

AFRICA : 5 NOVEMBRE 2019 : [NATO - African Union plan closer collaboration]



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Suivre

Dr. Chihombori-Quao is clearly not one of your African comparador intellectuals. Talking about the current state of Africa's underdevelopment and removing from that discourse the experiences from slavery, colonialism, and neocolonialism is disingenuous. AU, reinstate her.



10:07 - 13 oct. 2019

URGENT : Les pays africains membres de l'Union Africaine ont ils été concertés ? Une très grosse erreur géopolitique pour l'Afrique. L'Union Africaine vient de signer un accord de coopération avec l'OTAN. Sachant que c'est l'OTAN qui a détruit la Libye ! [NATO and the African Union signed a new cooperation agreement on Monday (4 November 2019), laying the ground for closer practical and political cooperation between the two organisations.]

AU faces backlash after terminating ambassador's appointment

The African Union is facing a backlash after terminating the appointment of Arikana Chihombori-Quao, its ambassador to the United States.

In a letter addressed to Chihombori-Quao on October 7, AU Commission Chairman Moussa Faki Mahamat said the diplomat was relieved of her position in line with the commission's rules.

BURUNDI :

Burundi / Russie : Forte délégation de la diplomatie burundaise à Moscou

[<http://burundi-agnews.org/diplomatie/burundi-russie-forte-delegation-de-la-diplomatie-burundaise-a-moscou/>]

GLOBALISATION, DIPLOMATIE, DEFENSE, GEOPOLITIQUE – La diplomatie burundaise à Moscou en vue de renforcer la coopération Russie-Burundi

MOSCOU, Lundi 4 novembre 2019 – Dans le cadre de la Politique Etrangère, Globale, de Défense et Diplomatique des Burundi, M. NIBIGIRA Ezechiel, Ministre burundais des Affaires Étrangères, est arrivé en Russie, accompagné d'une délégation importante, pour rencontrer son homologue Russe M. LAVROV Sergueï Viktorovitch, Ministre Russe des Affaires Étrangères.

Ensemble, ils échangeront sur les relations bilatérales Russie-Burundi. De nombreuses rencontres sont prévues avec les responsables des institutions publiques de Russie.

Au niveau des enjeux géopolitiques mondiaux, la Russie est un adjuvant politique très important du Burundi au sein du Conseil de Sécurité de l'ONU.

DAM, NY, AGNEWS, <http://burundi-agnews.org>, Mardi 5 novembre 2019

TANZANIA :

Egyptian team visits Tanzania to follow up construction of Rufiji dam

[<https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/1/77447/Egyptian-team-visits-Tanzania-to-follow-up-construction-of-Rufiji>]

By: Egypt Today staff / Mon, Nov. 4, 2019

CAIRO – 4 November 2019: An Egyptian team, headed by Chief of the Central Agency for Reconstruction Mahmoud Nassar, visited Tanzania to follow up on the construction works of Rufiji Dam and Julius Nyerere electricity Power Station on Rufiji River, stated the agency on Saturday.

The station aims to produce electricity power with a capacity of 2,112 megawatts and is being implemented by the Egyptian Arab Contractors Co., in cooperation with El Sewedy Electric Co., at a cost of \$2.9 billion, the agency's statement added.

The project targets benefitting from Rufiji River in generating energy and preserving the environment, said Nassar, adding that the under-construction dam is 1,025 meters in length, and 131 meters in height, with a storage capacity of about 33.2 billion cubic meters.

On July 8, 2019, Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouli received his Tanzanian counterpart Kassem Majalwaon to discuss ways of joint cooperation between the two countries. According to the statement issued by the Cabinet, the meeting also discussed possibilities of strengthening cooperation in the fields of agriculture, food processing, livestock, energy and medicine.

The volume of trade exchange between Egypt and Tanzania witnessed a remarkable development during 2018, reaching \$47.19 million compared to \$25.41 million in 2017. The trade balance between the two countries is in favor of Egypt at \$37.28 million.

Mining, telecoms grow Tanzania's economy; GDP low

[<https://www.theeastaffrican.co.ke/business/Mining-telecoms-grow-tanzania-economy-gdp-low/2560-5336110-bd4ssuz/index.html>]

Tuesday November 5 2019 By ROSE MIREMBE / More by this Author

Tanzania's economy expanded by 7.2 per cent in the second quarter of 2019 compared with 6.1 per cent in 2018.

According to A Tanzania National Bureau of Statistics report released recently, the fast growth of the gross domestic product in the April-June 2019 period was due to improved performance of construction, mining and communications sectors.

“The largest share to GDP in the second quarter of 2019 was from tertiary activities which accounted to 41.5 per cent, followed by primary activities by 32.9 per cent and secondary activities had the least share of 25.7 per cent, before adjustment for taxes,” the report said.

Construction recorded the highest growth of 19.6 per cent followed by mining and quarrying (17.2 per cent) and information and communication (10.3 per cent), it said.

The economy grew by 6.6 per cent in the first quarter of 2019 and government expects full-year GDP growth to expand by 7.1 per cent this year, up from 7 per cent last year.

In the second quarter, construction recorded a double-digit growth rate, at 19.6 per cent compared with 5.2 per cent in the corresponding quarter of 2018.

RWANDA :

Rwanda: Paul Kagame remanie son gouvernement

[<https://www.agenceecofin.com/politique/0511-70801-rwanda-paul-kagame-remanie-son-gouvernement>]

(Agence Ecofin) - Au Rwanda, le président Paul Kagame (photo) a effectué un remaniement ministériel ce lundi. C'est ce que rapporte le site d'information rwandais New Times, de sources officielles.

L'une des conséquences majeures du nouveau remaniement est le remplacement de Richard Sezibera, ministre des Affaires étrangères depuis octobre 2018. Il cède sa place à Vincent Biruta, ancien ministre de l'Environnement.

Le nouveau poste de ministre de la Sécurité intérieure sera désormais occupé par le général Patrick Nyamvumba, qui a été chef d'état-major des Forces de défense du Rwanda (FDR). Un changement important, environ un mois après une attaque menée par un groupe rebelle près de la frontière avec la République démocratique du Congo (RDC) et qui a fait une dizaine de morts.

Le ministère de l'Environnement sera quant à lui occupé par Jeanne d'Arc Mujawamariya, tandis que le ministère des Sports sera désormais dirigé par Aurore Mimosa Munyangaju, qui remplace Espérance Nyirasafari.

Moutiou Adjibi Nourou

RDC CONGO:

Investissement russe dans le rail en RD Congo : "la facture est monstrueuse"

[<https://www.france24.com/fr/20191028-rdcongo-russie-investissement-sotchi-rail-congolais-facture-monstrueuse>]

Au sommet de Sotchi, la Russie a signé un contrat d'investissement dans le réseau ferroviaire de RDC. Les 500 millions de dollars mis sur la table ne suffiront pas à réhabiliter des infrastructures "en ruine", selon le chercheur Thierry Vircoulon.

Publicité

Lors du premier sommet Russie-Afrique, à Sotchi, les autorités russes ont affiché leur ambition de doubler, d'ici cinq ans, les échanges avec le continent. Parmi les contrats signés, celui engageant la société de chemin de fer russe RJD à investir dans le réseau ferroviaire de la République démocratique du Congo. Le contrat s'élève à "500 millions de dollars", selon la présidence congolaise.

Sur les 2,3 millions de km² de son territoire, la RD Congo dispose d'un réseau de rails de 5 000 km datant de l'époque coloniale. Ce réseau est éclaté en quatre zones sans interconnexions. Les déraillements sont fréquents – le dernier date de la mi-septembre, dans la région du Tanganyika.

"Ce réseau ferroviaire est en ruine", estime Thierry Vircoulon, chercheur à l'IFRI et spécialiste de l'Afrique centrale. "Il faut tout refaire : les rails, les machines, les trains, l'alimentation électrique. La facture est monstrueuse, il faudra un grand nombre d'années pour réhabiliter ce réseau et rentabiliser l'investissement." D'où le scepticisme du chercheur : "Cet accord a été signé parce que le partenaire congolais est demandeur, mais l'entreprise russe n'aura jamais le financement nécessaire. Moscou a signé beaucoup d'accords qui n'ont aucun sens financièrement parlant. Comme lorsqu'il s'est engagé à construire des centrales nucléaires au Soudan. Ça fait sourire quand même", tranche le chercheur.

>> À lire aussi sur France 24 : "La Russie veut bousculer l'ordre établi en Afrique"

L'affaire est tout de même assez sérieuse pour que la visite d'une délégation russe soit prévue à Kinshasa le 10 novembre 2019, selon le compte Twitter de Kasongo Mwema, porte-parole du président congolais Félix Tshisekedi.

Or, en RDC, non-seulement le réseau ferroviaire est en piteux état, mais la société des chemins de fer est aussi critiquée pour sa mauvaise gestion, autant par la Ligue congolaise de lutte contre la corruption que par la Banque mondiale. Dans un rapport datant de juin 2019 et dont RFI a obtenu copie, la situation financière de la Société nationale des chemins de fer du Congo est jugée "malsaine", voire "en faillite". Un plan social impliquant un tiers des employés – quelque 4 000 personnes –, et des travaux pour la réhabilitation des wagons et locomotives ont été mis en œuvre, et malgré cela, les auteurs de ce rapport se disent "hautement insatisfaits" des résultats et redoutent que les investissements ne survivent pas à la fin du projet. La Banque Mondiale avait investi dans le secteur du transport en RDC près de 400 millions de dollars en cinq ans.

"C'est un contrat d'apparat"

Quel intérêt aurait alors la Russie à promettre des investissements dans le rail congolais ? D'autres marchés – militaires, énergétiques – sont-ils liés ? "L'expérience des Chinois, qui ont financé des

infrastructures en échange de l'accès au minerai, a montré que ce type de 'deal' n'était pas rentable. L'enjeu pour la Russie est surtout diplomatique. C'est un de ces contrats d'apparat, qui permettent au président congolais de dire à son peuple qu'il œuvre pour son pays, et au Kremlin, d'être visible sur la scène internationale à peu de frais : ça ne coûte pas trop cher de signer un contrat", estime Thierry Vircoulon.

La Russie a entamé une politique de rapprochement avec la RDC, comme elle l'a fait en Centrafrique, en nouant avec Kinshasa une coopération militaire, notait déjà RFI au printemps 2018.

"Pour ce faire, Kinshasa a exhumé une convention de presque vingt ans, et jamais mise en application, jusqu'à maintenant. Mais l'objectif, à terme, c'est une coopération économique et commerciale dans les secteurs des mines, des énergies et de l'agriculture", décrypte la radio d'information internationale, citant un communiqué russe.

Selon des médias russes, le gouvernement de RDC tout comme ceux du Niger et de la Guinée ont conclu des accords avec une agence fondée par un homme d'affaires russe lié au Kremlin, Konstantin Malofeev. M. Malofeev, qui fait l'objet de sanctions américaines et européennes pour son implication dans le conflit ukrainien, conseillera les trois pays sur les moyens de réunir plus de 2,5 milliards de dollars pour la construction d'un oléoduc au Niger et la construction de chemins de fer et de routes en Guinée et en RDC. L'agence de M. Malofeev, l'Agence internationale pour le développement souverain (IASD), a été créée cette année et tenait un énorme stand en marge du sommet Russie-Afrique à Sotchi.

Avec AFP

La RDC et ses voisins s'accordent à prévenir les conflits dans les Grands lacs

[<https://www.digitalcongo.net/article/5dc19150becd760004ec49f7/>]

Kinshasa 05-11-2019 Société - L'occasion a été propice aux représentants des plates-formes des confessions religieuses de l'Angola, du Burundi, de la Centrafrique, du Congo, du Soudan du Sud, du Rwanda et de la RDC d'échanger sur les défis qui minent la sous-région des Grands-lacs en matière de la paix et de la sécurité.

Les plateformes des confessions religieuses des six pays de la sous-région des Grands-lacs ont mis sur pied une Plateforme interconfessionnelle destinée à prévenir les conflits dans les Grands lacs.

C'est dans ce cadre qu'un cadre de concertation et de coordination dénommé « Plateforme interconfessionnelle Dignité et Paix Grands Lacs » sur la prévention des conflits dans les pays de la sous-région. Les représentants des plateformes des Confessions religieuses sont issus de l'Angola, du Burundi, de la République centrafricaine, du Congo, du Soudan du Sud, du Rwanda et de la RDC.

C'est le résultat d'un atelier organisé du lundi 28 octobre au vendredi 1er novembre 2019 à Tour de Peilz en Suisse et qui a regroupé les différentes plates-formes des confessions religieuses citées ci-haut.

L'information a été livrée au public par l'abbé Donatien Nshole, Secrétaire général de la CENCO, à l'issue de la messe mensuelle de cette institution le lundi 4 novembre 2019, au Centre interdiocésain à Kinshasa.

Les participants à cet atelier ont, à l'unanimité, confié la présidence au Président de la CENCO, Mgr Marcel Utembi, Archevêque de Kisangani.

Ce dernier a tenu à souligner que toutes les réflexions faites et les résolutions prises sont conformes à la doctrine sociale de l'Eglise catholique.

La plateforme a été créée pour permettre aux participants de se convenir sur les actions concrètes à mener pour faire face aux défis identifiés. Les activités ont donc été sanctionnées par des recommandations et une déclaration.

Raymond Okeseleke L.

UGANDA:

Uganda in Cape Town to promote oil and gas

[<https://www.busiweek.com/uganda-in-cape-town-to-promote-oil-and-gas/>]

5th November 2019 EABW Editor0 Comments

Uganda's Minister of Energy and Mineral Development Irene Muloni, is leading a delegation of private and public sector players from Uganda's oil and gas sector at Africa Oil Week 2019, 4th to 8th November 2019 in Cape Town, South Africa.

"Uganda is promoting the country's highly progressive and lucrative hydrocarbon sector during the Africa Oil Week.

"Over the course of the week, we will hold a National Showcase, highlighting the ongoing second licensing round for oil exploration, which covers five highly prospective blocks with relatively good seismic and other data. Uganda is open for business," said Muloni.

Uganda's Oil and Gas sector offers exciting opportunities for investment in the ongoing exploration activities in the three licensed blocks.

The recently announced second licensing round for petroleum exploration covering five new blocks, preparation of the discovered oil fields in the Kingfisher and Tilenga projects for production and putting in place infrastructure commercialization of the discovered 6 billion barrels of in-place oil and gas resources.

"During the Africa Oil Week, we will detail our Government's strategy to ensure the oil and gas sector provides value to both the investors and the country. We will host private meetings with the global private sector in order to attract investment in the highly lucrative projects," added Muloni.

Ernest Rubondo, Executive Director of the Petroleum Authority of Uganda, the country's oil and gas regulatory agency said Uganda's oil and gas sector, offers a highly stable regulatory and institutional environment, that is structured to position the country as a sound investment destination.

"Africa Oil Week brings together a wide network of Global Oil and Gas operators and Governments in Africa. We, therefore, look forward to meeting with our colleagues from other nations, together with the operators, investors, service companies during this year's Africa Oil Week," said Rubondo.

Proscovia Nabbanja, the Chief Executive Officer of the Uganda National Oil Company (UNOC) said her body was delighted to be part of a large premier platform at the AOW that allows them to network and share information on our strategic projects.

"UNOC strongly believes in strategic partnerships and AOW provides the right platform for this".

This development highlights the importance of Oil Week and the fact that it continues to drive new business opportunities for Exploration and Production companies in Africa.

On top of the 12 confirmed ministers who will lead delegations to AOW, we now have a partnership with the Government of Uganda to host a huge opportunity for the global private sector to

exclusively engage and hold private meetings regarding oil and gas opportunities at Africa Oil Week.

Uganda welcomes all delegates at the Africa Oil Week 2019, that started on 4th and will run till 8th November 2019, to partner in one of the most commercially viable and prospective oil and gas environments in Africa.

On 6th November 2019 at 4 pm, the Uganda delegation, will promote the country's second licensing round and other opportunities for investment.

SOUTH AFRICA :

South Africa-Ireland Joint Commission: Agriculture, science in the spotlight

[<https://www.thesouthafrican.com/news/south-africa-ireland-joint-commission-agriculture-science-spotlight/>]

Dirco's Deputy Minister, Alvin Botes, has led a delegation to Dublin, where he will co-chair the inaugural South Africa-Ireland Joint Commission for Cooperation with the Minister of the State for the Diaspora and International Development of Ireland, Mr Ciarán Cannon. What is the South Africa-Ireland Joint Commission all about? The Joint Commission is an engagement [...]

by Andile Sicetsha / 2019-11-05 15:38 / in News

Dirco's Deputy Minister, Alvin Botes, has led a delegation to Dublin, where he will co-chair the inaugural South Africa-Ireland Joint Commission for Cooperation with the Minister of the State for the Diaspora and International Development of Ireland, Mr Ciarán Cannon.

What is the South Africa-Ireland Joint Commission all about?

The Joint Commission is an engagement between South Africa and Ireland that takes place for the first time in 2019, with the view that the two nations will come together, at least once a year, to strengthen and expand "cooperation in line with the priorities of the two governments, particularly in the areas of agriculture, science and technology, education, arts and culture and development cooperation."

This commission is nothing but a way to formalise the bilateral relations that have existed between South Africa and Ireland since 2004. (...)

Government's new plan to draw R1.2 trillion in investments to South Africa

Staff Writer 4 November 2019

[<https://businesstech.co.za/news/government/351103/governments-new-plan-to-draw-r1-2-trillion-in-investments-to-south-africa/>]

President Cyril Ramaphosa will lead the second South Africa Investment Conference to be held at the Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, from 5 to 7 November 2019.

In a statement on Monday (4 November), the presidency said that the annual conference is a key milestone in the country's bold ambition to raise R1.2 trillion in new domestic and intentional investment over the next five years.

"This year's conference will highlight the positive steps government is making to improve the investment environment and the progress made on last year's investment commitments,"

"It will also serve as a platform for government to engage with the local and international investment community in order to promote the investment opportunities in the country and explore new markets," said Ramaphosa.

Ahead of the conference's launch, the government has published a 120-page report focusing on why you should invest in South Africa.

The report focuses on 10 key reasons why you should invest in South Africa, as outlined below.

Vibrant emerging market – Growing middle class, affluent consumer base, excellent returns on investment.

Most diversified economy in South Africa – South Africa has the most industrialised economy in Africa. It is the region's principal manufacturing hub and a leading services destination.

Largest presence of multinationals on the African continent – South Africa is the location of choice for multinationals in Africa. Global corporates reap the benefits of doing business in SA, which has a supportive and growing ecosystem as a hub for innovation, technology and fintech.

Progressive Constitution and independent judiciary – South Africa has a progressive Constitution and an independent judiciary. The country has a mature and accessible legal system, providing certainty and respect for the rule of law.

Favourable access to global markets – The African Continental Free Trade Area will boost intra-African trade and create a market of around 1.3-billion people with a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of USD2.3-trillion that will unlock industrial development. SA has several trade agreements in place, creating an export platform into global markets.

Abundant natural resources – South Africa is endowed with an abundance of natural resources. It is the leading producer of platinum group metals (PGMs) globally. Numerous listed mining companies operate in SA, which also has world-renowned underground mining expertise.

Advanced financial services and banking sector – South Africa has a sophisticated banking sector with a major footprint in Africa. It is the continent's financial hub, with the JSE being Africa's largest stock exchange by market capitalisation.

World-class infrastructure and logistics – A massive governmental investment programme in infrastructure development has been underway for several years. South Africa has the largest air- and sea-ports, as well as logistics networks in Africa, and is ranked number one in Africa in the World Bank's Logistics Performance Index.

Young, eager labour force – South Africa has a number of world-class universities and colleges producing a skilled, talented and capable workforce. The country boasts a diversified skills set, emerging talent, a large pool of prospective workers and government support for training and skills development.

Excellent quality of life – South Africa offers a favourable cost of living, with a diversified cultural, cuisine and sports offering, generally superb weather all year round and a world-renowned hospitality sector.

(...)

KENYA:

Kenya's population has grown by 9.9 million people over the last ten years to reach 47.6 million this year.

[<https://www.kbc.co.ke/kenyas-population-grows-to-47-6-million-people/>]

According to the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census results presented to President Uhuru Kenyatta today at State House Nairobi, the total population enumerated during the census exercise conducted in August this year was 47,564,296 persons.

The results indicate that the female population which stands at 24,014,716 accounts for 50.5 percent of the total population while the male population is 23,548,056 persons.

The 2019 census report, presented to the Head of State by Director General of the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) Zachary Mwangi shows that Nairobi is the most populous county in the country with a population of 4.4 million people followed by Kiambu (2.4), Nakuru (2.16), Kakamega (1.87) and Bungoma (1.67).

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The least populous counties are Lamu(143,920), Isiolo (268,002), Samburu (310,3217), Tana River (315,943) and Taita Taveta (340,671).

Speaking when he officially launched the census report, President Kenyatta said the findings will guide successful planning and implementation of government development initiatives, including the Big Four Agenda programmes.

"These results now provide us with a unique opportunity to realign our development strategies, policies and programmes.

"I therefore direct all Ministries, Departments and Agencies to utilise these results," the Head of State instructed as he urged other arms of government including counties to utilise the results in their planning processes

In addition to being the first census under the 2010 constitution, it was also the first such exercise in the history of Kenya where technology was fully deployed.

"I am proud to note that the mobile devices used in the census were assembled by our local universities and data capture software was internally developed by the Bureau (KNBS)," the President said of the national exercise that was fully funded by the government.

Cabinet Secretaries Fred Matiang'i (Interior), Joe Mucheru (ICT) and Ukur Yattani (National Treasury) were among several senior government officials at this year's census results launch ceremony.

In Kenya's fight against al-Shabab, locals say the military is fighting terror with terror

[<https://www.stripes.com/news/africa/in-kenya-s-fight-against-al-shabab-locals-say-the-military-is-fighting-terror-with-terror-1.605877>]

By MAX BEARAK | The Washington Post | Published: November 4, 2019

KUTULO, Kenya — As the newly elected representative for this remote village of sheep and camel herders out in the expanse of Kenya's red-sand borderlands with Somalia, Issa Ahmed Abdi decided to dig a well for his community.

But the drill made a lot of noise — "like a chopper or a tank," he recalled. "Mothers were running away with children on their backs, like terrified antelope. I had to go into the bush to convince them it wasn't the military."

The people who live here are Kenyan citizens, yet they say they fear their country's military more than al-Shabab, an extremist group that controls the area across the border as well as most of rural southern Somalia, imposing a strict Islamic code and drafting young men into its battles.

Eight years into Kenya's U.S.-backed offensive to combat al-Shabab, both in Somalia and domestically, residents of Kutulo say the Kenyan military is fighting terror with terror. They say the Kenya Defense Forces, or KDF, regularly round up noncombatants from Kenya's ethnic Somali population as a form of collective punishment for al-Shabab attacks on Kenyan soil.

Some detainees are released and sworn to silence about their interrogation. But sometimes a neighbor finds a decomposing body on the side of a road days or months later. Other times, the hyenas that prowl the desert get there first. Human rights groups, local media and the United Nations have documented dozens of allegations of abuse by the Kenyan security forces, including 88 cases of alleged enforced or involuntary disappearance since 1980.

Allegations of abuses against ethnic Somalis have dogged the KDF for decades — starting long before it sent troops into Somalia in 2011. Experts have warned that their clampdowns often serve to radicalize populations instead of contributing to peace, but the KDF has always denied any wrongdoing and rejects any link between its activities and radicalization.

In Kutulo, residents estimate that al-Shabab has recruited hundreds from the area in just over a year, since a local religious teacher was arrested by the KDF in the neighboring village of Aws Mudul and later found dead by herders on a remote dirt road.

"The KDF does what it wants," said Mohamed Elmi, the uncle of Abdulkadir Elmi, 34, the man who was killed. "No one has ever stopped them. Even tonight we will barely sleep, out of fear of them."

The U.S. government has given Kenya's military tens of millions of dollars' worth of training, equipment and other support over the past eight years and "regularly stresses the importance of respecting human rights with all of our Kenyan counterparts at all levels," said Lt. Cmdr. Desiree Frame, a spokeswoman for U.S. Africa Command. The U.S. military has at least 200 service members in Kenya.

Presented with specific allegations made by residents of Kutulo, the KDF issued a blanket denial that its soldiers had in those instances or ever committed such abuses. In a statement, the KDF said any credible allegations would be referred to the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, a watchdog set up by the government.

Jedidah Waruhiu, one of the commissioners of that body, said the KDF has not referred any allegations to her office, nor has the KDF cooperated with her investigators when she has brought them complaints from community members.

"We have not been able to complete one investigation of the KDF," she said in a phone interview. "They have refused us access or cooperation in every case. It frustrates our work greatly."

The Kenyan government has also refused to cooperate with the office of the U.N. special rapporteur for enforced disappearances.

"There are a number of countries that do not cooperate or cooperate only formally with the (special rapporteur's office), for instance by providing standard replies or plainly denying allegations," a September report by the United Nations' forced-disappearance working group said. "For instance, Bangladesh, Eritrea and Kenya have not cooperated ... and (North Korea) has sent standard replies."

Abdulkadir Elmi's mother, Halima Mohamed, remembers the day she got the news her son had been picked up by the KDF. Al-Shabab had recently blown up a KDF transport vehicle with an improvised explosive device, killing eight soldiers.

About a week later, a crowd of onlookers watched as a military vehicle arrived at the Islamic school where Elmi was a teacher. Relatives ran to her home soon after.

"My son had never left this cluster of villages. He was a sober and polite person who lived for his family," she said on a recent day, gathered with her son's three widows and their children. "To this day I can't explain why they took him. No one has ever told me what he was accused of."

Human rights advocates have for years warned of the dangers of what they call the "blanket condemnation" and "collective punishment" of the Somali community in Kenya. Somali Kenyans, who make up the majority of three border counties, are largely poor pastoralists, and signs of government services are minimal.

Many in Kutulo described feeling profiled as terrorists, even if they had no sympathy for al-Shabab. Instead, they felt their lives were caught up in rounds of retribution between the KDF and the extremist group.

"Al-Shabab attacks the KDF, KDF attacks innocent locals, and locals join al-Shabab to get revenge," said Omar Mohamed Ibrahim, the local director of a U.S. Agency for International Development-funded conflict-resolution nonprofit called Peace III, distinguishing al-Shabab's motives in Kenya from its ideology in Somalia. "The cycle here begins because of KDF's instinct to crush. Like many African militaries built by colonial powers, it was built to crush rebellions, not protect citizens."

The KDF opposes that characterization, saying its "personnel are deployed to protect and serve local populations, (and) the primary duty is to ensure that there is peace."

Nearly a decade of deployment hasn't brought peace to Kenya's border with Somalia. Al-Shabab attacks KDF convoys in Kenya frequently and firmly controls a vast, country-size rural area on the Somali side of the border. The KDF declined to say how many of its service members had been killed by al-Shabab, only that its soldiers could not be "reduced to mere numbers" and that "in our hearts they live forever."

The number of abuses attributed to the KDF has decreased in recent years, said Otsieno Namwaya, a researcher for Human Rights Watch who was the author of an 87-page report in 2016 called "Deaths and Disappearances" that documented 34 cases between 2014 and 2016 in which the Kenyan military arrested ethnic Somali Kenyans yet never opened formal investigations. But the

persistence of the allegations indicates the KDF believes its strategy is effective or is permissive about abuses within its ranks, Namwaya said.

"When six out of 10 detainees are wrongly victimized, let's say, or are even killed or disappeared, then you get anger," he said. "And even after doing such things, they expect local communities to cooperate with them on crucial local intelligence. But when locals report al-Shabab movements, instead of working with them, the army says: 'How do you know? You must be one of them.' "

"Kenyan security forces have got it all wrong," Namwaya said. "They are creating the enemy they mean to destroy."

ANGOLA :

Angola forms consortium with five oil firms for \$2 bln LNG project

[<https://uk.reuters.com/article/africa-oil-angola/angola-forms-consortium-with-five-oil-firms-for-2-bln-lng-project-idUKL8N27L6U5>]

Reuters-3 hours ago

CAPE TOWN, Nov 5 (Reuters) - Angola has formed a consortium with five international oil companies including Eni and Chevron to develop ..

Diamonds provide Angola with revenues of US\$294 million in the third quarter of 2019

[<https://macauhub.com.mo/2019/11/05/pt-diamantes-proporcionam-a-angola-uma-receita-de-294-milhoes-de-dolares-no-terceiro-trimestre-de-2019/>]

5 November 2019 | Angola

Diamond sales provided Angola with revenues of US\$294.85 million in the third quarter of 2019, an increase of 11.7% or US\$30.7 million compared to the same period of 2018, according to figures released on Monday in Luanda.

Angolan national diamond trading company, Sodiam reported that this revenue was the result of the sale of 2.94 million carats of diamonds, an increase of 46% or 722,800 carats compared to the third quarter of 2018.

Angola is currently producing around 9 million carats of diamonds, with the Angolan diamond company Endiama intending to produce 14 million carats of diamonds by 2022 as a result of the start of exploration of the Luaxe mine in the province of Lunda Sul.

The United Arab Emirates remains the most important market for Angolan diamond sales, with Sodiam as the exclusive channel for contract and auction sales to diamond cutting units.

Sodiam sold more than 8.4 million carats of diamonds from 12 mines for a total of US\$1.2 billion, or an average price of US\$145.5 per carat, placing Angola among the top five diamond producing countries in the world. (Macauhub)

AFRICAN UNION /UA :

NATO-African Union plan closer collaboration

[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_170512.htm]

NATO and the African Union signed a new cooperation agreement on Monday (4 November 2019), laying the ground for closer practical and political cooperation between the two organisations.

“This is an important step towards bringing our two organisations closer together” said Jonathan Parish, NATO’s Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Operations who signed the agreement on behalf of the alliance. “We are strengthening our political and practical partnership with the African Union so we can better respond to common threats and challenges.”

NATO's cooperation with the African Union (AU) focuses on operational, logistical and capacity-building support. NATO has provided air and sealift to African Union forces, as well as planning support for the African Union peacekeeping mission in Somalia. NATO has also supported the build-up of the African Standby Force through exercises and training. For day-to-day activities, the Alliance maintains a liaison office at the AU’s headquarters in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia.

Today’s agreement, signed in the margins of a two-day NATO-AU symposium held at NATO’s Joint Force Command in Naples, will serve as a starting point for even closer cooperation between the two organisations based on mutual respect and reciprocity. The AU’s Commissioner for Peace and Security, Mr Smaïl Chergui, signed the agreement on behalf of the African Union.

The deal supersedes an earlier NATO-AU cooperation agreement from 2014.

AU faces backlash after terminating ambassador's appointment

[<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/10/16/africa/petition-over-sacking-of-au-ambassador/index.html>]

By Bukola Adebayo, CNN / Updated 2104 GMT (0504 HKT) October 16, 2019

(CNN)The African Union is facing a backlash after terminating the appointment of Arikana Chihombori-Quao, its ambassador to the United States.

In a letter addressed to Chihombori-Quao on October 7, AU Commission Chairman Moussa Faki Mahamat said the diplomat was relieved of her position in line with the commission's rules.

Chihombori-Quao, a US-trained doctor, took up the position in 2017 and had strong views on France's occupation and hold over its former African colonies, which she shared publicly.

The Ghanaian national, who served in various capacities for the African Union before her appointment, has also voiced her disapproval of Western powers, who she says have continued to foster their policies on African governments.

But the African Diaspora Congress, in an online petition demanding her reinstatement, said the diplomat was fired because of "influence and pressure exerted on African leaders and people by the former colonial powers of Europe."

Some were not happy with Chihombori-Quao's "bold but honest" stance on Pan African issues, Apollos Nwauwa, the group's secretary, said in the petition, which had garnered nearly 37,000 signatures by Wednesday night.

"Why was she dismissed, or better, who benefits from her removal? Were African heads of states and governments consulted? Who called the shot? Or is Africa, and peoples of African descent, still facing the debilitating effects of modern colonialism or neocolonialism?" the petition reads.

The spokeswoman for the AU chairman's office, Ebba Kalondo, told CNN that Chihombori-Quao has come to the end of her political appointment after spending three years in the position, and to imply she was being punished for her views is not true.

"This is normal diplomatic practice for political appointees everywhere," Kalondo said in a statement. "To state that Ambassador Chihombori's termination of service is due to any pronouncements she has made, or opinions she may have held during her three-year tenure, is patently untrue."

Chihombori-Quao successfully galvanized diaspora support for the African Union during her tenure, and the African bloc has never sanctioned or received any complaints about her views from any of its member states, Kalondo added.

Ghana's former President Jerry John Rawlings was among those who have condemned the African Union's decision.

Rawlings said in a tweet the diplomat shared her views on the detrimental impact of France's influence in Africa, and termination of her appointment was coming from "French-controlled colonized minds."

CHINA /AFRICA :

China wants state media to peddle its “soft power” in Africa, but tech platforms are a better bet
[<https://qz.com/africa/1736534/china-daily-cgtn-fight-for-influence-in-africa-vs-bbc-cnn/>]

Celine Sui / By Celine Sui October 29, 2019

China’s increasing state-backed media presence in Africa has stoked fears among Western observers. But current evidence shows the plan to increase Chinese soft power through official outlets who portray the Asian giant in a positive light has had limited impact. Instead, it is Africa’s rapidly evolving landscape of digital technology that offers Chinese media influence the most room for growth.

Since coming to power in 2012, president Xi Jinping has repeatedly instructed Chinese state media organizations to tell “compelling Chinese narratives,” and “better communicate China’s message to the world.” The African continent—a major destination for China’s Belt and Road projects, international trade, and private businesses—is at the forefront of this effort.

The Chinese state news agency Xinhua had 28 bureaus across Africa as of February 2018. Though inside sources say that number has dropped to around 20 due to a lack of assignment, it is still a regular contributor of stories to local newspapers and news websites across Africa.

“Honestly, the only real change I see right now is that there was no Chinese media before, but there are some now.”

China Global Television Network (CGTN), formerly known as CCTV Africa, opened its continental headquarters in Nairobi in 2012 and can now be accessed in six UN languages across the continent. Also in 2012, China Daily, another state mouthpiece, began printing a weekly Africa edition. State-backed Chinese investors have bought stakes in African media companies, such as South Africa’s Independent Media. The Chinese are not alone of course. Well-established multinational Western media outlets have been ramping up efforts to engage with Africa’s booming young generation and business professionals. In 2016, CNN launched its multimedia platform in Lagos to increase its digital presence in Nigeria and Bloomberg unveiled its Africa edition in the same year targeting the continent’s growing innovators and influencers. BBC has expanded significantly in Africa in the last few years introducing new language services online in a nearly \$400 million investment two years ago.

Th3 four state media—Xinhua, CGTN, China Radio International, and China Daily have around one hundred people in Kenya. But BBC alone has 300. In fact, Kenya is BBC’s largest bureau outside of the UK, and across the entire continent, BBC has around 600 journalists. This far outnumbers the Chinese: CGTN Africa has approximately 150 staffers in total, according to a source with the majority being local staffers. Xinhua’s headquarters in Nairobi has some 40 Chinese, including family members. China Daily’s Kenya Bureau currently has four staffers with two Chinese.

“Even though China wants to expand its soft power through media, looking from the actual resources on the ground, such as the amount of news here, they cannot support big groups of people here. There is not enough value in doing that,” explained a former senior executive for Xinhua Africa, who asked not to be named as they no longer worked there.

To be sure, while Xinhua and other Chinese state media look small relative to the BBC—whose legacy goes back to the colonial period—Chinese state media’s staff do outnumber American and other Western media outlets such as CNN, Financial Times, and Der Spiegel. But again Chinese

state press do not enjoy the same level of viewership and influence compared to the international corporate news organizations, whose reporting are often featured, cited, and disseminated widely on social media platforms.

Much of the coverage about China's state media in Africa focuses on the expansion without critically examining how Chinese state media outlets are received on the ground. Presence does not necessarily mean influence. "Honestly, the only real change I see right now is that there was no Chinese media before, but there are some now. But we are not nearly as influential as the Western ones such as the BBC," says a reporter from one of the Chinese state media houses who has asked not to be identified.

The potential impact of Chinese state media could be measured by viewership. The number of CGTN viewers is many times smaller than for CNN, the BBC, and Sky News in Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa, according to researchers at the University of Cape Town and Dani Madrid-Morales of the University of Houston.

A CGTN Africa insider privately expressed frustration over how little coverage the broadcaster has given to the Hong Kong protests.

Even among the regular viewers, Chinese state media seems more about having a presence than having influence. A study using focus groups in Kenya and South Africa found that among regular viewers of Chinese state media, opinions of China were "predominantly negative." Another pan-African study in 2016 found similar results in higher ratings of Western media. One reason for limited influence could be the Chinese state media's often defensive position in "countering what it considers to be the Western media's distortion of the Chinese presence on the continent," a former CGTN editor in Africa suggested to The Elephant, a Kenya-based blog.

In other words, the state's international media unilaterally strives to portray the good aspects of China's role in Africa. Amid critical coverage of Chinese debt traps, authoritarian ideology, and environmental destruction, Chinese state media houses emphasize positive changes to communities due to Sino-African economic cooperation. Typical headlines include "50 years on, Chinese doctors relay health and love in Africa" and "China-Africa Friendship helps Africa's socio-economic development: A.U. official."

AP Photo/Vincent Thian

The headquarters of CGTN in Beijing

Painting a rosy picture, while one-sided, is not a malicious act in itself. They sometimes broaden the discussion by supplying alternative perspectives.

But filtering out negative news about China and avoiding sensitivities limit the amount of news and render the available coverage "boring" opined a 2018 piece by The Economist: "When not showing footage of middle-aged Chinese men in suits talking in a room in Beijing, CGTN has middle-aged African men in suits talking in a studio in Nairobi."

Last month, a non-Chinese CGTN Africa insider privately expressed frustration over how little coverage the broadcaster has given to one of the biggest global stories of the year, the Hong Kong pro-democracy protests. The Chinese government has been quite sensitive about how the protests are covered particularly at home in China where Quartz along with other publications have been blocked online for this reason.

You could argue Beijing may not be as committed to increasing its media soft power in Africa as is often claimed given the relatively limited resources of these news organizations on the ground.

However, human resources are not the crux of the issue. Current evidence shows a lag between media presence and amount of influence, partly because the market is already dominated by others, says an editor from one of the state media houses.

Digital Africa

Chinese companies have been quick to realize the massive potential of mobile news in Africa.

While state media struggle to break into the traditional news industry, Chinese private companies are capturing new opportunities to expand Chinese media soft power. The 2019 Digital report by WeAreSocial, recorded 437 million internet users across Africa, and another 2018 report from GSMA predicted Africa would get 300 million new internet users by 2025. Africans are turning to the internet for news and information with expanded mobile access, with social media already sitting as the staple source of news and information in Africa as of 2017. Chinese companies are quick to realize the massive potential of mobile news. One such company is Opera, a Chinese-owned internet company headquartered in Norway. Opera developed Opera News, an AI-curated personalized content stream for news and short videos. Opera News' number of users grew from zero to 21 million in a year.

Similar to Opera News is a site called Scooper owned by Transsion, maker of Tecno phones, which are the most popular phones in Africa. Scooper is now second with users in Kenya and Nigeria after Opera.

Besides news, another powerful factor contributing to soft power is entertainment. While ByteDance made TikTok the most downloaded app of 2018 in the U.S., another Chinese company Transsnet created the African version of short-video platform TikTok—Vskit, which now has over 10 million users.

Soft power is not only defined in political terms, and the most effective way to sway public perceptions of China in the 21st Century will probably originate elsewhere than traditional state media broadcasters and news agencies.

In their journey to reshape how information is accessed and consumed in Africa, novel news platforms developed by Chinese companies are having more success in penetrating African societies in subtle and irresistible ways that might ultimately put traditional media outlets to rest.

Why the US should be worried about South Africa's increasingly close ties with China

[<https://www.theafricareport.com/19443/why-the-us-should-be-worried-about-south-africas-increasingly-close-ties-with-china/>]

By Eric Olander / Posted on Wednesday, 30 October 2019 12:02

On its own, South African Deputy President David Mabuza's week-long trip to Beijing, which started 29 October, will probably not generate a lot of headlines.

But his arrival in the Chinese capital caps a month of small but important milestones that all point to deepening of Sino-South African ties that will likely come at the expense of Pretoria's ties with the United States.

China is already South Africa's largest trading partner and one of its most important sources of foreign investment but the relationship is moving far beyond economics as President Cyril Ramaphosa further embraces the "Look East Policy" that his predecessor, Jacob Zuma, began.

South Africa Deputy President David Mabuza arrived in Beijing for four days of meetings with Chinese officials.

Today, Ramaphosa is one of China's most forceful advocates in Africa, pushing back against the United States on a variety of issues ranging from Huawei to Chinese lending practices.

Even if he is quick to point out that there is "nothing sinister" about South Africa's relationship with China and others.

When a president with the standing of Ramaphosa feels comfortable to stand up to Washington and endorse key Chinese foreign policy objectives, it creates openings for other African leaders to follow suit.

Case in point, just one week after President Ramaphosa accused the United States of being "clearly jealous" of Huawei's advancements in 5G technology, Kenya's ICT Minister Joseph Mucheru similarly rebuffed the United States on the same issue.

Now this alignment between Pretoria and Beijing is extending into the military realm as the two countries, joined by Russia, prepare for their first-ever joint naval exercises next month in South Africa.

What 'Look East' Looks Like

●

DEBT TRAP: In his regular email newsletter to constituents, sent yesterday, President Ramaphosa defended China's lending practices in Africa and echoed Beijing's "win-win" talking points by framing Chinese engagement on the continent as focused "on partnership for mutual benefit."

●

DIPLOMACY: Last week, Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi made a one-day visit to Durban where he met with Ramaphosa. The fact that the visit drew so little press attention is partially indicative of how frequent Wang's visits to the continent have become, to the extent that they are now a normalized part of the African political landscape.

●

DEFENSE: Next month's joint naval exercise with China is only one part of the PLA's increasingly tight relationship with the South African defense establishment. The two countries are now training together in a variety of disciplines and working more closely on military technology R&D.

Taken alone, none of these examples are conclusive.

But together they seem to indicate that momentum is building in this relationship.

Bottom line: As Wang Yi, David Mabuza and their respective militaries become more comfortable with one another, the U.S. could find itself increasingly on the margins of South Africa's defence and foreign policy priorities.

This article first appeared on our partner site, The China Africa Project.

UN / AFRICA :

Deputy UN chief sees real chance for peace in Horn of Africa
[http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-11/05/c_138528424.htm]
Source: Xinhua| 2019-11-05 04:36:22|Editor: yan

UNITED NATIONS, Nov. 4 (Xinhua) -- UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed said Monday that she saw a real chance for peace in the Horn of Africa after a trip to the region, which was focused on women, peace and security, and development.

Mohammed led a joint UN-African Union mission to the Horn of Africa countries of Ethiopia, Djibouti, Eritrea and Somalia on Oct. 21-26. She then visited adjacent Sudan.

"I left all five countries with a sense of hope and optimism. The chance for peace in this region is real. The international community, together with these countries, can find lasting solutions to the complex challenges of the region," Mohammed told the Security Council in a briefing.

Each country is moving at its own pace through a process of reform and transformation. And in all countries, women are playing a critical leadership role in social cohesion, economic revival, and peace, she said.

The leaders of these countries are making concrete efforts to place gender equality and greater representation of women at the heart of reforms in order to reap the benefits of the links between inclusion, stability and peace, and give substance to prevention efforts during complex transitions, she observed.

"The region I saw is a region with some of the fastest-growing economies on the continent, with rich natural resources, extraordinary capacity particularly among their youth, and genuine reforms. These are the elements that we need to support, and the narrative we need to share."

However, she cautioned that the road ahead for the Horn of Africa will not be easy.

The foundations have been laid for a transition from peace to sustainable development. But building on these fragile foundations will require unity and cooperation across the region and common ground internationally to accompany these transitions, she said.

This is particularly the case when it comes to the issue of refugees and internally displaced persons, of which there are tens of thousands, many of them vulnerable to trafficking; and equally in finding regional solutions to protection challenges, including sexual violence, in areas where conflict is still going on, she said.

From 'strength to strength' UN-African Union security partnership growing, Security Council hears
[<https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/10/1050311>]
30 October 2019 / Peace and Security

The Security Council highlighted the growing partnership on matters of peace and security between the United Nations and African Union (AU) on Wednesday amidst calls to bolster overall effectiveness.

“The partnership between the African Union and the United Nations continues to grow from strength to strength”, Hanna Tetteh, Special Representative and Head of the UN Office to the AU told the Chamber via videolink.

In introducing the Secretary-General’s annual report on the partnership, she elaborated on a various mechanisms based on the 2018 Joint UN-AU Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security.

Ms. Tetteh also highlighted joint field visits and consultations between the Security Council and the AU’s Peace and Security Council and noted some “major challenges” that need to be addressed, including workable funding for AU peace operations.

Meanwhile, in her video briefing, AU Ambassador Fatima Kyari Mohammed described the burgeoning cooperation between the two organizations, noting that their combined efforts have contributed to positive recent developments in Sudan, following its major political upheavals this year.

She pointed out that both organizations also prioritize the accelerated implementation of the new 17 August Constitutional Declaration on the full transition from military to civilian rule.

Ms. Mohammed asserted that the two organizations should enhance joint work in technical areas, such as mission planning, financial management and accountability for peace operations.

Following their briefings, Council members similarly welcomed the growing collaboration between the Security Council and the AU’s Peace and Security Council and called for strengthening the relationship further.

UN official calls for more women peacekeepers in Africa

[<https://www.yenisafak.com/en/world/un-official-calls-for-more-women-peacekeepers-in-africa-3504505>]

UN deputy secretary-general urges action against practical obstacles faced by women serving in UN missions

News Service / 12:20 November 05, 2019

Women serving as peacekeepers in Africa are of "critical importance", a UN official said in a call to increase the number of women in UN peacekeeping missions.

Briefing the UN Security Council (UNSC) on her recent Joint Solidarity Mission with the African Union, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed on Monday said: "These women, against all odds, strengthen our protection efforts, increase the credibility of our efforts, engage in local level mediation and make communities feel more at ease."

Mohammed called for the addressing of practical challenges women might face while serving in UN security missions, such as lack of deployment opportunities, according to the UN official website.

"Much more can and should be done," she urged.

The UN aims to double the number of the women serving as military and police peacekeepers by 2020.

According to the latest figures issued by the UN, it has some 110,000 peacekeepers serving in 13 operations around the world, with 4% of those deployed being women.

US/AFRICA :

AFRICOM commander heads to Somalia as airstrikes against violent extremists rise

[<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2019/11/05/africom-commander-heads-to-somalia-as-airstrikes-against-violent-extremists-rise/>]

By: Diana Stancy Correll

U.S. Africa Command commander Army Gen. Stephen Townsend is in Somalia to visit U.S. troops and other global leaders — a move that comes amid a slight uptick in airstrikes against violent extremists in Somalia this year.

"The purpose of my engagements is to meet with important African, international and U.S. key leaders, to visit our troops and to assess the progress of our campaign in East Africa and against al-Shabaab," Townsend, who had headed the command since July, said in a statement.

Townsend is slated to visit Somali President Mohamed Abdullah Farmaajo on Nov. 5, according to AFRICOM. He visited Djibouti on Monday.

Townsend claimed that violent extremist groups, including al-Shabab, an al-Qaida offshoot, and ISIS-Somalia, aim to target the U.S., and pose a threat to U.S. interests and African partners.

"Due to persistent pressure our campaign puts on al-Shabaab and ISIS, we believe they lack the actual capability to attack our homeland but we must stay vigilant and keep pressing them," Townsend said.

So far, AFRICOM has conducted 55 airstrikes in 2019 against violent extremist organizations — an increase from the 47 airstrikes conducted in 2018 and 35 airstrikes in 2017, AFRICOM spokesperson Air Force Col. Chris Karns told Military Times.

The command estimates that there are between 5,000 to 7,000 al-Shabab fighters in Somalia, and approximately 150 to 300 ISIS-Somalia militants.

"The number of al-Shabaab militants has remained relatively stable, but their hold on territory has significantly declined," Karns said. "The loss of ground equates to loss of ability to influence and negatively impact more innocent Somali futures."

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Airstrikes conducted against the militants are designed to foster organizational discord and "afford time and space for advancements in security, governance and economic development," according to Karns.

"The increase in strikes has increased confusion within the terrorist network and has impacted their ability to organize and commit acts of violence and terror against innocent people," Karns said.

Approximately 650 to 800 U.S. forces are in Somalia at any given time, Karns said. A key responsibility for AFRICOM forces is instructing and building ground forces, including the Somali special operations unit called the Danab.

According to Karns, Somali military forces have been successful in keeping the territory seized from al-Shabab and likewise fending off al-Shabab counter attacks. These successful seizures from Somalia's government and partner forces have led to gathering important intelligence that aids future efforts, he said.

"This intelligence allows targets to be developed, and ultimately eliminated, through intelligence-sharing, armed overwatch and airstrikes," Karns said.

Lt. Cmdr. Desiree Frame, a spokeswoman for AFRICOM, previously told Military Times that AFRICOM has been involved training approximately 1,000 out of 3,000 planned special operations Danab troops.

"Terrorists need to know we will pursue them relentlessly to disrupt and degrade them today and prevent their spread tomorrow," Townsend said. "As long as terrorists threaten and try to impose their extreme beliefs on the people and their government, they will not be able to sleep peacefully."

2020 U.S.-Africa Business Summit to be hosted in Morocco

[<http://northafricapost.com/35216-2020-u-s-africa-business-summit-to-be-hosted-in-morocco.html>]

The Corporate Council on Africa (CCA) will host the next edition of the U.S -Africa Business Summit in June 2020 in Marrakech, Morocco

The announcement was made in Washington on Monday by CCA CEO Florizelle Liser, in the Presence of Morocco's ambassador to the USA, Joumana Alaoui.

Following a strategic selection process, CCA's Board of Directors selected the Kingdom of Morocco as the host for the 2020 Summit. Having rejoined the African Union and signed the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, Morocco has demonstrated its commitment to promoting economic development in Africa, making it an ideal destination for the 2020 Summit and the first time CCA will organize the Summit in North Africa, said the CCA in a press release.

"We are delighted to return to the continent for the 2020 Summit and look forward to partnering with the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco. The 2019 Summit in Maputo, Mozambique was a tremendous success and the caliber of engagement by U.S. and African business and government leaders was outstanding. The partnerships forged, investment opportunities identified, and deals closed are still being cited by attendees, and we intend to expand on these outcomes at the 2020 Summit in Morocco." said Florizelle Liser, President and CEO, Corporate Council on Africa.

Morocco's ambassador urged businesses to take advantage of the unique opportunities that will be presented at the Summit in 2020. "As the gateway to Africa, Morocco is committed to increasing business and investment on the continent and is pleased to partner with the Corporate Council on Africa to host the 2020 U.S.-Africa Business Summit in Marrakech."

Starting this year, CCA will hold the U.S.-Africa Business Summit annually, with the aim of providing CCA members, investors, and key U.S.-Africa business stakeholders with the opportunity to stay abreast on the latest developments in business and investment across Africa, the CCA press release said.

Since its inception in 1997, CCA's Summit has been considered as the essential conference on U.S.-Africa business and investment. With over 1300 attendees, the 2019 Summit witnessed a remarkable level of engagement, including participation by heads of state, vice presidents, and prime ministers from 9 African countries, ministers from more than 25 countries, more than 100 senior U.S. government officials and an exceptional line-up of global business leaders from a variety of sectors.

The U.S.-Africa Business Summit serves as a platform for African and U.S. private sector and government representatives to engage on key sectors including agribusiness, energy, health, infrastructure, trade facilitation, ICT and finance.

Summit participants can network with key private sector and government officials, explore new business opportunities, meet potential business partners, and forge new business deals. The Summit also serves as an opportunity to shape and advocate for effective U.S.-Africa trade and investment policies.

Two US fleets pair drills to boost security in East Africa

[<https://www.stripes.com/news/africa/two-us-fleets-pair-drills-to-boost-security-in-east-africa-1.606019>]

By SCOTT WYLAND | STARS AND STRIPES Published: November 5, 2019

The Navy's 5th and 6th fleets are conducting exercises in tandem to help East African and Indian Ocean nations combat seagoing crimes and other threats in the region.

This first-time coupling of the sea policing drill Cutlass Express with the large-scale International Maritime Exercise, or IMX, will boost security efforts among the more than 60 participating navies as well as the two U.S. fleets whose theaters border each other, the Navy said.

"As we all know, crime at sea doesn't heed any imaginary lines that we've drawn that separate our fleets," Rear Adm. Nancy Lacore, 6th Fleet's vice commander, told Stars and Stripes. "They flow freely across the Indian Ocean regardless of where we put a line down."

Cutlass Express, hosted by U.S. Africa Command and Naval Forces Europe and Africa, is taking place a few months early to run concurrently with the broader IMX, hosted by Naval Forces Central Command.

The three-week dual exercise runs until Nov. 16. Most of the two fleets' drills are separate but in proximity. The fleets will exercise together in the Gulf of Aden, practicing explosive ordnance disposal, port protection and other defensive tactics.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Allie Phillips, a role player, and a member of the Saudi Arabian special operations practice visit, board, search and seizure drills during exercise Cutlass Express and the International Maritime Exercise in Djibouti, Africa, Nov. 4, 2019.

ANDREA RUMPLE/U.S. NAVY

In Cutlass Express, 18 navies are training to spot, raid and search ships during simulations near Djibouti, Seychelles, Madagascar and Mauritius. Some of those navies will be among the 58 taking part in IMX, which includes nations in active or observer roles.

In the past, IMX focused on countering mines, defending against missiles and combating fast-attack vessels, such as the ones Iran commonly uses.

Mine countermeasures training will continue this year, but other scenarios will focus on protecting infrastructure, boarding techniques, explosives disposal and patrol force operations.

The two fleets' commands are sharing information, including for sea policing. The teamwork will better enable one fleet to hand off policing to the other when criminal activities cross boundaries, Lacore said.

Caricature : une coalition difficilement envisageable

[<https://actualite.cd/2019/10/26/caricature-une-coalition-difficilement-envisageable>]

Samedi 26 octobre 2019 -

Le porte-parole de l'armée congolaise, le général Léon Richard Kasonga, a annoncé, jeudi 24 octobre 2019, à Goma, que les Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo, du Rwanda, du Burundi, de l'Ouganda ainsi que le Commandement des Etats-Unis pour l'Afrique (AFRICOM) et la Mission de l'ONU pour la stabilisation en RD Congo (MONUSCO) ont fini les "réflexions sur les stratégies" à appliquer afin de neutraliser les groupes armés dans l'est du pays.

Même si ce responsable militaire a évité d'évoquer les opérations conjointes des armées précitées, le député national Juvénal Munubo Mubi a exprimé cette semaine une réticence et estime que les populations civiles de l'est du pays ne seraient pas d'accord avec une nouvelle expérience militaire étrangère pour traquer les forces négatives.

"Nous en avons l'expérience et pas la bonne expérience avec des opérations militaires conjointes. Il y a eu Umoja wetu en 2009, il y a eu aussi Kimia. Prenons le cas de Umoja, il y a eu des dérapages aussi parce que d'aucuns pensaient que ces opérations allaient aboutir à la neutralisation du groupe FDLR mais ce qui s'est passé, c'est que les FDLR qui ont été dispersées de suite de cette opération se sont rabattues sur des populations civiles et il y a eu plusieurs morts dans le territoire de Walikale. On sait comment ils entrent mais on ne sait pas comment ils quittent. Donc la présence des armées rwandaise et ougandaise ici, a été supportée avec l'AFDL en 1996. Je ne crois pas que les populations civiles soient prêtes à accepter encore la présence de ces armées ici, c'est un fardeau", a déclaré à ACTUALITE.CD l'élue de Walikale.

CANADA/AFRICA:

Climate change in Africa may mean more Canadian military help is needed: analysis

[<https://globalnews.ca/news/6101325/climate-change-canadian-military-africa/>]

By Jim Bronskill and Lee Berthiaume The Canadian Press

Posted October 30, 2019 6:55 am

Climate change is expected to play havoc with already fragile African countries, prompting more calls for help from the Canadian military, warns an internal Defence Department analysis.

The Earth's warming climate will contribute to growing instability and insecurity on the continent, which is already grappling with pervasive economic, social and political challenges, says the starkly worded memorandum.

The document notes the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicts temperatures in Africa will rise between two and four per cent by 2100, about 1.5 times the global average.

READ MORE: Modern humans originated from Botswana, but left due to climate change: study

Conflicts over water supplies, flooding and extreme weather events, food shortages and desertification could result, the memo says. In turn, there could be mass migration that leads to the spread of disease and increases in piracy and terrorism.

The six-page memo, prepared in April of last year for the deputy defence minister, was recently obtained by The Canadian Press under the Access to Information Act. Portions of the document were considered too sensitive to disclose.

Canada recently completed a year-long military deployment of helicopters and medical personnel to Mali, where water scarcity has worsened violence between factions.

The projected challenges posed by climate change could see more requests to the Canadian Armed Forces for humanitarian assistance and disaster-response operations, peace-support missions, counter-terrorism efforts and capacity-building activities, the memo says.

"In general, the effects of climate change will present a more unstable, complicated and dangerous operational environment for the CAF in Africa."

The memo cautions that the effects of climate change anywhere in the world, and human responses to them, are impossible to predict precisely. However, it underscores the consequences of three broad changes stemming from rising temperatures: shifts in rainfall patterns, more frequent and serious weather events and a rise of sea levels.

Among the implications:

Devastating damage to infrastructure from more cyclones and flooding along the heavily populated coast from the Niger Delta to Accra, Ghana, and flash flooding and mudslides in Central Africa.

The complete inundation of smaller islands and severe flooding of coastal centres of larger ones, contaminating freshwater and harming fisheries.

Diminished crop yields from lack of rain and erosion of agricultural land from rising seas.

Tensions between animal herders seeking more fertile grazing lands and conventional farmers in western Africa's Sahel region.

Introduction of pathogens, such as the deadly Ebola virus, to new areas by migrants and a rise in malaria from mosquitoes nesting in more plentiful pools of standing water as more rain falls in some areas.

Recruitment of desperate young people by criminal organizations involved in piracy, terrorism and trafficking in drugs or people.

Story continues below advertisement

Earlier this year, the British Ministry of Defence identified climate change as one of the greatest risks to defence and security. The U.S. military has also published a number of reports and papers outlining the potential impacts of climate transformation on its forces and operations.

Currently, the Canadian military has defence attaches in seven African countries, takes part in peace-support operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan and periodically participates in other activities.

1:53 World-wide climate strike: what's next

World-wide climate strike: what's next

"Overall, the projected challenges of climate change reinforce the importance of sustaining, and potentially improving, CAF situational awareness in Africa," the memo says.

The document emphasizes the importance of helping Africa now to ensure it has the necessary "coping mechanisms" to deal with the many future challenges that will come _ and prevent them from reaching Canada, said Canadian Forces College professor Walter Dorn.

The Liberal government's defence policy, released in June 2017, indicated Canada would need to enhance its relationships with African countries to successfully contribute to peace and security through training, the empowerment of women and girls and peacekeeping.

READ MORE: Trudeau promised legally binding climate targets — what exactly does that mean?

Yet Dorn, an expert on conflict prevention and peacekeeping, worries Ottawa isn't taking the issue seriously enough. He pointed to the lack of a comprehensive approach to Africa and the Liberals' lacklustre record on peacekeeping as evidence.

Story continues below advertisement

While the Liberals promised during the 2015 election campaign to significantly ramp up Canada's role in peacekeeping, the government has instead been accused of foot-dragging and contributing the bare minimum by United Nations officials and even some close allies.

"We have to plan to be able to help Africa with peace processes and with mitigating the effects of climate change, and this includes disaster response and peace operations," Dorn said. "These threats are global even if they originate in Africa."

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AUSTRALIA / AFRICA :

Australia urged not to miss investment boat in Africa

[<https://www.miningreview.com/investment/china-outpacing-us-in-african-investment-australia-urged-to-act-now/>]

Oct 28, 2019

Australia has been urged to rapidly take up investment opportunities in Africa beyond mining as trade war impacts see China snaring the lion's share of growth across the dark continent at the expense of the United States particularly.

The plea was issued today by one of Australia's most respected miners, Resolute Mining's MD John Welborn, whose company has been operating for more than 20 years in Africa and has gold mining operations and/or projects in Mali, Ghana, and Senegal.

Speaking on the first day of the three day Africa Downunder mining conference in Perth, Welborn said Australia understood current economic stimulus initiatives in the US, China, South East Asia and Europe.

Winner of 2018 investment battlefield receives US\$78 million

"However, we often do not recognise just how big Africa is and therefore have failed to recognise the growth and partnership opportunities there – opportunities now being snapped up by China," Welborn said.

"The fundamentals tell the forward picture. The population demographics in Africa will be the largest in any area in the world between now and 2050. This is on the back of being a continent that has seen enormous change in recent years. Since 2000, half of the countries in the world with the highest annual growth rates have been in Africa.

Zambia tax regime unsustainable for mining sector

"We are potentially missing what is happening around us. The Australian economy is focused on China and South East Asia and so is worried about China's trade tensions with the US and emerging Pacific presence.

"Yet during the first 20 years of my life, Australia, both government and business, missed what was going on in Asia – and faces making the same mistake with Africa currently.

"The reality is that while we have historically been a partner to Africa, the Australian economy is not focused on what is happening and is going to happen in Africa's population growth and economic stimulus yet.

"By 2050, one in every four humans in the world will be African and more than half of that African population by then will be middle and upper class.

"The explosion of middle class wealth in China is a key driver of the current Australian economy and we are facing a similar opportunity from the future explosion of middle class wealth in Africa."

Disinvestment in the South African mining industry – coal under threat

Welborn warned such growth dynamics needed to be considered against the current backdrop of global trade tensions.

“Ten years ago, China and the United States had equal levels of investment in Africa,” Welborn said.

“Now China is three times that of the US and it has moved the majority of that investment from mining to infrastructure, construction and finished goods – and that is the lesson for Australia.

“Mining is often a great opportunity to establish infrastructure links and that is exactly the opportunity China is grasping in Africa – at the expense of Australia and the US.

“This opportunity is not just being seized by the Chinese government, but increasingly by Chinese private enterprise and small business.

“Australian businesses and investors, supported by the Australian government, need to recognise this opportunity and join the African economic growth story – and do it now.”

We Are All Out Of Africa, Say Aussie Researchers

By James Sherbon 31 October 2019

[<https://www.nationalgeographic.com.au/australia/we-are-all-out-of-africa-say-aussie-researchers.aspx>]

The ancestral homeland of every human alive today is in the southern African countries of known today as Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe, south of the Zambezi River, according to Australian-led research.

While we knew modern humans originated around 200,000 years ago, exactly where we originated has remained a mystery - until now.

Interestingly, the study, which involved a cross-disciplinary investigation of genetics, geology and climate physics was able to not only look into people’s DNA codes but also take into account climate science as well.

By looking at climate data, the researchers were able to ascertain why humans migrated and the conditions which allowed this great migration.

Co-author Professor Axel Timmermann, Director of the IBS Centre for Climate Physics at Pusan National University, analysed climate computer model simulations and geological data, which capture southern Africa’s climate history of the past 250,000 years.

“Our simulations suggest that the slow wobble of Earth’s axis changes summer solar radiation in the southern hemisphere, leading to periodic shifts in rainfall across southern Africa,” says Timmermann.

“These shifts in climate would have opened green, vegetated corridors, first 130,000 years ago to the northeast, and then around 110,000 years ago to the southwest, allowing our earliest ancestors to migrate away from the homeland for the first time.”

According to study lead, Professor Vanessa Hayes from the Garvan Institute of Medical Research and University of Sydney these first migrants left behind a homeland population.

“Eventually adapting to the drying lands, maternal descendants of the homeland population can be found in the greater Kalahari region today,” she says.

Commenting on the research, Hayes says it has been clear for some time that anatomically modern humans appeared in Africa roughly 200,000 years ago.

“What has been long debated is the exact location of this emergence and subsequent dispersal of our earliest ancestors,” says Hayes.

“Mitochondrial DNA acts like a time capsule of our ancestral mothers, accumulating changes slowly over generations. Comparing the complete DNA code, or mitogenome, from different individuals provides information on how closely they are related.”

In their study, Hayes and her colleagues collected blood samples to establish a comprehensive catalogue of modern human’s earliest mitogenomes from the ‘L0’ lineage.

“Our work would not have been possible without the generous contributions of local communities and study participants in Namibia and South Africa, which allowed us to uncover rare and new L0 sub-branches,” says study author and public health Professor Riana Bornman from the University of Pretoria.

“We merged 198 new, rare mitogenomes to the current database of modern human’s earliest known population, the L0 lineage. This allowed us to refine the evolutionary tree of our earliest ancestral branches better than ever before,” says first author Dr Eva Chan from the Garvan Institute of Medical Research, who led the phylogenetic analyses.

Part of the research uncovered the region once held Africa’s largest ever lake system, Lake Makgadikgadi.

Geologist Dr Andy Moore from Rhodes University says before modern human emergence, the lake had begun to drain due to shifts in underlying tectonic plates.

“This would have created, a vast wetland, which is known to be one of the most productive ecosystems for sustaining life,” he says.

Bearing this in mind, the authors’ new evolutionary timelines suggest that the ancient wetland ecosystem provided a stable ecological environment for modern humans’ first ancestors to thrive for 70,000 years.

“We observed significant genetic divergence in the modern humans’ earliest maternal sub-lineages, that indicates our ancestors migrated out of the homeland between 130 and 110,000 years ago,” says Hayes.

“The first migrants ventured northeast, followed by a second wave of migrants who travelled southwest. A third population remained in the homeland until today.”

“In contrast to the northeasterly migrants, the southwesterly explorers appear to flourish, experiencing steady population growth,” says Hayes.

The authors speculate that the success of this migration was most likely a result of adaptation to marine foraging, which is further supported by extensive archaeological evidence along the southern tip of Africa.

EU / AFRICA:

Erasmus+: EU will invest over €3 billion in young Europeans to study or train abroad in 2020

[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_19_6218]

Today, the European Commission published its 2020 call for proposals for the Erasmus+ programme. 2020 is the last year of the current European Union programme for mobility and cooperation in education, training, youth and sport. The expected budget of over €3 billion, an increase of 12% compared to 2019, will provide even more opportunities for young Europeans to study, train or gain professional experience abroad. As part of the 2020 call for proposals, the Commission will launch a second pilot on European Universities. Moreover, the EU aims to create 35,000 opportunities for African students and staff to participate in the programme as part of the Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs.

Tibor Navracsics, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, said: "I am very pleased that in 2020 the European Union is set to invest more than €3 billion in Erasmus+. It will allow us to open up more opportunities for young Europeans to study or train abroad, enabling them to learn and develop a European identity. And it will help us to take the European Universities initiative forward, showing our continued investment in the European Education Area. I am proud to see higher education institutions form strong new alliances, paving the way for the universities of the future, for the benefit of students, staff and society across Europe."

Marianne Thyssen, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, added: "The new Erasmus funding opportunities for the vocational education and training sector will strengthen the Vocational Education and Training community; bridging sectors, regions and countries. Reinforcing ErasmusPro will make those bonds still tighter while giving more Vocational Education and Training learners more opportunities."

Any public or private body active in the fields of education, training, youth and sport may apply for funding under this call for proposals. In addition, groups of young people who are active in youth work, but not formally established as youth organisations, may apply. Together with the call for proposals, today the Commission also published the Erasmus+ Programme Guide in all official EU languages. It provides applicants with details on all opportunities open to them in higher education, vocational education and training, school education and adult education, youth and sport under Erasmus+ in 2020.

European Universities

The first 17 European Universities were selected in June 2019. They are in the process of starting their activities. The second call for proposals launched today builds on this first test phase. The initiative will be the focus of a European Commission event on 7 November 2019, where all the European Universities selected so far will for the first time come together to exchange information and discuss the way forward with students, rectors and ministries responsible for higher education. Other universities will also be represented for discussions on the future of higher education in Europe.

Education, vocational training and adult learning

This will be the third year of the School Exchange Partnerships – an Erasmus+ action offering opportunities for European schools to exchange pupils and teachers. Over the past two years, more

than 15,000 schools have participated. In 2020, another 9,000 schools will have the opportunity to take part.

In vocational education and training, investment focuses on ErasmusPro – opportunities for learners and apprentices to spend between three months and a year abroad, developing their professional and linguistic competences. Since its launch in 2018, ErasmusPro has succeeded in increasing the interest for long-term placements in vocational education and training, and has supported more than 12,000 learners per year. Support will also help set up "pilot" transnational vocational education and training Centres of Excellence, integrated in local and regional development strategies. The Centres will work closely with other education and training sectors, the scientific community and business to develop high quality curricula focused on sectoral skills.

In adult learning, financial support will help set up or strengthen regional or national networks of adult learning providers, so that they can offer an increased number of quality projects for the next Erasmus programme.

Additional opportunities in the Africa-Europe Alliance

As in 2019, this year's call will offer additional opportunities to support exchanges for African students and staff to participate in Erasmus+. While 26,247 exchanges have already taken place, the aim is to support 35,000 people by 2020, as announced in the Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs. Universities can also apply for capacity building in higher education projects, which contribute directly to the recommendations made at the recent Africa-Europe high-level Conference on Higher Education collaboration.

Background

Erasmus+ is the EU's programme for mobility and transnational cooperation in the areas of education, training, youth and sport for the period 2014-2020. The current programme as well as its successor, coming into effect in 2021, have a key role in making the European Education Area a reality by 2025. Erasmus+ aims to facilitate access to the programme for participants from all backgrounds, with a particular focus on reaching out to people with social, economic, physical or geographic disadvantages.

In May 2018, the Commission has proposed to double the Erasmus budget to €30 billion for 2021-2027, making it possible for up to 12 million people to have an experience abroad.

For More Information /
Erasmus+ Call for proposals
Erasmus+ Programme Guide
Erasmus+

EU 'can offer #Africa a different kind of partnership'

[<https://www.eureporter.co/frontpage/2019/10/28/eu-can-offer-africa-a-different-kind-of-partnership/>]

Colin Stevens | October 28, 2019

The European Union's strong links with Africa are under strain as first China and now Russia are significantly ramping up their investment on the continent. This week, Russia hosted its first-ever summit with Africa, drawing 43 African heads of state to Sochi. Moscow allegedly signed \$12.5 billion in deals at the conference, though the lion's share of these were memorandums of understanding to sell Russian weapons to African leaders.

This new Great Game is unlikely to die down in the near future, as Africa is currently one of the most promising investment destinations in the world. The continent boasts six of the world's fastest growing economies, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has predicted that Africa's growth prospects over the next five years will be among the strongest in the world.

Beijing and Moscow are gambling on drawing African countries into their orbits with perks from flashy infrastructure projects to Kremlin-connected mercenaries. The EU can best counter rising Russian and Chinese influence in Africa by offering African countries a different, more equal, kind of partnership.

Russia and China offer quick cash, but at a price

China's check book has been open in Africa for a while. Since 2016, Chinese investment in the continent has surpassed that of the US and the EU. Massive infrastructure projects funded by Beijing—from the Mombasa-Nairobi railway to the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa—have popped up around the continent. Critics have suggested that this funding is leaving African capitals mired in unsustainable debt, but China's unconditional aid still has its appeal. Autocratic leaders, in particular, have sought out Chinese cash for their vanity projects—before he was ousted, Zimbabwean strongman Robert Mugabe received \$48 million from Xi Jinping to build a new parliament complex in Harare.

Putin, meanwhile, is setting itself apart by promising African countries—including those under US sanctions—"no strings attached" deals, including for military cooperation and hardware. At the recent Sochi summit, African leaders tested Kalashnikov assault rifles and milled around near stacks of grenade launchers—even newly-minted Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Abiy Ahmed was spotted checking out model tanks.

It's pretty clear that Moscow is looking after its own interests with this charm offensive—both by securing a lucrative market for its weaponry and by projecting its power and influence to the West's detriment. The EU nevertheless needs to take note of what makes Russia's overtures so appealing—and modify its own partnerships with Africa accordingly. As policy analyst and former Liberian cabinet minister W. Gyude Moore noted, "[The Russians] are really, really savvy at positioning themselves as not the U.S., not the EU—as treating you as equals, responding to your needs as they are and not imposing their own ideas of what your country should do".

Partnership with Senegal: a model for EU-Africa relations

The EU is already investing a significant amount in Africa. In fact, European companies already account for one-third of the continent's foreign direct investment (FDI), and the EU gives Africa roughly €20 billion annually of development aid. The EU should use its considerable influence through development aid and FDI to support local, sustainable development projects in Africa. Such initiatives should go beyond photo-ops and offer long-term quantitative solutions for improving the livelihoods of Africans by generating sustainable economic growth, jobs and mitigating climate change—which is hitting Africa harder than nearly anywhere else in the world.

To improve the economic prospects of African nations, the EU should invest in African entrepreneurs and initiatives that support integrating its youth and women into the workforce. Senegal, with whom the EU signed a €27.5 million co-operation package earlier this month to “increase access to electricity and renewable energies, and boost support to civil society”, is a perfect example of a country that has adopted such policies.

Senegalese President Macky Sall, reelected earlier this year for a second term, has introduced reforms to allow companies to set up in 48 hours, increased the ease of doing business, and pushed for greater women’s involvement in entrepreneurship. He also collected \$50m in direct investment to help promising entrepreneurs. As a result of his policies, Senegal boasts one of Africa’s fastest-growing economies, with a GDP growth rate of around 7% a year and has seen a 400% increase in women’s income in the past few years.

The new EU funds are likely to kickstart this job creation and economic development still further, as Senegal will receive some €20m earmarked at creating lasting employment “in the most disadvantaged rural areas” while supporting Senegal’s renewable energy sector. Dakar has already made the promotion of renewable energy a clear priority—and a key step in its ambitious goals of achieving middle-income status by 2035 and universal access to electricity by 2025.

Last year, Macky Sall inaugurated the largest solar power plant in West Africa. Since then, three new solar plants have started up operations in Senegal, and two more are under development. West Africa’s largest wind farm, which will add 158.7 MW to the country’s grid, should be completed next year. This remarkable progress in bringing renewable capacity online means that Dakar looks set to hit its target of 15% renewable energy by 2025, and has hopes of reaching 25% renewable energy by 2030—an objective which may be fulfilled even further now thanks to the influx of European funding.

The EU’s added value: promoting long-term growth

The case of Senegal, in which European Union funds are supporting policy priorities and initiatives already laid out by the Sall administration, offers a perfect example of how the EU can offer Africa an appealing alternative to China’s cash and Russia’s rifles. Beijing’s willingness to foot the bill for glitzy railways and power plants that produce more electricity than African countries actually need, as well as Moscow’s readiness to fork over military hardware to anyone willing to pay for it, might seem tempting at first blush. Brussels’s job is to make a convincing case that genuine partnerships and strategically allocated EU funds will provide more long-term stability and growth.

INDIA / AFRICA :

Africa should look to India for digital inspiration

[<https://www.ft.com/content/5237edd3-2763-4ac7-a16a-8bec17b58167>]

Governments must invest in infrastructure and skills / Aubrey Hruby yesterday

Africa's digital economy is still small in size compared with those of its global peers. But it has seen exponential growth over the past decade and now has the potential to redefine the continent's economies.

Africa had the fastest growth in internet access of the world's regions between 2005 and 2018, from just 2.1 per cent of the population to 24.4 per cent. It is home to the fastest growing mobile phone industry, with 20 per cent annual growth between 2005 and 2017. It is estimated that half of Africa's population will have a mobile phone subscription by 2025.

Even so, immense challenges must be addressed to ensure that Africa's digital ecosystems are positioned to support the employment growth the continent needs. African governments and development finance institutions (DFIs) should look to India as a model and focus on critical infrastructure needs. This includes reducing the cost of data and increasing access to fixed line broadband, spurring corporate ventures in the tech ecosystem, and providing Africans with the skills they need to take part in this digital transformation.

The lack of adequate access to the internet in most African countries boils down to the fact that mobile data is too expensive and fixed line broadband is too slow and not widely available. It costs Africans on average \$7.04 or nearly 9 per cent of their monthly income for just 1GB of mobile data (enough to watch about three hours of low quality video on Netflix). That compares with just 3.5 per cent of monthly income in Latin American and 1.5 per cent in Asia.

There has been progress in some countries. In Nigeria, mobile data prices continue to drop following a decision by the Communications Commission in October 2015 to remove a floor on data prices, and increased competition among submarine cable companies.

In India, competition among carriers played a critical role in lowering mobile data costs, which are now the cheapest in the world. Reliance Jo, a young telecom operator, is highly responsible for the shift, investing \$35bn in a 4G network and offering free unlimited data trials to attract new customers. While some have criticised the company's practices and data prices may increase, the impact of private sector investment and competition has benefited average Indians.

African governments should further liberalise their telecoms sectors and encourage competition to promote private investment in infrastructure that can be shared by providers. Regulators should track the cost of data as a measure of the healthiness of the industry.

Beyond mobile data, African countries must increase the speed of fixed line broadband internet and further improve access. A report by cable.co.uk measuring countries' fixed line broadband speeds showed zero African countries meeting speeds above 10 Mbps, the deemed minimum speed required by consumers.

Such limitations are problematic for Africa's growing tech hubs and ecosystems, where internet speed is cited as a limitation for start-ups and customers. While some African countries, such as

Kenya, have greatly increased the speed of mobile data, businesses are going to need faster speeds to accelerate growth.

As Africa builds its digital infrastructure, entrepreneurs and tech businesses need quicker access to funding. While numbers vary, WeeTracker reports that \$725.6m in venture capital was invested in 458 deals in 2018, a year-over-year increase but still tiny in comparison with global peers. Africa has 618 tech hubs today, with Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Egypt leading the way.

DFIs, governments and venture funds were key to spurring the first wave of tech hub growth across the continent, but without increased investment and the professionalisation of incubators and accelerators, African start-ups will continue to fall short.

Despite hundreds of hubs (of which about a quarter are solely co-working spaces), start-ups are short of corporate partners to help with the challenge of scaling on a continent with non-traditional supply chains, difficult distribution and limited access to financial markets.

In India, corporate venture from companies such as the Times Group and Microsoft (which has invested in 134 start-ups in the country) not only helps fill a funding gap but also plays a vital role in supporting companies, from sharing manufacturing plants to best business practices. Forty per cent of venture deals in Asia involve a corporate partner, helping to spur an ecosystem that could be replicated in Africa. Hybrid corporate-government/DFI venture capital models could be used to support increased investment from global tech companies less familiar with the continent and with a lower risk appetite.

Companies also increasingly recognise the need to train talent on the continent. Without greater commitment to raising African's digital skills, countries run the risk of falling behind in digital transformation, and in attracting enough capital for African businesses and entrepreneurs. DFIs should prioritise investments in digital infrastructure and quality education. Today, less than 25 per cent of Africans earn Stem degrees in higher education. Government commitments are needed to increase the number of Stem graduates and to invest in basic digital literacy. Rwanda's National Digital Talent Policy offers a model for targeted upskilling across the breadth of society, from creating "Smart Classrooms" at the elementary school level to offering more niche tech degrees in fields such as network engineering.

DFIs should look to invest in companies such as Andela or Lambda Academy, a start-up online coding boot camp that expanded to Africa in 2019 to offer training in software development through a partnership with Nigerian fintech start-up Payscale. Developers receive their training from offices in Africa and pay no fees for the programme if they take a job with one of the academy's partner companies in Africa. Many of these developers will start their own companies locally or continue to work for African companies, keeping vital talent on the continent.

Governments and DFIs need to look for models such as these that balance upskilling with the risk of brain drain. India has taken steps to tackle this; even before the Trump administration introduced visa restrictions, India saw a reversal of brain drain with hundreds more scientists returning home to pursue research than in previous years thanks to growing tech opportunities at home. Programmes that pair education with employment could help African countries to stem the outflow of tech talent.

Like India, Africa is home to a young, urbanising, often mobile-first population. Of the 1.3bn people in India, 50 per cent are under the age of 25. In Africa, 60 per cent of the continent's 1.25bn people are under 25. The number of megacities will continue to grow for both. Their respective populations tend to turn to mobile and prefer video, evident in the early adoption of mobile money and the popularity of websites such as YouTube.

India, unlike China, Korea or Singapore, is a large federal democracy — a more relatable model to the challenges Africa faces than Asian counterparts. While by no means replicas of each other, India's digital transformation serves as a better model to understand how Africa can digitally transform and compete globally. Without dedicated national and regional strategies to address needed changes, African countries risk falling deeper into the digital divide.

Aubrey Hruby is a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council's Africa Center and co-author of 'The Next Africa' (2015).

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India and East Africa: Cooperation as the key to Financial Inclusion

Jahnvi Aggarwal

[<https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/india-and-east-africa-cooperation-as-the-key-to-financial-inclusion-57128/>]

Financial Inclusion can help formalise the economy, increase transparency and efficiency, and provide financial stability for India and Africa.

In recent years Financial Inclusion (FI) has come to occupy a prominent position on the global stage as a key enabler of reducing poverty, and furthering development and prosperity. Universal Financial Inclusion (UFI) is a coveted goal for both India and Africa as it possesses particular prominence for developing countries, where the informal sector constitutes a major part of the economic sphere. FI can help formalise the economy, increase transparency and efficiency, and provide financial stability with assured access to financial products and services like credit, insurance, and a gainful savings mechanism.

In spite of the concordant objective of UFI, India and Africa have taken different paths to achieve the same objective. Within Africa, East African states such as Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania have been leading the charge on financial digitisation via mobile money for well over a decade. They have also displayed an eagerness to embrace the new age fintech.

FI in East Africa has primarily been driven by the private sector, where a leapfrogging over the so-called redundant technology and onto far more advanced and frictionless mobi-tech and digital payments platforms has been observed. On the other hand, in India the government has played a major role in FI through its public sector banks. The launch of Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojna (PMJDY) in 2014 may be regarded as the biggest initiative in this regard.

Degree of Financial Inclusion in India and East Africa

Country % of People with Accounts % of People with Financial Institution Accounts % of People with Mobile Accounts

India	79.9	79.8	2.0
Tanzania	46.8	21.0	38.5
Rwanda	50.0	36.7	31.1
Uganda	59.2	32.8	50.6
Mozambique	41.7	33.0	21.9
Kenya	55.3	28.2	48.6

Source: Data from Global Findex Report, 2017.

Although both approaches contribute towards a certain degree of FI, neither can be fully successful without the other. The 2017 Global Findex Report substantiates this argument: it suggested that while the percentage of people with bank accounts in the Indian sub-continent was 79.9%, a mere 2% possessed mobile accounts. On the other hand, in East African states the percentage of people with mobile accounts exceeds the percentage of those with bank accounts by a huge margin.

While the East African model of FI -- which primarily pertains to mobile money accounts like Vodacom and Safari's M-Pesa -- has had considerable success in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, we are yet to see the same outcome in Mozambique and Rwanda. The discrepancy is mainly because of delayed implementation and the limited interoperability capacity of mobile money in these countries. Also, the inclusion achieved is more or less a low equilibrium FI, since the countries still have large proportions of population that continue to remain unbanked, and access and inclusion in the formal sector banking sphere constitute a vital part of proper FI.

On the other hand, India experienced an improvement in the level of FI with the launch of the PMJDY in 2014. According to the Global Findex Report 2017, the proportion of the population with financial institution accounts rose from 52.8% in 2014 to 79.9% in 2017, but the percentage of people with access to mobile money remained abysmally low. This was primarily due to the widespread digital illiteracy and rigid branch banking habits in the Indian sub-continent. Therefore, even though it cannot be denied that the substantial rise in formal sector banking is a laudable achievement, one cannot neglect the need or the importance of mobile money and other forms of financial technology and innovations in today's highly digitised landscape. This is because fintech contributes greatly towards lowering the banking costs, and in increasing transparency and efficiency.

Holistic FI requires an approach that strikes a balance between the methodologies followed by India and East Africa, and this is precisely where the need and potential for cooperation arises. The East African region, owed to its epochal prowess in the digital FI sphere, thus emerges as an appropriate partner for India. Moreover, while addressing the Ugandan parliament in July 2018, Prime Minister Modi outlined 10 guiding principles for India Africa engagement; one of these was to "harness India's experience with digital revolution to support Africa's development; improve delivery of public services; extend education and health; spread digital literacy; expand financial inclusion and mainstream the marginalised."

Cooperation on FI will prove to be mutually beneficial for both India and East Africa as it will offer learning experiences for both regions and help them overcome their aforementioned shortcomings on the FI front. The Indian government can collaborate with the governments of the East African countries and help them formulate their own versions of the PMJDY in their respective countries. This will go a long way in promoting formal sector financial inclusiveness and will help bring the hitherto unbanked into the realm of formal sector banking. Designed with the specific purpose of accelerating FI and providing improved access to financial services like savings accounts, insurance and pension schemes, and affordable credit, the PMJDY does well in remedying the major challenges to formal sector FI. These mainly include the lack of sufficient funds to open an account, distrust in the formal financial institutions, and high costs in terms of both time and money. For instance, one of the most novel features of the scheme is the construct of a 'Zero Balance' bank account or the Basic Savings Bank Deposit Account which requires 'nil' or a very minimal amount of balance. It involves no or minimal charges and can be easily opened due to simplified Know Your Customer norms. This goes onto solving the problem of fund paucity.

The Indian government also has a lot to learn from the East African countries. While USSD (Unstructured Supplementary Service Data) based banking services which do not require internet to function can be used on basic feature phones, and can cater to the low income groups, digital and financial illiteracy, and rigid branch banking habits pose an obstacle for the spread of fintech and digital financial platforms in rural India. Although Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and RuPay are steps in the right direction, they have limited impact in rural regions where people aren't particularly avid users of banking services. The Government of India can engage in the creation of knowledge sharing platforms and learn from the East African model. Moreover, the governments can also collaborate on the extension of associated fintech platforms like UPI and RuPay to the East African region which will create a better digital infrastructure. This will help reinforce and enhance the efficiency of the existing financial structures by reducing the cost of formal sector banking. This will also enable India to gain a stronger foothold in East Africa, which is of great strategic importance. The governments can also collaborate on setting up financial and digital literacy camps and awareness drives in both the regions. They can thus, provide the people an opportunity to educate themselves about the importance of FI.

In light of FI's increasing importance on the global stage as a requirement for the holistic development of a country, the achievement of universal financial inclusion has become paramount. However, moving forward, cooperation between the India and East Africa is required if the regions wish to attain comprehensive FI that gives due prominence to the formal sector and does not neglect the need or the importance of fintech. The regions need to learn from each other's experiences and mistakes in order to pave way for a holistic future.

The views expressed above belong to the author(s).

BRAZIL/AFRICA:

Brazil's Unprecedented Oil Spill Could Cost Billions

[<https://oilprice.com/Latest-Energy-News/World-News/Brazils-Unprecedented-Oil-Spill-Could-Cost-Billions.html>]

By Irina Slav - Nov 05, 2019, 9:00 AM CST

An oil spill along the northeastern coast of Brazil that baffled authorities and Petrobras has slowed down but damages done by it could reach billions of reais, according to government officials.

"It is an unprecedented situation. This disaster has never happened in Brazil, even in the world. This oil is not noticeable by the satellite," Defense Minister Fernando Azevedo told media, as quoted by Reuters. "We don't know how much is spilled," he added.

The oil has been flowing along the Brazilian coast since September, and the government and Petrobras are firm that it is Venezuelan crude. However, the actual source of the spill has yet to be located.

Last Friday, the federal Brazilian police said they were investigating a Greek-flagged vessel as the potential culprit for the spill.

"The Greek-flagged vessel docked in Venezuela on July 15, stayed for three days, and sailed to Singapore across the Atlantic Ocean, stopping only in South Africa. The spill investigated would have occurred during this journey," the police said in a statement.

Also last week, the chief executive of Petrobras, Roberto Castello Branco said the spill could turn out to be the worst "environmental attack" in the history of Brazil.

Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro, for his part, this weekend said the worst is yet to come and that "a much bigger catastrophe" is on the way.

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Samples from the crude at the beaches are being analyzed in the U.S., France, and Norway to determine the origin. Petrobras has also examined samples of the oil and says it had narrowed down its origin to three specific fields in Venezuela.

"Compared with oils from our 'oil bank' there is strong similarity with oil produced in the Venezuelan petroleum basin," the director of the Brazilian University of Bahia's Geosciences Institute says.

Venezuela has rejected the claims that the oil came from its fields.

By Irina Slav for Oilprice.com

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