bank plays a key role in helping to guide government and utilities toward a more stable and effective power sector.

Bank support has contributed to significant increases in energy access rates. In Rwanda, for example, access jumped from 6 percent in 2009 to 22 percent in 2015.

Tanzania increased access from 2.5 percent in 2010 to around 24 percent in 2014. In Kenya, electricity access increased from 23 percent in 2009 to 50 percent today.

A second challenge has been the use of urban technical standards in rural areas where demand is significantly lower.

In Africa, low-cost options like Single Phase Reticulation, Single Wire-Earth Return (SWER), Shield Wire Systems (SWS), and the associated cost-effective design of transmission expansion, have been successfully introduced in Ghana, Namibia, Togo, Burkina Faso and South Africa. They could be replicated elsewhere.

With an ambitious target of providing clean, affordable, quality-verified off-grid lighting to more than 250 million people across sub-Saharan Africa by 2030, the World Bank Group's Lighting Africa program addresses both supply and demand through a market-tested combination of policy development, quality assurance, market intelligence, access to finance, business support and consumer awareness.

The Bank has provided electricity to 14 million people in under six years, and the market is growing at 141 percent annually.

As it is the case globally, the effort to provide universal, sustainable energy access to Africa requires public and private partners coming together to invest in generation, transmission, distribution and off grid solution.

UN/AFRICA :

US/AFRICA :

CANADA/AFRICA :

SA deploys 301 firefighters to Canada
2016-05-27/Lizeka Tandwa, News24

Johannesburg – Canada will be receiving the aid of 301 South African firefighters who will assist the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC) with their fire suppression efforts at the province of Alberta.

"CIFFC have sent a formal request for assistance to their international partners including Working on Fire," according to a statement from Working on Fire.

"This deployment of wildland firefighters is the biggest South African deployment ever outside of the army to assist a foreign country."

Firefighters will be leaving on Sunday on a Canadian Airways plane chartered by Canada.

"There are a number of priority fires that require human resources especially the Fort McMurray, Alberta fire with more than of 500 000 hectares already burnt," it said.

In April, Working on Fire held a deployment boot camp in Gauteng to prepare 400 South African firefighters for deployment and to meet international standards.

Working on Fire said it has been praised for its Integrated Fire Management services and products which were successfully implemented in Chile and Australia.

“We are proud of our South African firefighters from our Working on Fire programme and we no doubt believe that they will do us proud to provide these essential services to Canada.”

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

EU/AFRICA :

CHINA/AFRICA :

The next wave of Sino-African opportunities

By Robert Gumede/howwemadeitinafrica.com/27 May 2016'

There is a misinformed notion that Africa's rise is being hijacked by China. There are claims that at the moment when South Africa, for example, has found the momentum to emerge as a developing economy amidst the budding continent, its resources and talent are routinely exploited by a nation undertaking a “no strings attached” integration policy, one serving as the root of American investment trepidation.

Our best chance of growth, they claim, is being cut away from us by the Chinese, who want to prune it before it can flower.

This is, of course, nonsense.

China is no doubt in Africa, and they are looking for business; win-win partnerships. But China's trade and investment is to be welcomed; if Africa is to continue its awakening, it needs to connect with the economic giants, and China is one of the best partners we could hope for. After over 400 years of colonialism, almost every new energy power station, hospital, school, roadway, water purification centre, railway, port or food security enterprise has been funded and built by China in unique partnership with African countries.

President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping proposed at the Johannesburg Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in December of 2015 the concept of our strategic partnership; moreover, its ability to flourish through governance offering guidance, business playing a lead role and such win-win cooperation promoted throughout the multilateral engagements in Africa to date and in future.

I have often participated at similar forums in Beijing, Shanghai and of course at home in Johannesburg, bringing together officials and business leaders to discuss the role of Chinese policy and investment. It has been enlightening and encouraging to hear about the good that China has done for Africa, and the ambitious plans it has for the years to come. The China-Africa Development Fund under Pan Africanist Chairman Chi (for example) has been further capitalised to make innovative investments, especially in the industrialisation of African countries in order to

create sustainable jobs. And since my country joined BRICS, we have seen partnerships such as this blossom.

It is true that there have been tensions in the relationship. But officials from China have been at pains to reassure that Chinese companies will strictly abide by local laws and regulations, hold themselves accountable for the quality of their projects, goods and to consumers, and “shoulder due responsibility” for local communities and the environment.

The reality is that China has been a vital catalyst in African growth in recent years and this cannot be overlooked. China’s trade with Africa has overtaken that of the traditional partners, Europe and the US. China-Africa trade is now at \$300bn, with more than 2,500 Chinese companies operating on the continent.

Take Nigeria, for example: trade between Nigeria and China in 1994 was \$90m but by 2000, it had climbed to about \$830m. Last year, it was \$15bn.

And, such as in resource-rich Nigeria, energy is a key area where Chinese expertise can help.

Akinwumi Adesina, president of the African Development Bank, stated that by 2025 there is absolutely no reason why Africa should not be “totally lit up with the power it needs to industrialise”.

“While we must explore every single opportunity, we will use the sun until the sun becomes the moon,” he said. And as the world’s biggest manufacturer of solar panels, China is an obvious partner when it comes to tapping into the ample renewable energy of sunlight that shines over Africa. Indeed the Africa game-changer 40,000 MW Grand INGA Hydro Project will only see light if China, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), African Union (AU) and South Africa join hands.

With Chinese and African entrepreneurs like me, the days of “Black Africa” will be a thing of the past as new energy projects from Cape Town to Cairo will power and light up our economies.

However, while at the end of last year, China and the African Union agreed on an ambitious plan to develop road, rail and air transport routes to link capitals across the continent, social responsibility projects to coincide have been overwhelmingly encouraged. Indeed Takyiwaa Manuh, Director of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), commented that Chinese firms will be doing much more in the sectors of infrastructure development and importantly, alongside it, technical education and training (such as agricultural training and other vocational exercises) as part of a necessary ‘soft infrastructure’ approach to support lasting economic modernisation and industrialisation.

No doubt a well-functioning road network will bring trade to cities and villages across the continent, helping African countries enhance their connectivity and break their development bottleneck. And while China has already completed 1,046 projects in Africa, building 2,233 km of railways, 3,530 km of roads and over 132 schools and hospitals, such ‘soft infrastructure’ initiatives will allow for sustainable development to be a mutually-beneficial realisation.

Thirty years ago, China was just embarking on its program of economic reforms under Deng Xiaoping. Slowly but steadily, Deng’s reforms opened China to foreign investment and the global market, and encouraged private competition. They eventually turned China into one of the fastest-growing economies in the world for over 35 years and raising the standard of living of hundreds of millions of its citizens; surely we can learn from China’s example and support an agenda wholly

tangible and with accountable benchmarks to enhance our shared ascendancy.

I have always said that “I strongly believe the best time to climb on the back of an elephant is when it is on its knees, so that when it rises, you should be on its back”. This mantra applies to African economics.

It is thus critical that Chinese companies partner with African entrepreneurs to secure their investment and sustainable growth, differentiating themselves from the former colonial powers who may have only been interested in dealing with the “big man” than local businesspersons. This mantra will help rid Africa of being labelled and stigmatised as corrupt. And governments are enablers for such partnerships, whilst ensuring businesses invest properly to create jobs and grow the middle class, so as to develop the list of tax payers towards the fiscus.

Frankly, the days of Africa being a begging bowl are over; Africa is so too ready for Chinese business.

Ultimately, while US foreign policy has of late hinged largely on ‘resets’ and ‘pivots’ (and no doubt coming presidential elections will shift this dynamic), Africa and China’s destinies have been and will remain closely linked. The spirit of our founding fathers Nyerere, Mandela, Krumar, Lumumba, Kaunda, Marcus Garvey and Chairman Mao lives on. We supported each other during the struggle for independence; we have forged a relationship of mutual learning in our civilisations and cultures.

We have respected each other’s choices in the path of development according to our national conditions, and we are learning from each other.

INDIA/AFRICA :

On Africa Day, one envoy says it in verse: ‘Tell me... what did I do wrong?’

May 27, 2016/indianexpress.com

The envoys had gathered for the event after initially conveying that it should be postponed following the brutal assault on Congolese youth in New Delhi.

“Hear My Cry Oh! Africa
Deep in an unknown chilled cage I lie
Frozen with ice of pain and stained by
My hot African blood suddenly gone cold
Someone must tell me...what did I do wrong?”

This is just one paragraph from a poem written by Samuel Panyin Yalley, High Commissioner of Ghana to India, in memory of Masunda Kitada Oliver, an African post-graduate student of Congolese origin who was beaten to death in Delhi last Friday night.

On Thursday, Yalley distributed the poem to fellow envoys and Indian officials who had gathered here to mark Africa Day. “I was so shocked at the incident, so I penned my thoughts. Justice needs to be done for this young man,” Yalley told The Indian Express.

The envoys had gathered for the event after initially conveying that it should be postponed following the brutal assault on Oliver following a dispute with three men over hailing an

autorickshaw in Vasant Kunj.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Thursday said that Indian shops and establishments in Congo's capital Kinshasa were attacked and gunshots fired, injuring two Indians, in what is believed to be retaliatory attacks over Oliver's killing.

In Delhi, the African envoys said they took "very seriously the firm assurances by the Government of India in its determination to ensure that India continues to serve as a safe, secure and friendly destination for African students".

Led by Eritrea Ambassador Alem Tsehaye Woldemariam, who is also dean of the African diplomatic corps, the envoys wore a sombre look, as they attended the event at the Indian Council for Cultural Relations conference room and auditorium.

Woldemariam started the proceedings with a minute's silence in memory of Oliver. In a written statement, on behalf of African envoys, he said, "The high-ranking officials of the Government of India, after offering deep condolences and regrets, made a number of commitments aimed at ensuring that the concerns raised by the African group were addressed and ultimately resolved."

Nigerian High Commissioner Sola Enikanolaiye said "racism and Afro-phobia" were issues of "major concern". He called Oliver's death a "barbaric attack and a murder in cold blood".

"Such incidents have taken place in Bengaluru, Hyderabad and several parts of the country. It has raised very serious concerns about the safety of African students," he said.

Enikanolaiye said authorities must take "pro-active" steps and "concrete action" against the accused. "Police also need to respond. There have been many instances when there has been lack of response by police," he alleged.

Referring to the Oliver incident, Mbuya Isaac G Munlo, High Commissioner of Malawi, said it was a "day of reflection". "The challenge for us is to reflect. It is usually not very easy. We will have to enhance understanding about each other," he said.

Meanwhile, responding to the attacks in Kinshasa, MEA's official spokesperson Vikas Swarup said that a Note Verbale was issued to Congo's Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a copy to the Ministry of Interior and police to ensure the safety of life and property of all Indians residing there.

"It has come to notice of our mission in Kinshasa that some Indian establishments and shops in the commercial areas were attacked on May 23 and May 25 as a reaction perhaps to the killing of the Congolese national in New Delhi last Friday. It has also been reported that there were some gunshots fired injuring a couple of Indians living in the area. Our Ambassador took up the matter immediately with the Congolese Foreign Ministry," said Swarup.

He added that as per latest reports, no further incidents of violence had been reported since Wednesday evening.

Concluding his poem on Oliver's death, the Ghana High Commissioner wrote: "Never let the blood I shed be in vain. Never let my name and pain be forgotten; in this strange land of incredible magic and charms... Let the great rivers of Africa, the Nile, the Great Congo, The Tangayika the Volta, Receive my blood from the Ganges."

BRAZIL/AFRICA :

EN BREF, CE 27 Mai 2016... AGNEWS/DAM, NY, 27/05/2016