

AfricaRenewal

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MIGRATION
Making it safe
and orderly

Human Rights
How is Africa faring?

**Amina Mohammed on ending
violence against women and girls**



8 SPECIAL FEATURE

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Cover photo: *An migrant heading for Italy.* 📷 IOM / Francesco Malavolta

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(L-R) UN Women Regional Director for West and Central Africa Diana Ofwona and the First Lady of Cape Verde, Lígia Fonseca, mark the start of the 16 days of activism. 📷 UN Women

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United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Ms. Amina Mohammed (right), the UN Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa Ms. Bience Gawanas (middle) and Ms. Inga R. King, the 74th President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (left) during the launch of the Africa Dialogue Series 2018 at the UN headquarters in New York. 📷 Africa Renewal / Paddy Ilos

Africa Dialogue Series launched

By Sharon Birch-Jeffrey

The United Nations has launched a new initiative to promote Africa's agenda. Organised by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA), the Africa Dialogue Series (ADS) will provide interactive opportunities to discuss and identify areas in which the UN, the African Union and the broader international community can mobilise efforts for a prosperous and peaceful Africa.

The first of the series last October saw a wide range of participants, including representatives of member states, the UN and African regional and subregional organisations, as well as representatives of the private sector, civil society, academia, think tanks, the diaspora and other key stakeholders, meeting in New York to discuss peace, humanitarian assistance, security, human rights and development in Africa.

ADS 2018, which coincided with the 15th anniversary of OSAA's establishment, also served as an opportunity to identify areas for support for the Sahel.

Bience Gawanas, UN Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa, set the tone at the opening of the series when she stated that Africa was full of hope, aspirations and youthful energy that can advance peace, security and sustainable development.

"Africa is driving its own agenda—African countries are becoming more prosperous and growing more integrated," Ms. Gawanas said.

Under the theme "A Stronger UN-AU Partnership for Peace, Security and Development in Africa," experts and other guests at the event explored ways to improve the partnership between the AU and the UN.

Participants agreed that it was time to move from talk to action. "Africa does not lack frameworks. We lack implementation," said Abdalla Hamdok, Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa.

OSAA intends to build synergies across the UN system in support of

see page 5



UN Photo/Antonio Fiorente

Thirty years ago, Uganda was among the four countries that had the largest number of refugees abroad, along with Ethiopia, Afghanistan and Sudan. We have dealt with it. Today people stay because they find a better life here.

Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda

I call on the government and all the people of Tanzania to stand up for the human rights of everyone in the country, regardless of who they are or whom they love.

Michelle Bachelet, Head of United Nations Human Rights

There can be no peace while women and girls are raped with impunity as a tactic of war.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director, UN Women





OP-ED

Ending violence against women and girls in the Sahel: crucial for sustainable development

BY AMINA MOHAMMED

After flying into the city of Bol in the Republic of Chad, over the lush fields and receding lakes, we landed to a rapturous welcome from traditional rulers and local women. Their faces reflected a hope and dignity slipping away under the harsh reality of poverty and insecurity. The women, smiling at us as we disembarked, showed the same resilience I have seen in women in countless contexts: an ability to survive, even in the face of multiple forms of violence and insecurity at home, in public or from political conflict.

I visited Chad this past summer as part of a three-country mission that included South Sudan and Niger, leading a delegation of senior women from the United Nations and the African Union.

In Niger and Chad, we were joined by Margot Wallström, the deputy prime minister and foreign minister of Sweden,

a country that has pioneered the idea of a feminist foreign policy and given prominence to the dynamic between women's status in society and international peace and security during the country's two years on the Security Council.

Throughout the mission, I could not shake what we have come to know, that women, and their rights, are the first to suffer in times of crisis. And that this often compounds already high levels of inequality and violence.

I met Halima, a young girl whose life had not been her own. Against her will she was forced to marry. Then her husband, a member of Boko Haram, indoctrinated her with promises of a better afterlife. Halima strapped on a suicide belt, yet never made it to what they were told was a target, as the belts of two other girls went off as they stopped to pray. Halima lost both her legs. Her future seemed grim, yet she had a measure of

hope as she spoke and is working as a paralegal in her community to empower other women.

In Niger, at a centre for fistula survivors, we met girls as young as 12 and 13. Mere children forced into marriage and then raped by their husbands, without any agency or voice over their futures, their bodies, their lives.

Over 75% of girls in Chad and Niger marry before they are 18. They drop out of school and many become pregnant soon after, and because of their young age and complications during pregnancy, these countries have some of the highest maternal mortality rates globally. Faced with dire poverty and often conflict, families believe they have no choice. They cannot feed their children, but hope maybe a husband can.

As we commemorate 16 days of activism to end violence and harmful practices against women and girls, it is important

that we acknowledge the multiple forms of violence women and girls face, and the consequences they have for individuals, families, communities, and our shared agendas for development—the 2030 Agenda and the African Union’s Agenda 2063.

From early forced marriage to femicide, from trafficking to sexual harassment, from sexual violence to harmful traditional practices: violence in all its forms is a global impediment to sustainable development, peace and prosperity. It prevents women from fully engaging in society, scars successive generations, and costs countries millions in health expenses, job days lost, and long-term impacts.

The United Nations, together with partners, national governments and civil society, is leading efforts to end all forms of violence against women and girls by 2030. And we have existing efforts we can build on.

During our trip, we met traditional leaders, in particular men, who are taking actions in their own communities to stop early marriage. We talked to fisherwomen on Lake Chad who have taken over a traditionally male job in order to provide for their families and who are engaged in sustainable resource management, income generation and empowerment.

And across a number of countries in Africa, we are implementing a new effort with the European Union—the Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls. The approximately \$300 million investment in Africa will target all forms of gender-based violence, with a particular focus on child marriages, female genital mutilation and the sexual and reproductive health needs of women and girls.

I finished my travels with a great sense of urgency and hope.

The visit reinforced my conviction that we need to implement our global agenda on sustainable development—the 2030 Agenda—with urgency, and gender equality is at the very heart of this.

I am inspired and hopeful because of women like Halima, like the survivors of marriages they never chose, like the girls who were forced into sex and pregnancy long before their bodies were ready. They survived. They are telling their story, and they are determined to have a better future, not only for themselves, but also for their sisters.

In the words of the late Kofi Annan, “Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance.” 🌍

Amina Mohammed is the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations



Africa Dialogue Series launched from page 3

Africa’s priorities, Ms. Gawanas said. At the same time, it plans to promote African voices and foster an understanding of the region’s experiences on peace and development issues.

In 2019, the Africa Dialogue Series will be held on Africa Day, 25 May. The organisers hope to get concrete and actionable recommendations on key issues emanating from the debates.

Ibrahim Mayaki, the CEO of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), underscored the importance of developing strategic partnerships at a time of constant attacks on multilateralism. Mr. Mayaki represented the AU Commission chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat, at the event.

The AU’s permanent representative to the UN, Fatima Mohammed, called for shared responsibility on issues relating to Africa. It was a sentiment shared by many participants.

The ADS took place against the backdrop of reforms at both the UN and the



AU. The AU reforms, Mr. Mayaki said, include ensuring that the youth represent 35% of its workforce by 2025 to make the organization “fit for purpose.”

OSAA expects the ADS to help shift dialogue at the UN headquarters “from policy to effective and results-based implementation of the joint UN-AU Frameworks for Peace and Security, and implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda.”

The UN and AU frameworks, signed within the last two years, are designed to support efforts to tackle security

Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki of NEPAD and Ms. Fatima Mohammed, AU Permanent Observer to the UN at the ADS. 📷 Africa Renewal / Paddy Ilos

challenges as well as drive development on the continent.

Bringing the youth to the decision-making table was a recurring theme at the ADS. “If Africa were to operate based on a system of feedback and hearing not only the concerns but the solutions from the youth, then I believe we can truly prosper,” emphasised Ted Apondi, the UN digital representative. ●

PROFILE

Plaudits for the man who mends women

Celebrating Dr. Denis Mukwege: Nobel Peace Prize laureate 2018

BY FRANCK KUWONU



Dr. Denis Mukwege meets with women in the DRC. Endre Vestvik

When in October 2018 Denis Mukwege, a Congolese gynecologist and specialist in reconstructive surgery, won the Nobel Peace Prize for 2018, the world's media celebrated the extraordinary life of a doctor often referred to as “the man who mends women.” The moniker is a recognition of the years he has spent fixing the bodies of sexually assaulted women and girls in the war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Dr. Mukwege and Nadia Murad, an Iraqi human rights activist, were awarded the peace prize for “their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflicts.”

“Denis Mukwege is the helper who has devoted his life to defending these victims, while Nadia Murad is the witness who tells of the abuses perpetrated against herself and others,” stated the Nobel Foundation.

Dr. Mukwege, a renowned women's rights advocate, runs the Panzi Hospital in Bukavu, South Kivu, in the DRC. The hospital cares for women wounded by rape and other assaults.

The DRC has been engulfed in deadly conflicts for decades. UN Women, the United Nations agency for gender equality and women's empowerment, estimates the number of women raped in the country to be more than a million during that time. Dr. Mukwege has treated 45,000 of those rape victims.

In an internationally acclaimed documentary on his work titled *The Man Who Mends Women: The Wrath of Hippocrates*, released in 2015, Dr. Mukwege summed up the situation of women in his country: “In conflict zones, battles take place on women's bodies.”

In his autobiography *Plaidoyer pour la vie* (Plea for Life), he writes: “When war is declared, when there is no law, no religion, it is the women and children who suffer.”

One of the women he has operated on said, “I have had nine surgeries. And when the doctor [Mukwege] took care of me right from the first surgery, I knew no one else in this world could have done the same. He didn't know what I went through, but he went out of his way to give me back my life. I can love myself again and carry on with life because of him.”

The Nobel laureate often recounts the story of the first victim he operated on, in 1999, and how he decided from then on to devote his life to mending women's bodies.

“They brought me a woman who had been raped by several men in uniform,” said Dr. Mukwege. “She hadn't just been raped, they had also shot at her genitals. I had never seen anything like it.... I thought it must be an exceptional case, the act of a madman. I couldn't imagine that it would become the work I do for probably the rest of my life.”

His dedication to women's rights was acknowledged in 2014 by the European Parliament when he was awarded the Sakharov Prize, which honours people who dedicate their lives to human rights and freedom of thought.

On receiving the award, he warned, “This prize won't have any significance to the female victims of sexual violence if you won't join us in our quest for peace, justice and democracy.” He was calling on politicians, civil society and citizens to join the fight against sexual violence.

The Sakharov Prize was not his first award. He is the recipient of over two dozen honours, including the Olof Palme Prize in January 2008 and the Seoul Peace Prize in September 2016.

“Dr. Denis Mukwege has been a fearless champion for the rights of women caught up in armed conflict who have suffered rape, exploitation and other horrific abuses,” UN Secretary-General António Guterres remarked when news broke of the Nobel Peace Prize laureate of 2018.

African Union Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat praised the Nobel Foundation for recognizing Dr. Mukwege's “immense contribution to restoring the dignity of countless women victims of senseless and insidious acts of violence committed in the context of the multiple conflicts plaguing the eastern part of the DRC.”

An assassination attempt on the doctor failed in 2012, but his driver was killed.

“Despite regular threats to his life, he made the Panzi Hospital in the Democratic Republic of the Congo a haven from mistreatment,” Mr. Guterres noted in his Nobel Prize congratulatory message.

Even in the face of mortal danger, Dr. Mukwege is not giving up. “I identified every woman raped with my wife, every mother raped with my own mother and every child raped with my own children,” he said. “How can we keep silent?” 🇷🇵

Speaking up against gender-based violence

16 days of campaign against GBV wants women to be heard

Each year, the world comes together in a campaign to speak out on one topic: ending violence against women and girls. Sixteen Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence begins on 25 November, which is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and runs through Human Rights Day on 10 December.

Organized by UN Women under the theme “Orange the World: #HearMeToo,” this year’s campaign highlights the voices of women and girls who have survived violence and those who are defending women’s rights every day. The colour orange has been designated to the cause to symbolize a brighter future without violence.

“Women and girls in many parts of the world have their voices muted. This is why our theme for this year is #HearMeToo, because it is about the women and girls we are yet to hear from and respond to,” said UN Women’s Executive Director, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka.

The statistics are grim. At least one third of women worldwide have experienced either physical or sexual violence at some point in their lives. In some countries up to 70% of women have experienced physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime.

About 650 million women and girls in the world today were married before age 18. In West and Central Africa, over 40% of young women were married before their 18th birthday. At least 200 million women and girls alive today have undergone female genital mutilation or FGM, according to UN Women.

Research indicates that the cost of violence against women could amount annually to around 2% of global gross domestic product (GDP), equivalent to \$1.5 trillion. ●

Africa Renewal recently listened to some “Orange Voices”

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: ALL WE WANT IS PEACE AND AN END TO IMPUNITY



Marguerite Ramadan
President of OFCA,
(Organisation des Femmes
Centrafricaines)

Should peace return to the country, maybe the worst forms of gender-based violence would abate. In 2017, the UN alone reported 308 cases of sexual violence, including 253 rapes, of which 181 were gang rapes, five attempted rapes, 28 forced marriages, 2 cases of sexual slavery and 20 cases of other sexual assault. Peace should return so that the victims can get justice.

TOGO: BREAK THE SILENCE



Michele Aguey
Secretary-General of GF2D,
(Groupe de réflexion et d'actions femmes,
Démocratie et Développement)

In the small West African country of Togo, economic violence is a common form of abuse, says Michele Aguey, secretary-general of GF2D, a women’s advocacy group based in Lomé. In addition, she referred to the latest available official government statistics to explain the plight of women and girls, including that 9 out of 10 women have suffered a form of psychological abuse, 4 out of 10 have suffered physical abuse and 3 out of 10 have suffered sexual violence. “It is about time victims were heard,” she says, adding, “Victims should break their silence, file charges and get justice. Otherwise acts of violence will continue to flourish.”

GHANA: THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW



Patricia Essel
Programme Director at Wildaf,
(Women in Law and
Development in Africa)

The most prevalent form of gender-based violence in Ghana is economic violence. When women are deprived of work opportunities or barred by their husbands from working, it makes them economically dependent, as when men control their wives’ access to resources or unilaterally decide how to spend their wives’ earnings. Ghanaian women want to be heard when they say, ‘The time to act is now. Let us not wait for tomorrow because it may be too late.’

KENYA: WE NEED JUSTICE FOR VIOLATED WOMEN AND GIRLS



Florence Machio
Campaigns Officer,
Equality Now, Africa

Although we have laws such as the anti-FGM act, the Children’s Act that prohibits child marriages and the Sexual Offences Act, there are no structures in place to support the administration of justice to women and girls. For example, when a child is violated by a teacher, what mechanisms are there to ensure she gets a safe space to speak out? When a woman is violated at home and chased away at midnight, what structures exist to ensure her safety and protection? If women are sexually harassed at the workplace, what structures exist to help them get recourse without losing their jobs?

There are about 36 million African migrants, some living in another African country and others in Europe, North America and other regions of the world. In this edition, we examine the factors causing Africans to move to other countries, and the contributions they are making to their new societies. We also highlight the Global Compact for Migration, an intergovernmentally negotiated agreement that countries adopted in Marrakech, Morocco, in December 2018. The Compact is aimed at achieving safe, orderly and regular migration.



MIGRATION

Towards a safe and orderly migration

A global migration compact may help combat the myth that migrants are liabilities

BY KINGSLEY IGHOBOR

In August 2018, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and British Prime Minister Theresa May visited countries in Africa, sparking hope of increased foreign direct investments (FDI) in the continent.

Mr. Macron was in Nigeria, Ms. Merkel visited Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal, and Ms. May made stops in Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa.

Apart from the question of FDI, these influential leaders were looking at how to stem the flow of African migrants traveling to Europe in search of jobs and better lives.


"I believe in a win-win game. Let's help Africa to succeed. Let's provide new hope for African youth in Africa," President Macron said in Nigeria, explaining that it

was in Europe's interest to tackle migration from Africa at its roots.

New York Times writers Eduardo Porter and Karl Russell echoed the French president's sentiments: "If rich countries want fewer immigrants, their best shot might be to help poor countries become rich, so that fewer people feel the urge to leave."

Africans on the road

Every day hundreds of Africans, including women and children, strike out in search of real or imagined riches in Europe or America. About a million migrants from sub-Saharan Africa moved to Europe between 2010 and 2017, according to the Pew Research Center, a Washington, D.C.-based nonpartisan fact tank.

Rescue operations of African migrants carried out in the Channel of Sicily, Italy.  IOM / Malavolta

While Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia and South Africa are the top way stations for sub-Saharan migrants moving to Europe and the US, Pew lists South Sudan, Central African Republic, São Tomé and Príncipe, Eritrea and Namibia as having some of the fastest-growing international migrant populations living outside their country of birth.

Africans are on the move because of "conflict, persecution, environmental degradation and change, and a profound lack of human security and opportunity," states the International Organisation for

Migration (IOM), in its *World Migration Report 2018*. Migration corridors mostly used by Africans are Algeria to France, Burkina Faso to Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt to the United Arab Emirates, Morocco to Spain, and Somalia to Kenya.

Of the 258 million international migrants globally, 36 million live in Africa, with 19 million living in another African country and 17 million in Europe, North America and other regions, Ashraf El Nour, Director of IOM, New York, informed *Africa Renewal*.

When unregulated and unmanaged, migration can create “false and negative perceptions of migrants that feed into a narrative of xenophobia, intolerance and racism,” UN Secretary-General António Guterres noted at an event in New York last September.

“The narrative of migrants as a threat, as a source of fear, which has colored international media coverage on migration, is false,” said Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), a UN body that deals with trade, investment and development issues, in an interview with *Africa Renewal*.

Orderly migration

The Global Compact for Migration, the first-ever intergovernmentally negotiated agreement on international migration, could counter negative perceptions of migrants, experts say.

The IOM states the compact will help achieve “safe, orderly and regular migration,” referring to it as an opportunity to “improve the governance on migration, to address the challenges associated with today’s migration, and to strengthen the contribution of migrants and migration to sustainable development.”

The compact consists of 23 objectives, among them mitigating the adverse drivers and structural factors that hinder people from building and maintaining sustainable livelihoods in their countries of origin; reducing the risks and vulnerabilities migrants face at different stages of migration by respecting, protecting and fulfilling their human rights and providing them with care and assistance; and creating conditions that enable all migrants to enrich societies through their human, economic and social capacities, and thus

facilitating their contributions to sustainable development at the local, national, regional and global levels.

The compact also refers to enabling faster, safer and cheaper transfer of remittances and fostering the financial inclusion of migrants; ensuring that all migrants have proof of legal identity and adequate documentation; and providing migrants with access to basic services.

The Global Compact for Migration is not legally binding, but its provisions can be a powerful reference point for those formulating immigration policies as well as for human rights advocates in the face of mistreatment of migrants.

Negative attitudes or even violence against migrants typically stem from fears that they take jobs away from native-born citizens or that they engage in criminal activities, according to a study by the South Africa-based Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), a statutory research agency.

In the HSRC study, which focused on South Africans’ attitudes toward immigrants, 30% of the public blamed foreigners for “stealing jobs from hardworking South Africans,” while another 30% pointed to immigrants’ criminal activities.

But IOM South Africa countered that “immigration does not harm the long-term employment prospects or wages of native-born workers,” adding that “migrants are twice as likely to be entrepreneurs [as] South African nationals.” The South African government regularly condemns xenophobic attacks.

Economic perspective of migration

Mr. Kituyi said that most migration studies focus on “the plight of migrants, the crisis of international solidarity or humanitarian challenges.” He wished that more attention were paid to migration from the perspective of economic development.

Ms. Lúcia Kula, an Angolan migrant who is a researcher in the UK, concurred, adding that conversations about migration should shift to the migrants’ contributions to their new society.

“One of the main things they [immigrants] do in the economies they get into is create value. They enter niches where they are more competitive...and it can boost the local economy,” Mr. Kituyi elaborated.

Many migrants are talented professionals and offer expert services in their

new countries. Iso Paelay, for example, left Liberia in the heat of the war in the 90s and resettled in Ghana, where he became a star presenter for TV3, a leading media house in the country. Apparently, Liberia’s loss was Ghana’s gain.

Mr. Kituyi points to a phenomenon of migrants going to other countries to engage in the ethnic food business. “They start creating routes to get food from their home country,” he said. Ethiopian restaurants in Nairobi, Kenya, including Abyssinia, Habesha and Yejoka Garden, serve Ethiopian dishes such as *injera*.

Abuja International Restaurant in Union, New Jersey, sells Nigerian food such as eba, amala and fufu and the popular beer Gulder. In New York, Africans and others throng “Little Senegal,” a single street in Harlem, to shop for anything African—foodstuffs, music CDs, hair products, religious items and finely tailored clothes.

While working hard, earning money and making contributions to their new countries, African migrants also “remit small monies back home to support their families,” explained Mr. Kituyi. “Eighty-five percent [of immigrants’ earnings] goes to the host country and 15% to the country of origin through remittances.”

“A good chunk of the money I make here [in the US] I spend here; I pay my bills and get things for myself. I remit some to upkeep my parents,” concurs Ms. Christy Emeagi, a lawyer who left Nigeria “because I wanted a better life for my unborn children.”

The inclusion in the Global Compact for Migration of ways to make remittances faster and safer will be sweet music to African migrants.

In 2017, remittance flows from migrants to sub-Saharan Africa were \$38 billion, reports the World Bank. That is more than the \$25 billion official development aid (ODA) to the region that year.

Currently, says Mr. Kituyi, “it is painful to see an overly high cost of transaction mostly going to international payment services like Western Union, PayPal and so on.”

Achieving the objectives of the Global Compact for Migration may take some time, experts believe. Nevertheless, the compact’s immediate impact is that safe, orderly and regular migration is currently at the forefront of global conversation. And that is a step in the right direction. 🌱



MIGRATION

Risky journey to Europe

Search for greener pastures carries deadly consequences

BY FRANCK KUWONU & LOUISE DONAVAN (IN NIAMEY, NIGER)

Alone in Niger, the young man sits, filled with regrets.

“I didn’t necessarily want to come this far,” he says with anguish. “Khartoum may have been OK.” What made him extend his flight to a destination unknown, he wonders. He survived a perilous journey across deserts and seas, but at a terrible cost. His brother, with whom he was so close, lost his life after leaving the Sudanese capital, where the two had briefly settled after fleeing Eritrea, the country of their birth, as a result of political instability.

“So I left Khartoum too,” 36-year-old Tekle (not his real name) says.

The police in Khartoum “treat you so badly. You really have no rights,” he says

bitterly. He continued the journey he felt he was destined to make towards the land of opportunity—Europe.

“I left because I just wanted a peaceful life,” says Tekle, one of the thousands of refugees and migrants from Africa who attempted to flee to Europe through the Sahara Desert only to be trapped in Libya.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates there are currently between 700,000 and 1 million migrants stranded in Libya, of whom the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has registered more than 55,000. Some of the migrants are detained by smugglers or militias.

The smugglers demand money from the migrants before releasing them to the

The Italian Coast Guard rescues migrants bound for Italy. 📷 IOM / Francesco Malavolta

streets while the militias simply do not want them to enter the country.

Because humanitarian organisations such as UNHCR and IOM do not have access to all detention centres in Libya, some of which are controlled by the smugglers or militias, the number of people in need of international protection is likely much higher.

“From Khartoum to Libya, you can only travel with smugglers,” Tekle recalls. Those arriving in Libya are kept in big warehouses, each of which holds between 1,300 and 1,400 people.

There are several informal networks offering to guide or smuggle African migrants mostly from the Horn of Africa to destinations in Europe for a fee of up to \$1,000, according to a 2017 research by the Danish Refugee Council, a nongovernmental organisation.

During the arduous journey across the desert, migrants form bonds. “The people

you meet on the way become...your family. If I'm falling, someone is helping me up. You really become more than friends; you become family," Tekle says.

The journey is deadly for many. An estimated 30,000 people have gone missing in the desert since 2014, according to IOM. UNHCR estimates that for each death of a migrant in the Mediterranean, there could be at least two more deaths in the desert.

Most of those who die are believed to have succumbed to dehydration, resulting from the scorching desert heat. Some bodies are never recovered, presumably buried by powerful dust and sandstorms.

Tekle's brother was one such victim. He had left Sudan for Libya. Tekle followed his brother's path through the Sahara. He later learned that his brother spent two weeks trying to cross the Sahara Desert and later died of thirst with four others. "He was my favourite; we grew up together," says Tekle.

On his own journey, Tekle remembers that the women were the strongest of all. However, the women were defenseless against smugglers who would come at night, drunk or on drugs. "They would come and drag the women away. It was painful to see. You think of your own family. It got worse and worse and worse. You could hear the [women] screaming."

Tekle says he was beaten by the smugglers when he objected to such harsh treatment of women. After what they did to them, it hurts.... Even now I can't talk [about it] ... It is very painful."

For five months Tekle was moved around with others to unofficial detention centres run by smugglers until he finally reached an official detention centre, where he was visited by UNHCR officials who helped him get out of Libya earlier this year on a humanitarian evacuation flight.

He is now in Niamey, the capital city of Niger, south of Libya—one of the 1,675 refugees and asylum seekers evacuated by UNHCR since November 2017. He has since received support, including accommodation, legal protection, food, medical care and psychosocial counseling, while waiting to be formally resettled in yet another country. He is looking forward to yet another move.

"Now that I'm older, I couldn't go through that again, I don't have the stamina," he concedes. 🌱

A life on the move

From the ravages of war to culture shock in Europe



MIGRATION

Lucia Kula.

BY PAVITHRA RAO

Lucia Kula was only eight when war came to her doorstep and upended her life. A civil war had raged for years in her birthplace of Angola and her father was held political prisoner. To save her two daughters, Lucia's mother picked up the family and fled for safer ground.

They made their way to the cold and rainy city of Lelystad in the Netherlands. "It saved us from the conflict in Angola," Ms. Kula recalls.

"It was a complete culture shock, coming from a conflict environment to a country where you don't speak the language, you don't know the culture and customs," Lucia says. The new environment felt strange and unfamiliar, and she often felt confused and lost.

"Imagine moving to a country when you are eight years of age, and for 12 years you don't have a permanent resident permit. It means any day you could be deported," Ms. Kula told *Africa Renewal*.

"It meant years of insecurity and having your life on hold, mental exhaustion

By the numbers

\$34 billion

in remittances sent home by African migrants in 2017

50 million

is the number of migrants who are children, almost as many migrants are women as men

60,000

migrants since 2000 have lost their lives undertaking dangerous journeys

85%

of what migrants earn is spent in host country

3.4%

is the percentage of migrants in the world's population today

Despite the allure of Western life, Ms. Kula has not forgotten her motherland or her identity. “I always call myself an Angolan-Dutch researcher.”

and legal battles. It also meant years of not knowing where home was. School was my escape. I dreamt about all the things I could do, all the places I could go and the freedom it would give me,” she wrote in an article published by *I am a Migrant*, IOM’s platform for promoting diversity and inclusion of migrants in society.

She added: “I was always active with youth issues, migrant issues and student political activism. I organised debates and conferences, was vice president of the student union, secretary for an international youth fund, but not a resident.”

The family lived in asylum centres on the outskirts of town, and Lucia struggled to develop close relationships with others. “We moved about nine times and most of the centres were far from the city.” Although people were generally not hostile

toward her, that did not mitigate the stigma of being a refugee.

“There is the stigma and the ignorance attached to a refugee or an asylum seeker. Local communities did not understand anything about refugees, and as a child it was very difficult for me to explain,” said Lucia, inferring that refugees are seen as beggars.

“When that resident permit was finally issued, followed by the Dutch nationality a few years later, I finally felt like I could exhale,” she wrote.

“I received a partial scholarship in 2013 to do my master’s in London, UK. I completed my master’s and continued to pursue a PhD in law. Now, three years later, London is home. I miss it when I’m away, I feel comfortable and challenged to do more.”

Ms. Kula also researches and teaches refugee and migrant studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London.

She has traveled many times to Angola to conduct research and says she might even settle there one day.

While her mother and sisters plan to remain in the Netherlands, a place they now consider home, Lucia prefers London, thrilled by the city’s multiculturalism and diversity.

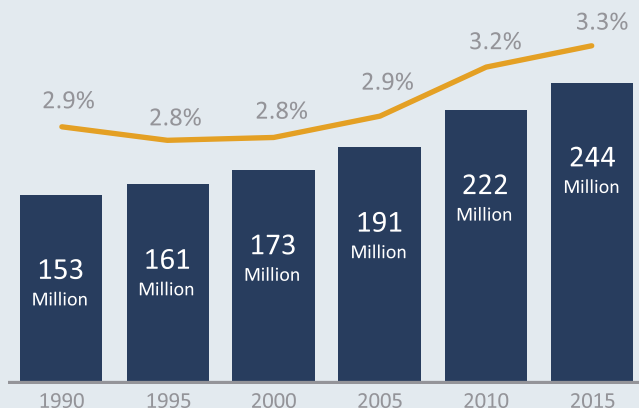
Despite the allure of Western life, Ms. Kula has not forgotten her motherland or her identity. “I always call myself an Angolan-Dutch researcher. I do identify as Angolan first, and then Dutch. The culture and customs that I grew up with are African. It’s the best of both worlds, so to say,” she enthused.

Her mother made a conscious decision to move to a safer place because they wanted their children to live in a safe environment and have a future, she said. Her father was later released but died years later.

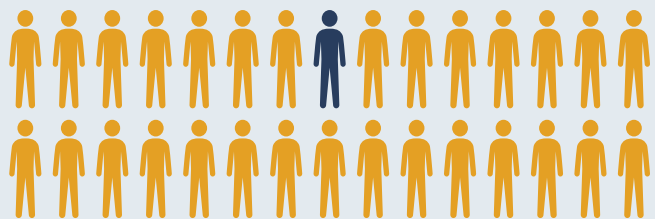
A refugee who is now a researcher can credibly speak on refugee matters. She would like conversations to focus more on how migrants and refugees can contribute to enriching a society rather than on how to protect borders and count populations. 🌍

Snapshot of International Migrants

The international **migrant population** globally has increased in size but remained relatively stable as a proportion of the world’s population



244 million international migrants in 2015 out of a global population of 7.3 billion: **1** in every **30** people



52% of international migrants are male, **48%** are female



Sources: IOM World Migration Report 2018



Confronting the challenges of migration in West and Central Africa

Sound policies and cooperation by countries are key

BY RICHARD DANZIGER

Without a doubt, migration is a defining issue of this century. One billion people, one-seventh of the world's population, are migrants. Some 258 million people are international migrants, 40 million are internally displaced and 24 million are refugees or asylum seekers. In 2018, there is no longer a single state that can claim to be untouched by human mobility.

About 423 million people are living in the Economic Community of West African States, a 15-member grouping whose aim is to promote economic integration in a region where the unemployment rate is sometimes 20%—inevitably leading to migration.

The protection of migrants is a core value of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the UN migration agency. Globally, but especially in the Sahel region, abuses against migrants have grown more frequent along the migration routes. Human trafficking and smuggling exacerbate the vulnerability of migrants, especially those without access to documentation.

The IOM's Regional Office for West and Central Africa maintains the conviction that anchored IOM's founding 65 years ago: that all men and women are equal members of the same human family in which freedom, protection and dignity are not luxuries to be reserved for the lucky few but fundamental rights for all humankind.

Migration across the Sahel region is a complex issue, and managing it involves major challenges, including insufficient migration data, weak border management and controls, the recurrent need for humanitarian assistance, irregular migration and human trafficking.

Without effective bilateral or regional mobility agreements, thousands of workers will migrate.

Migration is often associated with poverty, but other factors also drive the phenomenon, including youth unemployment, climate change and urbanization.

Employment-seeking migration accounts for the biggest share of intraregional mobility as youth migrate from one country to another looking for better job opportunities.

Widespread population displacement is also linked to violent conflicts and unstable environmental conditions. Conflict in the Central African Republic, for example, has left an estimated 2.5 million people relying on humanitarian assistance and 690,000 internally displaced.

Migrants fleeing violence have spilled across the borders of neighboring countries, particularly Cameroon, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad and the Republic of Congo. The current situation represents a challenge not only for the affected countries but also for the region.

In view of this growing crisis, a well-managed, orderly migration framework that incorporates practical, humane and rights-based operational solutions is needed. Strengthening mobility schemes in the region will foster regular and circular migration, allowing people to work abroad legally, return home safely and participate in the development of their communities of origin.

This strategy must also ensure the mobility of cross-border communities, but such mobility raises border

management challenges in the absence of effective identity management systems and given limited capacities to ensure surveillance and control over the extensive and porous borders throughout the region. Stakeholders will have to take coordinated action to address issues such as threats to public health, despoiling of natural resources, the loss of critical years of education and job training.

An increasing number of migrants are reconsidering migration—especially irregular migration—and want to make it at home before taking undue risks by going abroad. Legal channels and regional mobility schemes could help this group.

To ensure the safety of vulnerable populations along migratory routes who lack legal options to migrate or return home, IOM, together with African Member States and the European Union, launched in December 2016 the EU-IOM Joint Initiative on Migrant Protection and Reintegration to provide immediate assistance to stranded migrants along

2.5 million

people in need of humanitarian assistance and 690,000 are internally displaced

the routes. Almost 40,000 people have received assistance since the launch.

West and Central Africa face some of the world's greatest challenges—climate change and desertification, displacement due to conflict, galloping population growth and a youth bulge. But thanks to the resilience of the population of almost half a billion, these are also regions of enormous potential.

Sound migration policies and close cooperation among countries within the regions and on the continent with other countries of destination will help realize that potential, as will commitment by all concerned states to implement the new Global Compact for Migration. 🌍

Richard Danziger is IOM's Regional Director for West and Central Africa

African migrants keen to



African children abroad struggle over cultural identity

BY SHARON BIRCH-JEFFREY

To experience a taste of African culture deep inside the Big Apple, visitors—including many Senegalese—turn to Le Petit Senegal (Little Senegal), a West African neighborhood in West Harlem, New York.

African grocery shops, fabric stores, hair braiding parlors and regional restaurants sit shoulder to shoulder along the streets. The Sandaga Market of Little Senegal showcases a strong blend of African cultures, customs and languages, symbolizing efforts by African immigrants to project and protect their cultural identities.

Malcolm Shabazz Harlem Market, also in Harlem, bestrides a wide city block. There, master tailors are busy sewing all manner of African wear: the flowing robes of the boubou and agbada, stylish dresses made from kente cloth, sarongs of kitenge

and ever-popular dashiki. Maasai beads, crafts and leather products overflow in traditional baskets, imported from the homeland.

First-generation immigrants

There were about 2.1 million African immigrants living in the US in 2015, up from just 816,000 in 2000—a substantial increase from 1970, when the US was home to only 80,000 foreign-born Africans, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of US Census Bureau data.

Millions of immigrants have left Africa since the turn of the century, many going to Europe and the US. One factor behind this recent wave is the Refugee Act of 1980, which made it easier for those fleeing conflict-ridden countries like Somalia and Ethiopia to resettle in the US.

retain their cultural values abroad




With a dream of improving their families' well-being, many of these immigrants acquire higher education, get well-paying jobs or become entrepreneurs.

Like many immigrant groups, Africans are keen to preserve their cultural identity and ensure their children do not replace their traditional values with foreign ideas.

"When they are in my house, it is the Gambia. When they are outside, they have free will," said Dembo Jaebbeh, a tailor in the Harlem market, in an interview with *Africa Renewal*. He was referring to his three children, aged 21, 18, and 16, who relocated to the US from the Gambia four years ago.

Mr. Jaebbeh, who has lived in the United States for 14 years, says that being part of a close-knit community as well as having extended family on whom to rely helps immigrants like him preserve African beliefs and values.

British-born Christabel Nsiah-Buadi, whose parents migrated to the UK in the

Sengalese at cultural parade in Harlem in New York.  Alamy / Richard Levine

80s, received significant support from her UK extended family as well as the African community in that country. She is the producer and creator of the online TV series *The Media Disruptors*.

The mother of Arao Ameny, a graduate student and instructor at the University of Baltimore, Maryland, always worried that Ms. Ameny would lose her Ugandan identity.

"My Ugandan mother told me every single day since I came to America: 'You are a black African and you are Ugandan. Do not forget where you come from. Home is Uganda,'" Ms. Ameny, who migrated to the US in the 1990s, recalls.

The story is shared by many other African migrants in the US who do their best to keep their culture and traditions alive.

While many African migrant parents would like their children to develop a

strong bond with Africa, achieving that goal can be problematic because some parents, including hers, may not understand that their children face an identity crisis, Ms. Nsiah-Buadi told *Africa Renewal*.

Negative perception

Migrant children face real challenges, including a negative perception of Africa by Americans, that first-generation African immigrants may not understand because of views shaped by experiences growing up back home.

Ms. Nsiah-Buadi remembers that as a teenager in the UK, she had difficulties understanding her identity.

"I went to school knowing if I behaved within English cultural norms, I would stay out of trouble, then go home and follow my Ghanaian parents' rules," she said.

Ms. Nsiah-Buadi added that her sister, Phyllis, who had come to the UK at age eight, was better able to handle the bullying in school.

"As a child of immigrant parents from Africa, you are constantly straddling two worlds, reconciling, negotiating and trying to make sense of both worlds," noted Ms. Ameny.

Ms. Ameny was of the view that immigrant children who migrate at an older age tend to maintain their parents' traditions more than those who migrate as children or are born in foreign lands.

Older children tend to forge dual identities, while younger ones may quickly reject their parents' customs and languages as they assimilate in American schools and with friends.

Seventeen-year-old Brigitte Fofana, who was born in the United States to a Guinean mother, is not keen on cheb jen, a West African dish of rice and fish. She is not fond of African music either and sees no need to wear African dresses in New York. She is not alone. Lots of American-born children of immigrants feel the same.

But African-born parents are not about to give up the culture struggles. The jury is out as to how successful their efforts will be. 🌍



INTERVIEW

Migration can be a catalyst for economic growth

— Ashraf El Nour, Director, IOM New York

MIGRATION

Migration is at the heart of every discussion on sustainable development in Africa today. Experts paint a more complex picture than the too-common images of young African migrants crossing the Mediterranean. Who in Africa is migrating, how and where to? *Africa Renewal's* Zipporah Musau sat down with **Ashraf El Nour**, the Director of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Office to the UN in New York to find out more. Here are some excerpts:

Africa Renewal: Give us a brief overview of migration in Africa currently. Who is migrating and where to?

Mr. El Nour: Overall, migration in Africa is dominated by Africans moving within Africa. They move mostly to neighbouring countries, or within the same region. Africa's share of global migration, which overall stands at 258 million, are 36 million people of which 19 million move within the continent and 17 million move outside Africa.

What does that mean?

It means African migration is predominantly pan-African, with about 53% of total movements originating from Africa and staying within the continent. That shows that African countries can simultaneously be source, transit and destination countries. Africa has one of the busiest movement corridors, the fifth largest in the world. There are migratory movements that have been well-established for many years and connect migrants with destination countries because of historical, linguistic, religious or cultural ties. An example is francophone Africa and France. Migration out of the North of Africa started post-World War II, when people were invited as guest workers to help with the postwar rehabilitation and reconstruction. Over time Algerians, Moroccans, Tunisians and others established a presence in Europe, mainly in France and Belgium.

Some migrants from countries in East Africa such as Sudan, Eritrea and Somalia move to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries, such as the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. And South Africa is a magnet for migrants from surrounding countries such as Lesotho, Swaziland and Zimbabwe who go there to work in mines.

What are the major migratory routes?

Most of the contemporary movement in Africa is structured around three or four migratory routes. First, we have the Horn of Africa migratory route, which is the most dominant in the East African region. It starts from the Horn—Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea—then goes through Sudan into Libya and then across the Mediterranean to Italy or Malta. Source countries in the Horn of Africa are either in protracted conflict situations, like Somalia, or demographically have a larger number of young people, like Ethiopia.

The second is the West Africa route, starting from countries such as Nigeria, the Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso, then going through Niger to Algeria, then predominantly to Libya. Agadir is the main connection point from where they move to Libya.

The third route is from East Africa to South Africa through Tanzania, Mozambique and Malawi, with South Africa being the magnet.

The fourth is the Gulf of Aden route. Here we have people coming from mainly Somalia and Ethiopia, going to Djibouti (which is at the tip of the Horn of Africa) as a transit point to Yemen.

Who in Africa is migrating most?

These routes are populated by young people. About 60% of people in irregular migration are young people, many of them under 20 years and some unaccompanied. The rest fall into the 25 to 35 age bracket.

Are there more men or women moving?

Of the 258 million migrants globally, about 48% are female. Within Africa the percentage tends to drop a little bit, but we could safely say 45% of all African migrants are female. We are, however, seeing an increasing “feminization” of the process because some women are participating as breadwinners, seeking employment in new places. It is no longer like before, where men would leave home and women would stay behind.

We have seen images of migrants in the Sahara Desert...

These are mostly nonorganized movements facilitated by smugglers and human traffickers. They don't go through internationally recognized borders. It's a big business targeting young people who cannot easily get passports, visas or tickets, and the only other option is to look for recruiters who promise them a job and organize the smuggling from one country to another, from one group of smugglers to another. In the process the migrants are put at risk and some of them are even kidnapped for ransom.

What are the numbers of those missing?

The human cost during these movements is becoming unbearable. If we look at the figures since the beginning of this millennium, more than 60,000 people globally have lost their lives while migrating.

What main challenges do migrants face?

One is the “commodification” of migrants. Migrants becoming a commodity in the hands of smugglers and human traffickers as they pay for the journey. Human trafficking and smuggling is becoming a big business in Africa, and law enforcement cannot cope because it is lucrative and there are more people getting into this field.

Again, with many women and girls on the move now, gender-based violence (GBV) is becoming rampant, something that certainly worries us. We are also seeing situations where migrants have their body organs harvested. In short, there's loss of dignity, lack of migrants' rights and there is a protection deficit. Beyond that, we are worried that the public denouncement of migration drives a narrative that is very toxic—there's xenophobia, stigmatization of migrants and a decline in the public's trust in their government's ability to manage migration.

Because governments in many countries are not engaged in the way they should be, organized crime is coming into the mix also. There is money to be made from the smuggling and trafficking of humans. Governments are being urged to do more.

What economic gains do they bring to host countries?

Migration has always been historically positive and plays a constructive role as a catalyst of economic growth, a driver of population dynamics around the world and a blender enriching world culture and human heritage and civilizations. Migrant workers across all skill ranges fill labour market gaps, promote trade and investment and bring innovation, skills and knowledge to both host and origin countries. If you look at the recent report by the McKenzie Institute [International], migrants contributed roughly \$6.7 trillion to the global GDP output in 2015, which is \$3 trillion higher than they would have produced had they stayed home. The other benefit is the remittances. In 2017 the World Bank estimated that remittances by migrants globally stood at \$596 billion, of which \$466 billion went to developing countries, including Africa. Remittances to sub-Saharan Africa accelerated 11.4 % to \$38 billion in 2017.

Migrants also contribute to the transfer of knowledge and the enriching of civilization. If you look at a place like New York, which has been built on the backs and brains of migrants, you will see the positive contributions migrants have made to this diverse and global city – from people to food to culture, art and economic output.

Tell us about non-Africans moving into Africa.

IOM estimates that 2.3 million non-African migrants have established themselves in Africa. The majority of them are of Asian and European descent. Some of the Europeans migrated after World War II and settled in Africa—South Africa is a good example. There is also a large number of Asians, predominantly Indians, brought in during the colonial time to construct railways. Most recently we have the Chinese. The China model of investment brings not only the money but also people to do the job.

What can Africa gain from the Global Compact for Migration?

First, Africa can really pride itself on the fact that the first ever globally negotiated migration document was adopted on African soil, thanks to the Moroccan government's generosity to host the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in Marrakech on 10 and 11 December 2018.

Throughout the negotiation phase of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM), African Member States engaged actively in the process and developed a common African position on the GCM, with an emphasis on respect and dignity of migrants and respect of sovereignty of countries to manage their own borders and determine who comes in. The GCM offers a comprehensive framework to address migration in all its facets. 🇳🇬

Uganda stands out in refugees hospitality

The country hosts the largest number of refugees in Africa – more than a million

BY SULAIMAN MOMODU



MIGRATION

As thousands of desperate men, women and children flee conflicts and natural disasters in search of a place of refuge, some countries are debating whether to accept or reject asylum seekers. But Uganda has opened its doors to refugees in record numbers.

Thirteen-year-old Robert Yatta was living with his aunt and going to school in South Sudan's capital, Juba, when fighting broke out in early 2017.

"One night we woke up to heavy gunfire," he recalled in an interview with *Africa Renewal*. "Schools were closed and we were locked up in the house for a week before we made our escape to the Bidi Bidi refugee settlement in northwest Uganda." More than a quarter of a million refugees are living there.

At the peak of the fighting in South Sudan in 2016, Bidi Bidi received thousands of refugees every day. The 234 square kilometres settlement is used for residential and agricultural purposes. It is about

Refugee students in a classroom in Uganda.

UN Photo/Mark Garten

the size of the city of Birmingham, in the UK.

"Life in Uganda is good," reflects Yatta, though he is separated from his parents. "I am once again going to school."

The teenager is one of the brightest pupils in his class. He speaks English fluently and even provides academic guidance to his peers and older children.

Largest host country

Though poor, Uganda is the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa, with over a million refugees, most of them from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Burundi and Somalia. Kenya, Sudan, DRC and Ethiopia are also among the top refugee-hosting countries on the continent.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported in early 2018 that there are about 68.5



Mr. Valentin Tapsoba, UNHCR's Africa Director.

UNHCR/S. Momodu

million forcibly displaced people worldwide, including 40 million who are internally displaced. And developing countries, mostly in Africa, host 85% of the refugee population.

Mugisha Willent, 26, a refugee from the DRC, remembered fleeing Goma in 2000. "All I knew was that there was fighting

going on.” Now, “Uganda has given us peace, land and more. I call Uganda home,” she told African Renewal.

This year, Ms. Willent was one of three women to win a Voices of Courage Award from the Women’s Refugee Commission in New York.

While in Uganda, she helps out-of-school girls, young mothers and survivors of gender-based violence. She also serves as a UNHCR youth ambassador and has recently spoken at the UN in Geneva on behalf of her peers in Uganda to advocate for free movement in host countries, access to international travel documents and parity in school fees between refugees and national students.

Open-door policy

The refugee population in Uganda has been growing since 2013. Currently about 200 asylum seekers arrive daily in the country.

“Uganda has continued to maintain an open-door policy to refugees based on traditional African hospitality and not turning away anybody who is running to us for safety,” says Hilary Onek, Uganda’s Minister of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees.

Addressing the UNHCR’s governing executive committee meeting in Geneva in October, Mr. Onek noted that his government continues to maintain a policy of accepting refugees despite the country’s challenges.

At 4.5%, Uganda’s economy is “growing at a slower pace recently, thus reducing its impact on poverty,” notes the World Bank. During the 1990s and early 2000s, the economic growth rate was 7%.

Humanitarian experts applaud Uganda’s open-door refugee policy as the most generous in the world. The government’s strategy integrates refugee issues into its national planning framework.

“It is necessary for the international community to recognize that Uganda has had an exemplary refugee policy in the past and even today, faced with the largest refugee inflow of the past year, Uganda remains a symbol of the integrity of the refugee protection regime that unfortunately is not being respected everywhere in the world,” UN Secretary-General António Guterres said in June 2017.

Uganda’s refugee policy guarantees freedom of movement and the right to

employment, education and health, as well as the right to start a business. The government also provides refugees plots of land so they can farm and construct shelters. It empowers refugees to become economically self-reliant, while granting them the same rights that citizens enjoy.

Angèle Dikongué-Atangana, UNHCR’s Deputy Director for the East and Horn of Africa region reminds critics that refugees have knowledge and skills to contribute to host countries.

“In Uganda, some refugees have established businesses and employed nationals, while others are boosting food production through agricultural activities. Additionally, some are working as professionals,” said Ms. Dikongué-Atangana, underscoring that, if given the opportunity, refugees can immensely contribute to their host countries.

\$8.2 billion
is required to fund refugee
operations in 2018

Last June, Congolese refugee Robert Hakiza, now based in Uganda, told the annual UNHCR-NGO consultations in Geneva that the organization he cofounded—Young African Refugees for Integral Development (YARID)—was helping to empower refugees and contribute to their host community. YARID, whose motto is “Refugees may be forced to leave their homes, but they don’t leave behind their skills and knowledge,” creates the space for refugees and host communities to meet, discuss challenges and explore communally sourced solutions.

“Closing borders to refugees is not the solution. Among refugees are doctors, lawyers and other university graduates that can make valuable contributions to host communities,” says Mr. Hakiza, advocating free movement in host countries and across borders.

Speaking to *Africa Renewal*, UNHCR’s director for Africa, Valentín Tapsoba, said, “Uganda’s assistance to refugees is commendable, as they have a progressive

policy for hosting refugees. We are trying to encourage other countries to follow the same model as Uganda.

African hospitality

“Africa’s hospitality towards refugees is remarkable. African countries are opening their borders and their hearts to receive refugees. Host communities are welcoming refugees even before UNHCR and the international community can assist.”

Mr. Tapsoba would like to see more international support for host communities, warning that inadequate funding affects the protection of refugees, the food supply, health, shelter, and education, among other services.

According to UNHCR data, based on contributions to date, funding for 2018 is expected to be a mere 55% of the required \$8.2 billion. This compares to 56.6% in 2017 and 58% in 2016. As of October 2018, funding to Uganda was just 42% of the total budget.

While funding remains a massive challenge, Mr. Tapsoba notes that UNHCR is collaborating with partners to enable hundreds of refugees to voluntarily return home. “There are ongoing repatriation operations for Ivorian, Somali, Mozambican, Burundian and Central African Republic refugees,” he says.

Besides its operations in Uganda, UNHCR highlights the plight of thousands who are taking great risks to cross the Sahel into Libya and the Mediterranean and then into Europe. UNHCR is collaborating with some governments and the International Organization for Migration, the UN migration agency, to evacuate and sometimes resettle this group.

The chief executive officer of the World Bank, Kristalina Georgieva, says poverty, conflicts, natural disasters and climate change are key drivers of displacement. Under its International Development Association programme, the World Bank will spend \$2 billion between July 2017 and June 2020 in support of African refugees.

Development experts believe that prevention is key to solving the refugee and migrant crisis. “The best way to deal with a humanitarian crisis is not to have it in the first place,” stresses Ms. Georgieva. 🐦

Sulaiman Momodu is a Reporting Officer with UNHCR.



MIGRATION

2019: Year of return for African Diaspora

Ghana rolls out the red carpet to encourage resettlement in the motherland

BY BENJAMIN TETTEH

200 yrs

since the
abolition of
slavery

In the heart of Accra, Ghana's capital, just a few meters from the United States embassy, lie the tombs of W. E. B. Du Bois, a great African-American civil rights leader, and his wife, Shirley. The founder of the US-based National Association for the Advancement of Colored People moved to Accra in 1961, settling in the city's serene residential area of Labone and living there until his death in August 1963.

Mr. Du Bois's journey to Ghana may have signaled the emergence of a profound desire among Africans in the diaspora to retrace their roots and return to the continent. Ghana was a major hub for the transatlantic slave trade from the 16th to the 19th centuries.

In Washington, D.C., in September 2018, Ghana's President Nana Akufo-Addo declared and formally

launched the "Year of Return, Ghana 2019" for Africans in the Diaspora, giving fresh impetus to the quest to unite Africans on the continent with their brothers and sisters in the diaspora.

At that event, President Akufo-Addo said, "We know of the extraordinary achievements and contributions they [Africans in the diaspora] made to the lives of the Americans, and it is important that this symbolic year—400 years later—we commemorate their existence and their sacrifices."

US Congress members Gwen Moore of Wisconsin and Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas, diplomats and leading figures from the African-American community, attended the event. Representative Jackson Lee linked the Ghanaian government's initiative with the passage



Africans march on New York streets during the African Day Parade. 📷 Alamy/Richard Levine

in Congress in 2017 of the 400 Years of African-American History Commission Act. Provisions in the act include the setting up of a history commission to carry out and provide funding for activities marking the 400th anniversary of the “arrival of Africans in the English colonies at Point Comfort, Virginia, in 1619.”

Since independence in 1957, successive Ghanaian leaders have initiated policies to attract Africans abroad back to Ghana.

In his maiden independence address, then-Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah sought to frame Africa’s liberation around the concept of Africans all over the world coming back to Africa.

“Nkrumah saw the American Negro as the vanguard of the African people,” said Henry Louis Gates Jr., Director of the



Amber Walker.

Hutchins Center for African and African American Research at Harvard, who first traveled to Ghana when he was 20 and fresh out of Harvard, afire with Nkrumah’s spirit. “He wanted to be able to utilize the services and skills of African-Americans as Ghana made the transition from colonialism to independence.”

Ghana’s parliament passed a Citizenship Act in 2000 to make provision for dual citizenship, meaning that people of Ghanaian origin who have acquired citizenships abroad can take up Ghanaian citizenship if they so desire.

That same year the country enacted the Immigration Act, which provides for a “Right of Abode” for any “Person of African descent in the Diaspora” to travel to and from the country “without hindrance.”

The Joseph Project

In 2007, in its 50th year of independence, the government initiated the Joseph Project to commemorate 200 years since the abolition of slavery and to encourage Africans abroad to return.

Similar to Israel’s policy of reaching out to Jews across Europe and beyond following the Holocaust, the Joseph Project is named for the Biblical Joseph who was sold into slavery in Egypt but would later reunite with his family and rule Egypt.

The African-American community is excited about President Akufo-Addo’s

latest initiative. In social media posts, many expressed interest in visiting Africa for the first time. Among them is Amber Walker, a media practitioner who says that 2019 is the time to visit her ancestral home.

“The paradox of being an African-American is that we occupy spaces where we are not being considered as citizens. So I love the idea of Ghana taking the lead to kind of help African-Americans claim their ancestral space,” she told *Africa Renewal*. “It is a step in the right direction.

“It is definitely comforting because that kind of red carpet has not been rolled out by our oppressors in the Western world,” she added.

In making the announcement President Akufo-Addo said: Together on both sides of the Atlantic, we’ll work to make sure that never again will we allow a handful of people with superior technology to walk into Africa, seize their people and sell them into slavery. That must be our resolution, that never again, never again!”

But Ms. Walker took issue with Mr. Akufo-Addo for appearing to downplay the actions of some Africans in the slave trade. “In the president’s [Akufo-Addo’s] statement, he sounds like the entire blame is placed on white people coming in with weapons and taking black people away, but that’s not necessarily the history. So I think that needs to be acknowledged,” she said.

She suggested a form of reconciliation such as took place in post-apartheid South Africa—a truth and reconciliation process that will satisfy the millions of Africans whose forefathers were sold into slavery.

In 2013 the United Nations declared 2015–2024 the International Decade for People of African Descent to “promote respect, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of people of African descent.”

The theme for the ten-year celebration is “People of African descent: recognition, justice and development.”

The “Year of Return, Ghana 2019” will coincide with the biennial Pan African Historical Theatre Festival (Panafest), which is held in Cape Coast, home of Cape Coast Castle and neighbouring Elmina Castle—two notable edifices recognized by UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) as World Heritage Sites of the slave era. 🌍

Egypt 'Ify' Ufele

African themes a standout in young designer's fashion line

BY SONYA BEARD

The showroom in her Queens home in New York is bedecked with all the accoutrements of a young designer who has caught the eye of the high-flying New York fashion scene.

Walls are decorated with accolades—proclamations from the New York City Council, an award from an Ivy League university, celebrity recognition items and other certificates.

A rack in the corner brims with exquisite African-themed designs recently showcased by models on the runway during New York Fashion Week.

For a recent media interview, 13-year-old Egypt “Ify” Ufele sits in a white leather, crystal-studded throne chair fit for a princess. She is surrounded by her mocha-toned Barbie dolls, which are wearing the African-inspired styles that she hand-stitched during an earlier phase of her career. These Barbies were her first clients, a reminder of how far she has come.

Egypt has been profiled by the *New York Times*, *Teen Vogue*, *People* and other major US publications for her achievements in the fashion industry and for BullyChasers—the charity she launched to end bullying.

It wasn’t always a kind and gentle world for the amiable teen. “I was bullied and called names in school,” she says, recounting incidents of being punched in the back and having her finger dislocated. “One time, a boy stabbed me with a pencil.”

Egypt recalls a particularly painful moment at a community fashion show. A thoughtless designer rebuffed her, saying she didn’t make clothes for “fat kids.”

Her mom, Reba Perry-Ufele, says, “I tell her all the time: You’re a princess! You’re beautiful! You’re intelligent! When people attack you, that’s a way of God elevating you to a different level.” Ms. Perry-Ufele is a chaplain for the New York Police Department.

Born in the United States, Egypt has a Nigerian father and an American mother, but she considers herself an “Igbo princess.”

She is CEO of Chubiiline, a plus-size fashion line specializing in styles for curvy women, catering to sizes 00 to 26. “If someone comes to my rack, they’ll never hear the words, ‘We don’t have anything for you,’” says Egypt, who also designs for men, children and puppies.

At age five, “I began helping my grandmother by pushing the pedals on her sewing machine,” she told *Africa Renewal* in an interview. At 10, she was the youngest designer to feature at New York Fashion Week.

She is currently planning her fall 2019 collection for shows in Paris and Milan. This time, her grandmother is helping her with the African-themed ready-to-wear.

Egypt is a frequent guest and featured speaker at the United Nations on behalf of the Center for Global

Education, which is part of the US Federation of UNESCO Clubs, Centers and Associations. She also serves as a “Young Ambassador” for Guns Down, Life Up, a New York City-based antiviolence initiative.

Under the auspices of Bullychasers, Egypt has traveled to Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Togo and the Virgin Islands.

During a trip to Nigeria in 2017, Egypt noticed some children weren’t wearing shoes. Once back home, she launched a shoe-collection drive. “We collected 2,000 pairs of shoes. People were donating, and we shipped them to Nigeria for the kids,” says Ms. Perry-Ufele.

In addition to Egypt’s success as an entrepreneur, she maintains an A average at Medgar Evers College Prep School in Brooklyn. She told *Africa Renewal* she is debating whether to become a cardiothoracic surgeon or a pharmaceutical chemist. And then she added, “Maybe I should be an astronaut. There’s a whole galaxy out there, and what if we are the aliens? Do you ever think about that?”

Whichever path Egypt chooses, she has no plans to give up Chubiiline. “I like to recreate my old designs and make something new,” she said with a smile. 🌱



A double challenge for the disabled

Stigma prevents many people with disabilities from entering the workforce

BY FINBARR TOESLAND



At five years of age, Kenneth Habaalu, a Zambian, was paralysed by polio, a viral disease that attacks the nerves. Mr. Habaalu's paralysis appeared to cut short any hopes of getting an education and finding a job later in life. But thanks to his brother who paid his tuition, he acquired a diploma in management.

"The main challenge facing disabled persons in Africa is stigma. Instead of looking at your ability to do work, [employers] will look at your physical disability," explains Mr. Habaalu, now 54. He advocates for government support of disabled people's organisations (DPOs), "as these organisations will employ more disabled people and train many, which will improve their lives."

Mr. Habaalu manages Appropriate Paper Technology (APTERTS), a Lusaka-based organisation that produces mobility aids from recycled paper and cardboard for children with physical disabilities. The organisation relies on donations to subsidize production. APTERTS currently employs eight staff, each of whom has a disability.

But not many disabled persons in Africa can get an education or set up a business as Mr. Habaalu has.

More than 80 million Africans are disabled, according to the United Nations, including those with mental health conditions as well as birth defects and other physical impairments. In Africa's major capitals such as Accra, Lagos and Lusaka, hundreds of people with disabilities can be found by the roadsides begging for alms.

Jonathan Bigirima (left), married and father of six, in his joinery.  Panos/D. Telemans

The UN warns that aging populations, malnutrition, conflicts and disease, among other factors, can be expected to increase the number of the disabled in the near future.

For many of Africa's disabled, assistive devices such as wheelchairs, crutches, hearing aids and prosthetics are either not readily available or unaffordable. This, combined with a lack of formal education or vocational skills, creates difficulty for the disabled seeking employment. They are unlikely to be hired.

see page 37

Africa's freedom struggles and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

70 years since its adoption, the declaration has inspired liberation movements

BY FRANCK KUWONU

Sovereign African countries barely existed when the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, three years after the end of World War II.

It was the first time an internationally agreed-upon document unequivocally stated that all human beings are free and equal, irrespective of color, creed or religion.

But then, most of Africa was still under colonial rule. Only four African countries—Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia and South Africa—were UN members, and three of them signed the declaration. South Africa did not sign, because of the declaration's potential to disrupt its practice of racial discrimination and segregation, also known as apartheid, which lasted from 1948 until 1994.

Years later, the declaration would help transform African territories into independent states and inspire the continent's own African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, adopted on 21 October 1986, a document created to promote and protect human rights and basic freedoms. On 10 December 2018, the world marked the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

On 6 March 1957, barely a decade after the adoption of the declaration, Ghana's then-prime minister, Kwame Nkrumah, told a huge celebratory crowd at the Old Polo Grounds in the capital, Accra: "At long last, the battle has ended! And thus, Ghana, your beloved country, is free, forever!"

Ghana, a former British colony, had just gained independence.

In his speech Mr. Nkrumah aptly invoked the principles of equality, freedom and justice for all—the same principles that the declaration enshrines.

Before the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC, then Republic of the Congo)

became independent in 1960, Patrice Émery Lumumba, a historical figure in the continent-wide independence movement, emphasized that self-determination in Africa was a basic human right, underscoring the relevance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the fight for independence.

"Let [the West] today give proof of the principle of equality and friendship

between races that its sons have always taught us as we sat at our desks in school, a principle written in capital letters in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," Mr. Lumumba said in 1959 at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, a renowned center of intellectual ferment in colonial Africa.

"Africans must be just as free as other citizens of the human family to enjoy the fundamental liberties set forth in this



declaration and the rights proclaimed in the United Nations Charter,” he added.

Paradoxically, in 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights’ most enthusiastic supporters, including Belgium, France, Great Britain, Portugal and Spain, still possessed colonies in Africa in which most natives were subjects rather than citizens.

Freedom and Justice

The declaration’s proclamation of universal equality, freedom and justice strengthened the momentum toward self-determination in Africa and helped usher in an era of sovereign countries. It would also inspire several liberation movements, including those that fought against apartheid in South Africa.

The right to asylum, to freedom from torture, to free speech and to education are some of the 30 rights and freedoms contained in the Universal Declaration

of Human Rights. It also addresses civil and political rights, including the right to life, liberty and privacy, in addition to economic, social and cultural rights.

It sets the basic standards of individual rights and over the years has inspired several human rights legislations across the world, including the Freedom Charter in South Africa.

Unsurprisingly, anti-apartheid activists worldwide would draw on the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in their fight. In 1955 then-president of the African National Congress, Chief Albert Luthuli, said, “People from all walks of life [must meet] as equals, irrespective of race, color and creed, to formulate a Freedom Charter for all people in the country.”

The Nobel Foundation awarded Mr. Luthuli the Peace Prize in 1960 and described him as “the leader of ten million black Africans in their nonviolent campaign for civil rights in South Africa.”

Africa’s Charter

Although African leaders framed their quest for national independence as demands for justice, equality and dignity for all, the first two decades postindependence (the 1960s and 1970s) were marked by human rights violations.

Authoritarian and single-party regimes, including military administrations, had replaced elected ones across the continent.

Kéba Mbaye, an architect of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, described the situation at the time: “African governments appear clearly to have sacrificed rights and freedoms for the sake of development and political stability.”

Dictators such as Uganda’s Idi Amin (1971–1979), Equatorial Guinea’s Macías Nguema (1968–1979) and Central African Republic’s Jean-Bedel Bokassa (1966–1979) were accused of egregious human rights violations.

The African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights was intended to promote human rights from an African perspective, including by emphasizing collective political rights and the right to national self-determination.

Agitating for change: Women wave flags during a demonstration in Kasbah Square, Tunis. 📷 Panos / Alfredo D’Amato

“The Committee that drafted the African Charter was guided by the principle that it should reflect the African conception of human rights [and] should take as a pattern the African philosophy of law and meet the needs of Africa,” Amnesty International observed at the time.

The charter clearly acknowledges the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in its preamble and explicitly recognises civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

Strong and alive

Over the years, the principles of freedom, equality and justice embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights continue to fuel citizens’ demands for democracy and for accountability from authoritarian and single-party regimes.

“The Universal Declaration is strong and alive,” UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet remarked in New York last September, adding that the declaration “has empowered millions to march, to come together and to build progress.” Women and men are now inspired “to demand an end to discrimination, tyranny and exploitation,” Ms. Bachelet declared.

In African countries such as Cameroon, the DRC, Gabon, the Gambia, Kenya, Niger, Madagascar, Mali, Senegal, Tanzania and Togo, it is not uncommon to see citizens taking over the streets to demand equality, fairness, justice and dignity.

In the last two decades, citizens have pressured many African countries, including Nigeria, the Gambia, Liberia and Zimbabwe, to move from authoritarian regimes to democracies, opening up political space.

Most of these countries now regularly hold democratic elections, although questions are raised whether some of these elections are free and fair. Also, in many countries, vibrant civil societies are advocating for transparent and accountable governments, accentuating progress in the entrenchment of freedom of speech and association.

“We still have a long way to go,” Ms. Bachelet noted. “But in the past 70 years, humanity has moved a thousand steps forward.”

From colonies to independent states to more open and pluralistic societies, Africa is certainly making progress. 🌍





INTERVIEW

Nigeria needs free, fair and credible elections

— Edward Kallon,
UN Resident Coordinator in Nigeria

Edward Kallon is the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, a country that recently exited a painful economic recession. At the same time, insecurity stemming from the continuing terrorist activities of Boko Haram insurgents has not abated. Under these conditions, some 80 million Nigerians will go to the polls in February 2019 to elect a president, the governors of 29 of Nigeria's 36 states and all federal and state legislators. On these and other pertinent issues, *Africa Renewal's* Kingsley Ighobor interviewed Mr. Kallon. These are excerpts

Africa Renewal: What are the main areas the UN is focusing on in its work in Nigeria?

Edward Kallon: Nigeria is Africa's largest economy, and, with a projected population of around 200 million, it is the most populous country on the continent. Its sheer size and its economy are important for West Africa, Africa and the world at large. That's why it is critical for the international community to support the political and socioeconomic development in the country. Nigeria is too big to fail; if it fails, the continent will suffer.

Specifically, what is the UN doing in the country?

Nigeria is a lower-middle-income country, meaning that partnerships are very important. In July

last year we signed the Partnership Framework for 2018 to 2022. Based on this framework, the UN will support the government in three key areas: the first one is in governance, security and human rights; the second area is assisting the government to provide quality basic services; and the third is supporting inclusive growth and development. With the UN reforms, our focus is to work better together, to foster our synergies. Our key priority is to bring the UN system together to support the government of Nigeria to implement the SDGs [Sustainable Development Goals].

What are Nigeria's key challenges?

One of the challenges facing Nigeria is weak institutions at the federal, state and local levels. It is critical

27,000

people have been killed by Boko Haram insurgency in nine years

that institutions are strengthened and the governance architecture put in place. Another critical problem is the unreliable supply of electricity, although of late I am seeing some investments in the power sector to try to address the problem. I'm hoping these investments continue. Nigeria also needs to improve its infrastructure, which is critical.

You mentioned support for "inclusive growth." Do you mean women's empowerment?

It includes the empowerment of women; it has to do with the implementation of the SDGs, focusing on stimulating the economy and social investment. So our engagement is very catalytic. The UN's comparative advantage in Nigeria is fourfold: technical assistance; policy advisory services; the UN's convening power; and strengthening capacity to deliver basic services. However, due to current challenges, including pockets of instability in some places, we are also supporting the government in providing humanitarian services to the affected populations.

How challenging is Nigeria's security situation?

Let's put it this way: in general, the country is relatively safe, but we have pockets of instability. For example, we have the Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast that is now in its ninth year, and which has killed an estimated 27,000 people. There is also an emerging concern about tension between herders and farmers, which is affecting at least 17 of Nigeria's 36 states. This is quite worrisome because it has to do with issues of access to land and water made worse by the desertification in the North. The herders are forced to move their cattle down south, towards the riverine areas, and this creates tensions and clashes between them and farmers. In some of these areas there is a collapse of traditional conflict-resolution mechanisms.

How are you assisting the country to deal with this?

We are now thinking of supporting the federal states in reactivating the traditional conflict-resolution architecture. And there is also a need to modernize pastoralism, which is critical in the sense that nomadic life cannot be sustained because of demographic changes and pressure on land and water. We also have the old remnants of the Niger Delta Avengers, who are quite destructive, and the remnants of indigenous people of Biafra who are agitating for a separate republic. There is also the critical issue of hate speech, kidnappings, and petty crimes, which can happen in any populous country.

Do these security issues pose an existential threat to Nigeria?

I cannot say that the unity of the country is threatened. Nigeria has a dynamic social structure that one must appreciate. And you can only appreciate it if you understand its dynamics. There is, absolutely, the need to work on inequalities, better management of available resources, and to create opportunities for youths. About 65% of the population is under 24 years. This is a youth

bulge that can yield demographic dividends, but it is also a risk if investments are not made to make these youths productive.

How receptive is the government to your ideas?

The government is very receptive of the UN in general, and that's the reason why I am here [at the UN General Assembly] with them. There is an acknowledgement of the contributions we are making to their socioeconomic development. But let's be clear that the UN itself is not going to develop Nigeria for Nigerians. Our role will continue to be catalytic.

Nigeria has a three-tier governance structure (federal, state and local government). How do you interact within this structure?

Well, it has been very clear to me that I need to engage at the federal and state levels. Vertical and horizontal linkages are critical. Most policies are made at the federal level before they are adopted and implemented by the states, which is where we can make a difference in people's lives. Of course, the political landscape is quite dynamic in Nigeria. For the 2019 elections, for example, we are talking about 91 political parties and over 81 million eligible voters.

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About 65% of the population is under 24 years. This is a youth bulge that can yield demographic dividends, but it is also a risk if investments are not made to make these youths productive.

Regarding the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections in February 2019, what's your assessment of the electoral process so far?

We are advocating for free, fair and credible elections. If we end up with a contested election result, it can destabilize the fragile balance in the country. And I don't think it is in the interest of Nigerians. The economy is coming out of recession and they have put in place very viable policies that have started to make an impact.

How do you see Nigeria in 5 to 10 years?

If Nigeria is successful, it can take the whole of the subregion or even the continent to prosperity. So it is critical that Nigeria's policies and practices work, and I am hoping that the current development efforts will continue. They have an economic recovery plan that's focused on diversification, which is key to reducing the dependency on oil and to making the economy competitive. 🇳🇬



POLITICS

Crisis worsens in Cameroon

People flee as the UN calls for national reconciliation and durable solution

BY FRANCK KUWONU

13,000

jobs, mostly in the agricultural sector, on the line due to the crisis

What started as a struggle for equality and justice by citizens of southern Cameroon has spiraled into a full-blown crisis. Rebel groups seeking an end to what they consider domination of the anglophone south by the francophone north have taken up weapons against the government's security forces, causing hundreds to die while tens of thousands are forced from their homes.

Factories have been shuttered, roads have become impassable, warehouses have been destroyed, and truck drivers are routinely kidnapped for ransom.

The current crisis heated up in 2016 when activists in Cameroon's western provinces protested the official use of the French language in these predominantly anglophone regions.

In the past two years, those protests have turned deadly.

A prominent Cameroonian scholar and professor at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa, Achille Mbembe, observes that Anglophone

Cameroonians complain about being marginalized because the administration doesn't speak their language, adding that the controversy over language is an expression of deeper, long-held grievances around good governance and equitable political and social representation.


Fighting has intensified

UN Secretary-General António Guterres in September 2017 urged Cameroonian authorities to "promote measures of national reconciliation aimed at finding a durable solution to the crisis, including by addressing its root causes."

In her report to the 39th session of the UN's Human Rights Council last September, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet mentioned the crisis in Cameroon: "Fighting has intensified in the so-called anglophone regions between security forces and armed groups."

"The government has not acted to promote the conference on dialogue suggested by religious leaders,



A Cameroonian refugee across the border in Cross River State, Nigeria.  UNHCR/Simi Vijay

and there is still no mechanism in place which could envisage a halt in hostilities in the short term.”

Approximately 437,000 people are internally displaced across the affected provinces, said David Malan of the local Norwegian Refugees Council Office in an interview with *Africa Renewal*.

Most displaced people are taking refuge in remote rural areas or in surrounding bushlands and forests, several humanitarian agencies confirmed. Mr. Malan added that “getting them needed help has proved challenging.”

Cameroon’s GDP growth had been projected to reach 3.8% this year, a rebound from the previous year, due to an increase in natural gas production. That goal is now likely unattainable.

The country’s economic growth “depends on the government’s ability to successfully handle the violent secessionist conflict in the two anglophone regions,” the World Bank stated last October.

The western provinces, hotbed of the crisis, produce cocoa and coffee, the country’s two main agriculture exports. Oil

production, which accounts for an estimated 40% of the country’s GDP, mostly takes place in the coast of the Southwest Region.

Groupement inter-patronal du Cameroun (GICAM), an association of business leaders, declared in September that violence in two anglophone regions in the west of the country was forcing companies to halt operations.

Due to the crisis, GICAM estimates total loss of revenue as of October 2018 to be about \$470 million, while 13,000 jobs, mostly in the agricultural sector, have been or are about to be lost.

Regional concerns

While fighting so far is within Cameroonian borders, there are fears its escalation could destabilize all of Central Africa and parts of West Africa.

Cameroonian refugees have begun moving to border communities in Cross River State in the south of neighboring Nigeria. They arrive nearly destitute and



\$470 million
estimated total loss
of revenue as of
October 2018

eke out a living in low-wage jobs.

They are mostly young people and women who have witnessed violence firsthand. “I could not take any clothes. There was shooting—they killed my uncle and shot my cousin,” a 39-year-old mother of four told UNHCR.

Janet Obi, who used to trade in cocoa and clothes back home in Cameroon, is now tending cornfields in a village in Nigeria, the Qatar-based media company Al Jazeera reported in August.

“I get paid between 500 to 1,000 naira [\$2 to \$4] a day,” Stella Obi (no relation of Janet) told Al Jazeera as she worked the soil in a small vegetable field. “I never tasted this kind of suffering when I was in my village in Cameroon.”

These refugees are “employed as cheap day labourers, mostly in cocoa fields,” Chiara Cavalcanti of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR)

told *Africa Renewal*. Just as it is for western Cameroon, cocoa is Cross River State’s main commercial agricultural product.

Meantime, rights groups continue to denounce both the activities of the separatists and the central government’s tough response. Political observers warn that government crackdowns may exacerbate the situation.

Cameroon gained independence in 1961 and operated a federal system comprising two former UN trusteeship territories: French Cameroun and British Southern Cameroon. In 1972, the federal state was abrogated in favour of the United Republic of Cameroon, which was later renamed Republic of Cameroon.

In 1990, the first All Anglophone Conference was held in Buea, the historic capital of British Southern Cameroon. The participants called for a return to a federal state by April 1993, deeming the federal arrangement a better option than the prevailing unitary system.

The dream of a federal government did not materialize, sparking complaints over the years by people in the western regions that they were being marginalized by the central government.

Although the government has made efforts to address the situation by promising an inclusive approach to governance, few or no actions seem to have been taken, which prompted the latest protests and the ensuing violence.

The Catholic Church steps in

The Catholic Church recently renewed its calls for dialogue. “The Catholic Church can help break this dangerous stalemate,” suggests the Brussels-based international policy research group International Crisis Group (ICG).

Some 30% of the Cameroonian population is Catholic, giving the religious body clout to bring the warring parties to a peace table, the ICG believes.

Still, there appears to be divisions between anglophone and francophone clergies. Those divisions “stand in the way of [the Catholic Church] playing a constructive role,” notes the ICG.

To resolve the crisis, Mr. Guterres indicated his preference for a “genuine and inclusive dialogue between the government and the communities in the South-West and North-West regions.” 🇳🇪

After making peace, Ethiopia and Eritrea now focus on development

Both countries say they must make up for lost times

BY DANIEL OTIENO

The winds of change are blowing across the Horn of Africa following the signing in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, of the 17 September peace agreement by Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki.

The two countries have ceased hostilities and restored trade and diplomatic ties, and have planned joint projects.

“Local trade is reflourishing as Eritreans and Ethiopians trade with no currency exchange issues. Birr-nakfa [their respective currencies] exchanged on parity on the ground. Very positive development—but needs institutionalisation!” says Kjetil Tronvoll, a Norwegian professor who follows developments in the Horn of Africa and founder of Oslo-based International Law and Policy Institute, a think tank.

After a bitter war that lasted 20 years (from 1998 to 2018) and during which as many as 100,000 were killed, the agreement has enabled air services to resume, phone lines to reopen, military hostilities to cease and families to reunite.

As the agreement was announced, hundreds of citizens hugged each other in their respective countries and celebrated. Their leaders have also officially opened the crossing points of their shared border, which had been closed for 20 years.

Since 1998, no head of state or government representative had visited either side. Telephone lines had been disconnected, effectively cutting off communication between the two countries.

Ethiopia Airlines, which stopped flying the route in 1998, is now back, flying weekly to Asmara, Eritrea’s capital, a move likely to boost trade ties and contribute to economic growth.

“This is my message to Ethiopians: love looks better on you,” Prime Minister

Ahmed said in Jeddah, adding, “Love is the only way with our Eritrean brothers.”

President Afwerki said, “Hate, discrimination and conspiracy are now over. Our focus from now on should be on developing and growing together.... Now is the time to make up for the lost times.”

The crisis had real-life effects on Eritreans and Ethiopians. Astebeha Tesfaye, an Ethiopian who has been in Eritrea since 1998, now hopes to finally return home. He had gone to visit his friends in Eritrea 20 years ago when hostilities broke, and the borders were closed. He was forced to remain in Eritrea ever since.

“I was going to take the bus the next day [back to Ethiopia], but I heard that the roads were blocked, and that no one was going to move either to Eritrea or Ethiopia,” Mr. Tesfaye told the BBC.

Many credit Ethiopia’s 41-year-old prime minister with accelerating the pace, and changing the tone and direction, of peace negotiations.

On taking office, Mr. Ahmed stunned both sides by announcing that Ethiopia would give back to Eritrea the disputed border town of Badme in the Gash-Barka Region, 139 kilometers southwest of Asmara. Justifying the decision to hand over the town, the ruling Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front noted that “the Ethiopian and Eritrean people are tied together linguistically, by history and by lineage.”

The so-called Jeddah Agreement was the culmination of peace initiatives that began on 8 June 2018 with the historic embrace between the two leaders in Asmara. That was followed by the signing of a joint declaration in Asmara on 9 July, and then by the Jeddah Agreement and the resumption of diplomatic and trade relations on September 18.



The deal was sponsored by Saudi Arabia’s King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, who promptly awarded the two leaders the Medal of King Abdulaziz. Among the dignitaries at the signing ceremony were the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres and Saudi Arabia’s King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

Article one of the seven-point Jeddah Agreement reads: “The state of war between the two countries has ended, and a new era of peace, friendship and comprehensive cooperation has started.”

Other articles focus on, among other things, strengthening relations in security, defense, trade and investment, and the



cultural and social fields; establishing joint economic zones; and combating both terrorism and “trafficking in people, arms and drugs, in accordance with international covenants and conventions.”

With the peace pact, landlocked Ethiopia can now use, tax-free, the Red Sea ports in Assab, in the south of Eritrea, and in Massawa in the north. Ethiopia currently spends over \$1.5 billion annually for the use of Djibouti ports. Eritrean industries, on the other hand, will gain access to Ethiopia’s 100 million consumers (the second-largest in Africa).

Before the Jeddah Agreement, several unsuccessful attempts had been made to

broker peace between the countries. Ethiopia rejected a boundary commission ruling in 2002 that Badme belongs to Eritrea.

In September 2017, the Switzerland-based World Council of Churches, with millions of members in Ethiopia and Eritrea, failed to reconcile the two countries. Further efforts by the US State Department, the UN and the African Union did not bear fruit, according to *The EastAfrican*, a Nairobi-based publication.

The latest peace deal will be tested in the months ahead, says Martin Plaut, a senior research fellow, Horn of Africa and Southern Africa, at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies in the United Kingdom. He maintains

President Isaias Afwerki and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed sign the Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship between Eritrea and Ethiopia on 9 July 2018. 📷 Yemane Gebremeskel

that, “For the peace efforts to stick, both Ethiopia and Eritrea must complete internal reforms.”

He adds, “Prime Minister Abiy [Ahmed] has pushed Ethiopia much further down the road of reform, while Eritrea still has a long way to go. Consolidating democracy and internal peace-building will be needed if the dramatic pace of change is to hold in the region. 🌍

Fighting 'hidden hunger' with fortified foods

Lack of key nutrients in food impedes growth

BY BRENDA WAWA



For years, boosting agricultural production was believed to be the solution to world hunger and malnourishment. But years of intensive farming with chemical fertilizers and pesticides has done little to move the needle on food insecurity, health metrics or life expectancy.

Today, experts have identified a new kind of hunger—one caused not by lack of food but by food that lacks essential micronutrients necessary for growth and development.

Micronutrients include vitamins and minerals such as iodine, vitamin A, iron, zinc, calcium, and many others.

A farmer in Mount Kenya region in Kenya.

📷 CIAT/Neil Palmer

The effects of micronutrient deficiency can be irreversible. For example, without iodine, children are susceptible to brain damage.

“Its most devastating impacts occur during fetal development and in the first few years of a child’s life,” warns UNICEF, the UN body that handles issues affecting children.

Deficiencies of micronutrients can “condemn a child to lifelong irreversible damage. They would never be able to attain their intellectual, economic and developmental potential,” says Anna Lartey, director of nutrition at the Food and Agriculture Organization, a specialised UN agency that leads efforts to defeat hunger.

Lack of vitamin A is the leading cause of preventable childhood blindness, stunted growth, weakened immunity and high mortality for children under five.

Hidden hunger also leads to acute undernutrition or child wasting, which can be diagnosed in children under five with low height for their age. It affects them at an extremely crucial phase in development.

Globally, up to 2 billion people do not get enough essential vitamins and minerals from food, according to the 2018 Global Hunger Index, which tracks and measures efforts to fight hunger, indicating that many of the affected are expectedly in poor countries.

Nearly 48% of Africa’s population relies on cereals and root staples that lack vital micronutrients, according to the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, the implementing arm of the African Union. Millions have no access to or cannot afford foods such as vegetables, fruits, and animal products that are rich in micronutrients.

Possible solutions

To provide adequate micronutrients for children, UNICEF recommends a diverse range of nutrient-dense foods. It also recommends that children be breastfed.

Biofortification is another effective remedy, experts say. The World Health Organisation (WHO) describes biofortification as “a process by which the nutritional quality of food crops is improved through agronomic practices, conventional plant breeding, or modern biotechnology.”

The process usually targets the three crucial nutrients—iron, zinc and vitamin A—that are the most limited in the diets of populations across Africa.

Researchers and nutritionists are optimistic about the impact and cost-effectiveness of biofortification.

“It is a complementary intervention that can reach many people in the rural areas more easily, and has the advantage of being more sustainable,” says Dr. Natalia Palacios Rojas, maize nutritional quality specialist at the Kenya-based International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center. “Farmers and their families can benefit directly from a micronutrient-enhanced diet.”

WHO has yet to officially endorse biofortification, stating on its website that more research is needed before recommendations can be made. Nevertheless, by the end of 2017, about 6.7 million households globally had benefited from biofortified crops, of which 5 million households were in Africa.

HarvestPlus, a Washington D.C.-based organisation that seeks to reduce hidden hunger, is working with private and public sectors to implement biofortification in Africa.

Biofortification is also an objective in the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), a framework adopted in 2003 by African leaders that requires countries to invest at least 10% of their budgets in agriculture.

Farmers in 13 African countries, including Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, are already growing biofortified crops and have incorporated them into their national nutrition policies and programmes. Thirty-eight other countries, including Angola, Ethiopia, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mali and Zambia, are carrying out tests.

“Research has shown positive health impacts of vitamin A in maize and sweet potatoes in local systems, as well as the ability to scale up,” says Dr. John McDermott, Director of the Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health at CGIAR, a global network of organizations engaged in research on food security.

Dr. McDermott added that “similar evidence for iron in beans and pearl millet show effectiveness and scalability of iron in plant sources, and we are working to show the same for zinc.”

Limitations of biofortification

Despite its touted merits, biofortification has its limits, including that some members of a target population may not accept fortified foodstuffs, even when aware of the

increased levels of micronutrients in them, according to WHO.

Also, infants and young children consuming relatively small amounts of food may not get enough micronutrients from fortified staples alone.

Poorer families often have multiple micronutrient deficiencies at once. While multiple micronutrient fortification is possible, these families may not be able to get recommended intakes of all micronutrients from fortified foods alone.

“Although more cost-effective than other strategies, there are nevertheless significant costs associated with the food fortification process, which might limit the implementation and effectiveness of food fortification programmes in developing [countries] like India,” notes WHO.

The current funding for biofortification in Africa is restricted to adding the nutrient trait into already growing crop pipelines as opposed to including the nutrient trait right at the onset of plant breeding work. The current approach may not be sustainable in the long term, experts warn.

Also, weak seed and market systems in Africa continue to impede delivery to farmers of biofortified crops from which seeds can be obtained. Effective engagement between research and development institutions will likely address this weakness, posit biofortification researchers.

In sum, biofortification may not eradicate hidden hunger entirely, but it just might be an effective shield against hunger pangs in Africa. 🌱

By the numbers

2 billion

number of people not getting essential vitamins and minerals from food

5 million

number of households in Africa that have benefitted from biofortified crops

10%

percentage of budget Africa leaders committed to investing agriculture



ENVIRONMENT

Global warming: severe consequences for Africa


New report projects greater temperature increases

BY DAN SHEPARD

Record global greenhouse gas emissions are putting the world on a path toward unacceptable warming, with serious implications for development prospects in Africa.

“Limiting warming to 1.5° C is possible within the laws of chemistry and physics, but doing so would require unprecedented changes,” said Jim Skea, cochair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group III.

But IPCC, the world’s foremost authority for assessing the science of climate change, says it is still possible to limit global temperature rise to 1.5° C—if, and only if, there are “rapid and far-reaching

Farmers planting during a rainy season in Dali, North Darfur, Sudan.  UN Photo / Albert Farran

transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport, and cities.”

For sub-Saharan Africa, which has experienced more frequent and more intense climate extremes over the past decades, the ramifications of the world’s warming by more than 1.5° C would be profound.

Temperature increases in the region are projected to be higher than the global mean temperature increase; regions in Africa within 15 degrees of the equator are

projected to experience an increase in hot nights as well as longer and more frequent heat waves.

The odds are long but not impossible, says the IPCC. And the benefits of limiting climate change to 1.5° C are enormous, with the report detailing the difference in the consequences between a 1.5° C increase and a 2° C increase. Every bit of additional warming adds greater risks for Africa in the form of greater droughts, more heat waves and more potential crop failures.

Recognizing the increasing threat of climate change, many countries came together in 2015 to adopt the historic Paris Agreement, committing themselves to limiting climate change to well below 2° C. Some 184 countries have formally joined the agreement, including almost every African nation, with only Angola, Eritrea and South Sudan yet to join. The agreement entered into force in November 2016.

In December 2018 countries met in Katowice, Poland, for the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)—known as COP24—to finalise the rules for implementation of the agreement’s work programme.

As part of the Paris Agreement, countries made national commitments to take steps to reduce emissions and build resilience. The treaty also called for increased financial support from developed countries to assist the climate action efforts of developing countries.

But even at the time that the Paris Agreement was adopted, it was recognized that the commitments on the table would not be enough. Even if the countries did everything they promised, global temperatures would rise by 3° C this century.

According to the IPCC, projections show that the western Sahel region will experience the strongest drying, with a significant increase in the maximum length of dry spells. The IPCC expects Central Africa to see a decrease in the length of wet spells and a slight increase in heavy rainfall.

West Africa has been identified as a climate-change hotspot, with climate change likely to lessen crop yields and production, with resultant impacts on food security.

see page 38

Blue economy can be a lifeline for Africa

Sustainable exploitation of the oceans, lakes, rivers will increase countries' earnings

BY RUTH WARUHIU

By efficient management, the sustainable exploitation of resources in oceans, seas, lakes and rivers—also known as the blue economy—could contribute up to \$1.5 trillion to the global economy, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, an intergovernmental organization comprising of 36 countries.

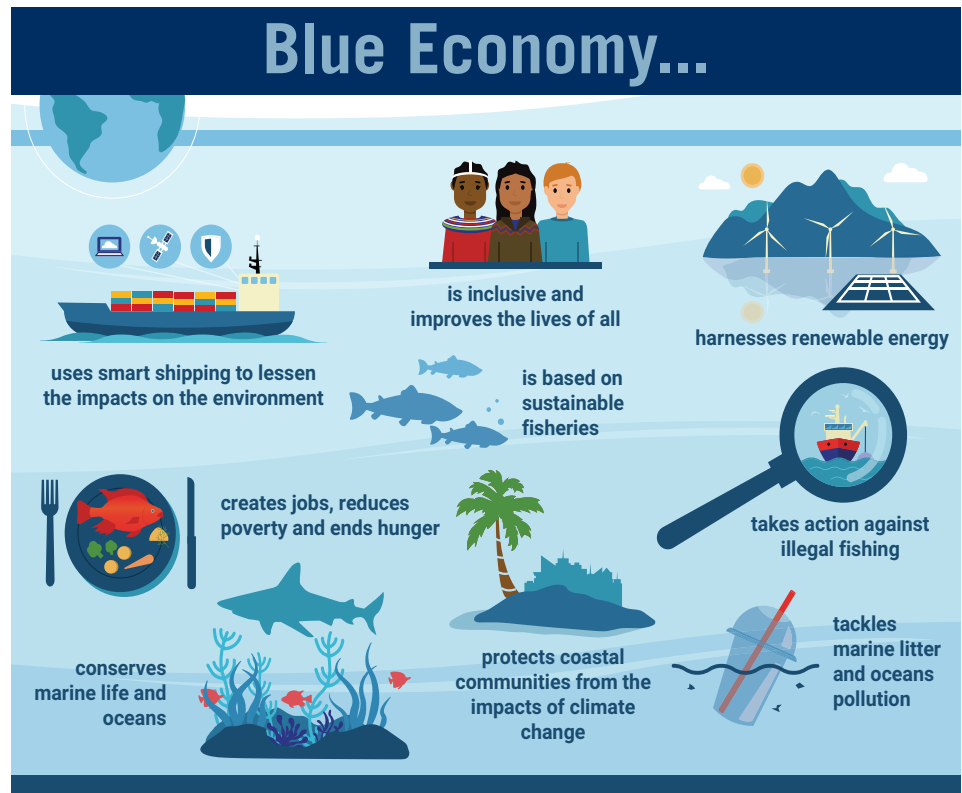
Last November experts, government officials, environmental activists, policy makers and academics converged in Nairobi, Kenya, for the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference.

With the theme “Blue Economy and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” the conference, convened and hosted by Kenya, with Canada and Japan as cohosts, looked at new technologies and innovation for oceans, seas, lakes and rivers as well as challenges, potential opportunities, priorities and partnerships.

Africa has 38 coastal and island states and a coastline of over 47,000 km, and hence presents an enormous opportunity for the continent to develop the sectors typically associated with the blue economy, says Cyrus Rustumjee, a blue economy expert and a senior fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation.

“Expanding fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, transportation and maritime and inland ports can help to reduce African poverty and enhance food and energy security, employment, economic growth and exports, ocean health and sustainable use of ocean resources,” says Dr. Rustumjee.

He notes that more than 12 million people are employed in fisheries alone, the



largest of the African blue economy sectors, providing food security and nutrition for over 200 million Africans and generating value added estimated at more than \$24 billion, or 1.26% of the GDP of all African countries.

Of concern at the Nairobi conference was the current wanton and large-scale exploitation of the world's waters, especially in developing countries.

President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya expressed concern over the “massive pollution of our water bodies; the evident

overexploitation of water resources and their related biodiversities, as well as the specific challenge of insecurity, more so in the high seas.”

Pre-conference advocacy by Kenya, Canada and Japan, the main organisers of the event, focused on many issues central to Africa's development, including food security for vulnerable groups and communities, malnutrition, sustainable food production and gender equality in blue economy industries.

Kenya's Foreign Affairs Cabinet Secretary, Monica Juma, said the discussions were “dedicated to realizing the untapped potential found in our oceans, seas, lakes and rivers; and focused on integrating economic development, social inclusion and sustainability which promotes a blue economy that is prosperous, inclusive and sustainable.”

“

Nairobi Blue Economy conference was dedicated to realizing the untapped potential found in our oceans, seas, lakes and rivers.

see page 38

Kofi Annan: tribute to a rare gentleman

BY CARLOS LOPES

He could give you his full attention for a few seconds and leave you with the feeling you mattered. This is a quality you will recognize in very few individuals. It is emotional and profound. That's because people occupying powerful positions more commonly portray arrogance and impatience. It could be true such people are usually quite busy, which explains their limited time for kindness or small talk. That is the normal behaviour you sort of expect. And, then, there was the Kofi Annan way.

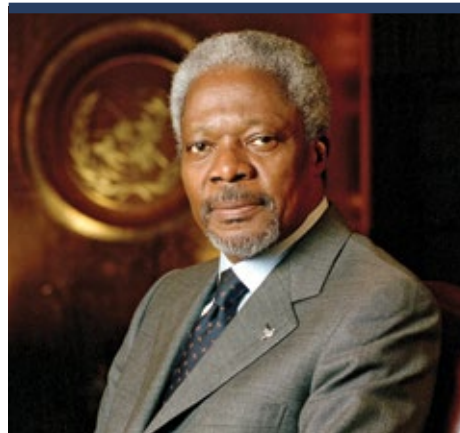
From a secular pope to a rock star of diplomacy, from a Nobel Prize laureate to traditional chieftainship, Kofi Annan was used to titles, glamour and recognitions of all sorts. Yet such attention would not make his voice louder. Here was a sophisticated player capable of enhancing his stature by doing the opposite: restricting his appearances, demonstrating humbleness, and lowering the tone of his voice when talking to the powerful or the vulnerable. Almost everyone that came across this rare combination of charm and poise was conquered. A rare gentleman that transmitted noble upbringing and natural politeness.

This personality archetype being so singular it is no surprise everybody that crossed him would pretend they knew him. In fact, in an odd way, they did. They could, even if they just saw him for a few seconds, connect the man with his public persona; so detectable and discernible.

For the UN actors—diplomats, staff, envoys, media—the connection was even stronger. He was their Secretary-General, someone approachable, sincere and capable of acknowledging his and the organization's mistakes. He was almost predictable in his demeanour.

I, like many others, got to know Mr. Annan in the course of time, throughout the various echelons of his UN career. When reflecting on the past more than once, he and I remembered three moments that marked our connection.

As the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) in Zimbabwe, I had the chance of welcoming the



Mr. Annan.  UN Photo/John Isaac

Secretary-General to an historic AU Summit in 1997. When the plane stopped next to the red carpet in the VIP area of Harare Airport, in-between other flights of important dignitaries, one could excuse a protocol confusion, even more so with a Head of State sharing the same flight and descending the same stairs. Mr. Annan was so popular that many minders rushed to shake his hand in the middle of folkloric dancers, military parade, and a cacophonous muddle. Visibly protocol-lost and looking for a reference, his eyes finally spotted me. In a typical discreet diplomatic touch, he greeted me while asking with visible annoyance who was the RC. I responded: "It's me!" It was my way of, also diplomatically, reminding him of our connection. He had known me since he was the Head of Human Resources at the UN. At the time we both lived at Roosevelt Island in New York. At the Airport tarmac he could, nevertheless, be excused for realizing that a 37-year-old was actually the RC, apart from being his acquaintance. We used to laugh about this encounter.

The second moment was no laughing matter. One of Mr. Annan's best friends and respected UN high-flyer Sérgio Vieira de Mello had died, a victim of the bomb attack on the UN compound in Baghdad on 19 August 2003. After numerous changes to the funeral plans by relatives and the Brazilian government, the decision was finally made that a

state ceremony would be organized in Rio de Janeiro. I was then RC in Brazil, this time nominated by Mr. Annan, who who used to ask me informally about my views on a range of issues.

Mr. Annan arrived in Rio almost an entire day before the funeral ceremonies. I felt the need to organize some sort of a programme, but he was not interested. I insisted on at least a short helicopter flight to see Rio's peaceful beauty from the sky, which he finally accepted. The Government was happy to do this for him. I joined the flight and while in the air pointed to the Rocinha favela that he had heard so much about. I told him that my friend, the Minister of Culture and famous singer Gilberto Gil, had a project there. It was the beginning of a conversation that ended up with Mr. Gil and Mr. Annan playing together in the UN General Assembly Hall in commemoration of Sérgio's exceptional life.

The third moment we often recalled was the modest beginnings of the Kofi Annan Foundation in Geneva, with me helping with some minor things to get it established. This modest man would be telling me about his student times in that city where we shared the same alma mater, the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, and unusual routines we learned there. I was myself back to Geneva to lead the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), after having served in the UN's 38th floor—a floor usually for top management. I never knew if my landing at UNITAR had his fingers. Like many people he helped or protected, his number one rule was discretion. But certainly, we were both happy to be able to continue to work together on the same causes. Although this is a personal tribute, I am convinced many people have similar stories from this towering character. He touched deeply those who had a chance to cross his path. 🇳🇬

Carlos Lopes, currently a professor at Mandela School of Public Governance, University of Cape Town, South Africa, is a former Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa.

A double challenge for the disabled from page 23

“Employers continue to think hiring disabled people is difficult, because they so rarely meet them face-to-face—and so they rarely have the chance to learn directly from disabled people speaking for themselves,” says Susan Scott-Parker, CEO of the London-based Business Disability International, a not-for-profit social enterprise that works to improve job prospects for disabled people.

Ms. Scott-Parker is calling for DPOs and other NGOs to train disabled people in skills that can make them attractive to employers. Unless disabled people are provided with the support they need to be independent and employable, the cost to governments and society will be substantial.

“Far too many disabled people are offered training that equips them with skills that local employers are actually not looking for. Why learn woodworking if there aren’t any woodworking jobs? Why not, instead, approach the local Cisco Networking Academies to ensure disabled people get the Cisco accreditation which we know local companies are looking for?” asks Ms. Scott-Parker rhetorically.



80 million
plus Africans are
disabled, according
to the United
Nations

Sadly, Ms. Scott-Parker says, many employers underestimate what persons with disabilities can achieve. Disabled people, she says, suffer from the “soft bigotry of low expectations,” a subtle form of prejudice against them by employers.

Some African governments and advocates for people with disabilities have been searching for ways to foster inclusion of talented people with disabilities in the workforce. In 2003, Kenya passed the Persons with Disabilities Act, which requires public and private organisations to have



disabled persons fill at least 5% of their job vacancies.

There are about 3 million people with disabilities in Kenya, according to the International Labour Organisation. Employers often disregard the act, laments 36-year-old Frederick Ouko, who himself uses a wheelchair. “They don’t even consider it.”

The Parliament of South Africa, in 1998, passed the Employment Equity Act, which requires organisations to ensure that people with disabilities make up at least 2% of their workforce.

Incentives for South African companies include tax rebates of up to 100,000 rands (\$7,000) for each disabled person undergoing training. Local and international NGOs, including Light for the World, an international disability and development organisation with headquarters in Austria, offer grants and training to disabled employees and jobseekers.

Still, South Africa absorbs less than 1% of its citizens with disabilities into its workforce because of two factors: first, the stigma disabled people face at work, which discourages many from looking for jobs; second, the lack of financial penalties for companies that fail to meet the 2% target, which gives employers the leeway to disregard the law.

“There are about five million disabled South Africans. This [not meeting the 2% target] indicates the magnitude of the problem that people living with disabilities are facing,” says Shereen Elmie, who sits on the board of Employment Solutions for People with Disabilities, a South Africa-based nonprofit that helps people with disabilities find jobs.

Disabled athletes at the start of a 10-kilometre race in Monrovia, Liberia. 📷 UN/Staton Winter

In a 2015 study, *Disability, Gender, and Employment Relationships in Africa: The case of Ghana*, published by the African Journal of Disability, researcher Augustina Naami found that in Ghana, most “persons living with disabilities are unemployed, the majority being women.” The author lists discrimination and negative perceptions about their abilities as key barriers to employment.

To counter these disadvantages, the study recommends educational interventions, such as government financing of formal education for the disabled.

Ms. Scott-Parker says that a business that creates a diverse, merit-based workforce, in which people with disabilities are treated equally to the “abled,” is likely to have access to the highest-quality talent available.

As governments are among the largest employers of labour in Africa, the public sector must deliver best practices to “have a huge impact on the employment prospects of disabled persons,” she said.

Tom Shakespeare, a professor of disability research at the University of East Anglia, UK, insists that this diverse group has much to offer companies across the continent.

“Businesses will find that disabled people are dedicated and hardworking employees who will stick at a job and give it their best. It makes good business sense to employ suitably qualified disabled people,” Mr. Shakespeare asserts. 🌱

Global warming: severe... from page 34

Southern Africa will also be affected. The western part of Southern Africa is set to become drier, with increasing drought frequency and number of heat waves toward the end of the 21st century.

A warming world will have implications for precipitation. At 1.5° C, less rain would fall over the Limpopo basin and areas of the Zambezi basin in Zambia, as well as parts of Western Cape in South Africa.

But at 2° C, Southern Africa is projected to face a decrease in precipitation of about 20% and increases in the number of consecutive dry days in Namibia, Botswana, northern Zimbabwe and southern Zambia. This will cause reductions in the volume of the Zambezi basin projected at 5% to 10%.

If the global mean temperature reaches 2° C of global warming, it will cause significant changes in the occurrence and intensity of temperature extremes in all sub-Saharan regions.

West and Central Africa will see particularly large increases in the number of hot days at both 1.5° C and 2° C. Over Southern Africa, temperatures are expected to rise faster at 2° C, and areas of the southwestern region, especially in South Africa and parts of Namibia and Botswana, are expected to experience the greatest increases in temperature.

Perhaps no region in the world has been affected as much as the Sahel, which is experiencing rapid population growth, estimated at 2.8% per year, in an environment of shrinking natural resources, including land and water resources.

Inga Rhonda King, President of the UN Economic and Social Council, a UN principal organ that coordinates the economic and social work of UN agencies, told a special meeting at the UN that the region is also one of the most environmentally degraded in the world, with temperature increases projected to be 1.5 times higher than in the rest of the world.

Largely dependent on rain-fed agriculture, the Sahel is regularly hit by droughts

and floods, with enormous consequences to people's food security. As a result of armed conflict, violence and military operations, some 4.9 million people have been displaced this year, a threefold increase in less than three years, while 24 million people require humanitarian assistance throughout the region.

Climate change is already considered a threat multiplier, exacerbating existing problems, including conflicts. Ibrahim Thiaw, special adviser of the UN Secretary-General for the Sahel, says the Sahel region is particularly vulnerable to climate change, with 300 million people affected.

Drought, desertification and scarcity of resources have led to heightened conflicts between crop farmers and cattle herders, and weak governance has led to social breakdowns, says Mr. Thiaw. The shrinking of Lake Chad is leading to economic marginalization and providing a breeding ground for recruitment by terrorist groups as social values and moral authority evaporate. 🌍

Blue economy can be a lifeline... from page 35

While emphasizing the importance of unlocking the full productive potential of Africa's waters, Ms. Juma said she especially hoped to see increased participation of women and youth in all areas of the blue economy.

A recurring theme at the conference was that the blue economy could boost a country's economic growth and environmental protection and, by extension, help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda.

According to Macharia Kamau, the Principal Secretary in Kenya's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, overall the conference presented "immense opportunities for the growth of our economy, especially sectors such as fisheries, tourism, maritime transport, offshore mining, among others, in a way that the land economy has failed to do."

The strategic importance of the blue economy to trade is clear, notes the International Maritime Organization, a specialised agency of the United Nations



responsible for regulating shipping. For instance, up to 90% of global trade facilitation by volume and 70% by value is carried out by sea.

One challenge is that the oceans and seas absorb about 25% of the extra carbon dioxide emissions added to earth's atmosphere through the burning of fossil fuels. Oil and gas remain major sources of energy, with approximately 30% of production carried out offshore.

Before the event in Kenya, the organisers highlighted current challenges within the blue economy, including a lack of shared prosperity, maritime insecurity and unsustainable human activities around and in oceans, seas, lakes and rivers, including overfishing.



Other challenges are pollution, invasive species and ocean acidification, which lead to biodiversity loss and compromise human health and food security. In addition, a weak legal, policy, regulatory and institutional framework and poorly planned and unregulated coastal development exacerbate existing challenges.

To address these problems, participants called on leaders and policy makers to implement appropriate policies and allocate significant capital to sustainable investment in the sector to boost production, inclusiveness and sustainability.

The Nairobi conference drew global attention to the blue economy; the challenge is ensuring concrete actions follow the vigorous discussion. 🌍

BOOK REVIEW

Living Together, Living Apart? Social Cohesion in a Future South Africa

Edited by Christopher Ballantine, Michael Chapman, Kira Erwin and Gerhard Maré

A quarter of a century after the demise of apartheid's notorious system of racial segregation, South Africans still grapple with the legacies of inequality and injustice. Their leaders frequently talk about building "social cohesion," towards a new, more inclusive society that can overcome the continuing divides of race, language, income, gender, culture and social position. Generally, however, they speak only in the vaguest terms, and tend to put forward solutions more symbolic than practical.

From their varied perspectives as academics, legal practitioners, scientists and women's rights activists, the 20 South African contributors to this collection (published in 2017 by the University of KwaZulu-Natal Press in Durban, South Africa), ask one basic question: "Instead of living apart, how—together—can we make a future?"

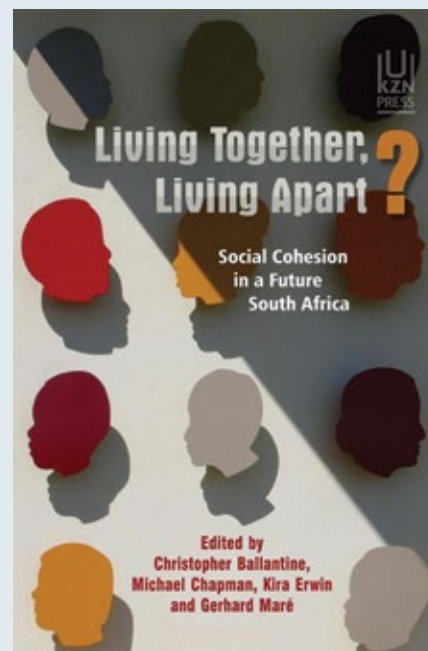
Social scientist Gerhard Maré, one of the book's editors, notes that while

racial identities are still the most visible markers of difference, economic cleavages are just as prevalent. Inequality may no longer coincide with race as starkly as it once did—witness the emergence of a few wealthy blacks. Yet inequality remains a predominant feature of South African society, with structural roots that cannot be removed by simply providing charity to the poor.

The authors take up differences in a variety of fields, from housing and education to language and culture, and explore possible ways to bring people together through art, music, sports and other means.

Concepts of identity can be fluid and complex. Combined with deprivation, they can also become explosive, as in recent xenophobic attacks against African immigrants. For the writer Njabulo S. Ndebele, it is thus vital to act not just as citizens, but as "human beings."

The legacies of apartheid may be unique to South Africa, yet this book's



broader themes of overcoming inequality and exclusion are relevant to Africa as a whole. 🌍

— Ernest Harsch

APPOINTMENTS



UN Photo/Kim Haughton

United Nations Secretary General António Guterres has appointed **Joanne Adamson** of the United Kingdom as his new Deputy Special Representative for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Ms. Adamson most recently served as Deputy Head of the European Union delegation to the United Nations. She succeeds Koen Davidse of the Netherlands.



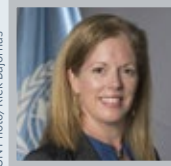
UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

Nicholas Haysom of South Africa has been appointed as the Special Representative for Somalia and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM). He most recently served as the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan. Mr. Haysom succeeds Michael Keating of the United Kingdom.



sdsadisa

Lieutenant General Dennis Gyllensporre of Sweden has been appointed as the Force Commander of United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. He most recently served as Chief of the Swedish Defence Staff and Head of Special Forces. Lieutenant General Gyllensporre succeeds Major General Jean-Paul Deconinck of Belgium.



UN Photo/Rick Bajornas

Stephanie T. Williams of the United States has been appointed as the Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs in Libya, United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). Ms. Williams most recently served as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Missions in Iraq.



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