Bridging Africa’s inequality gaps

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African youth turn to career in coding
SPECIAL FEATURE

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Cover photo: A silhouette photo depicting women’s underrepresentation in business leadership.

Africa Renewal (ISSN 2517-9829) is published in English and French by the Strategic Communications Division of the United Nations Department of Public Information. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or the publication’s supporting organizations. Articles from this magazine may be freely reprinted, with attribution to the author and to “United Nations Africa Renewal,” and a copy of the reproduced article would be appreciated. Copyrighted photos may not be reproduced.

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ISBN: 978-92-1-101377-1
eISBN: 978-92-1-362940-6
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Zimbabwe: A new chapter begins

Under pressure from the military and political associates, 93-year-old Robert Mugabe resigned as Zimbabwe's president on 21 November 2017. Erstwhile ally and former vice president Emmerson Mnangagwa took over as president.

Mr. Mugabe became president in 1980, having helped end white-minority rule. His efforts to redistribute land to black subsistence farmers stirred patriotic fervor but wrecked the white commercial agricultural sector that accounted for up to 40% of the country's total exports. Mugabe's popularity suffered in part due to the resulting economic collapse.

Mr. Mnangagwa has promised to fight corruption, re-establish relations with the West and revive the economy. He wants Zimbabwean professionals abroad to return to rebuild the country.

However, he will also need to assert control over an influential military and promote inclusion, accountability, robust politics and press freedom.

Kenya: Getting back on track

After a protracted electioneering period, President Uhuru Kenyatta is now focusing on ending political uncertainty and getting the economy back on track.

Mr. Kenyatta was sworn in for a second term amid protests from his rival, former prime minister Raila Odinga. The electoral commission declared Mr. Kenyatta the winner in the August 2017 election, but Mr. Odinga challenged the outcome in the Supreme Court, which in September nullified Mr. Kenyatta's victory and ordered a fresh presidential election within 60 days.

Mr. Kenyatta went ahead in October to win the repeat election, which Mr. Odinga boycotted, citing a flawed electoral system. This left the country deeply polarized, and experts are keen to see how the president will navigate out of the political conundrum and what legacy he will leave at the end of his second and last term.

The long walk to freedom for women and adolescent girls globally remains unfinished.

Amina Mohammed, United Nations deputy secretary-general

President Mugabe will be remembered as a fearless pan-Africanist liberation fighter, and the father of the independent Zimbabwean nation.

Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission

I never thought I would see this day. Mugabe has resigned in my lifetime.

Trevor Ncube, Zimbabwean entrepreneur and newspaper publisher

It is true that Africa already produces the equivalent of half a trillion US$ of manufactured goods a year. The continent is not a desert dreaming of a 19th century Manchester-like industrial makeover.

Carlos Lopes, former executive secretary, Economic Commission for Africa
EMPOWERMENT

Young African women turn to coding
Training more female techies could help close the gender gap in computing

BY FATIMATOU SENE

At Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Angela Koranteng was an accomplished student with a special dream. At a time when few women were breaking the gender barrier in male-dominated studies, Ms. Koranteng had her heart set on health sciences—but instead of treating patients, she wanted to be an engineer and build hospitals.

After a round of courses in computer programming, civil engineering and coding, Ms. Koranteng today has earned a degree and a title: professional African coder.

Coding is what makes it possible to create computer software, apps and websites. Your browser, your operating system, the apps on your phone, Facebook, and websites—they’re all made with code. Coding can be learned at a university or boot camp.

Because boys are exposed to technical matters in childhood and girls are not, few young African women imagine themselves on a career track in engineering.

Not just a man’s field
In college, “I learned everything from scratch, whereas the boys already knew the basics,” Ms. Koranteng told Africa Renewal in an interview. That disadvantage ensured that “my contributions [in class] were deemed less intelligent than those of my male counterparts.”

Even Ms. Koranteng’s father was not sure that a path in coding was good for her.

Today Ms. Koranteng works with a group called STEMbees, a Ghana-based nonprofit organization she helped to found, which mentors young women in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). Ms. Koranteng hopes that more girls in STEM will help bridge the gender gap in computing.

Unfortunately, training in STEM still attracts fewer women students than training in teaching, law, medicine or business.

Karen Spärck Jones, a professor of computers and information at the University...
of Cambridge Computer Laboratory in the UK, once said that “computing is too important to be left to men.”

But even in the most developed countries, the computer field is disproportionately dominated by men. In 2013 in the US, only 26% of computing professionals were female—down considerably from 35% in 1990 and virtually the same as in 1960. While the percentage of women in engineering has risen since 1990, the progress has been modest—from 9% in 1990 to 12% in 2013.

A 2012 US Department of Labor survey reported that women in the US comprised 30% of web developers, 25% of programmers, 37% of database administrators, 20% of software developers, and a little over 10% of information security analysts. Women also held less than 20% of chief information officer positions at Fortune 250 companies, and among the Fortune 100 tech companies, only four women held chief executive officer positions. At tech giants like Google, over 70% of technical employees were men.

Lacking reliable data, Ms. Koranteng presumes Africa’s situation to be far worse than that of the US. In the bustling Computer Village in Lagos, Nigeria, for example, it is mostly young men developing apps or engaging in other computing work, Caleb Ihasabemon, who monitors technology trends and plans to start a code-rearing app or engaging in other computing work, Caleb Ihasabemon, who monitors technology trends and plans to start a computer hardware sales company, told Africa Renewal in an interview.

Despite the growth of Internet usage in Africa over the last decade, about 10% of the continent has access to the Internet, according to a 2017 report by Internet World Stats, an organization that monitors global Internet usage. Low Internet diffusion on the continent is certain to impede efforts by Africans, especially girls, to become coding professionals.

Marian Tesfamichael, a young Ghananian who has been coding in Toronto, Canada, is one of the few success stories. Her undergraduate studies were in computer science and mathematics, and her graduate studies in computer science. She is a web developer and data manager at the University of Toronto.

Ms. Tesfamichael says her gender and ethnicity might have slowed her progress within the industry; many at companies she’s worked for didn’t believe she could be good at the job. However, at the moment things are looking up for her.

A Lagos-based tech company Andela is training engineering teams, including coders, to fill the gap in tech talent in Africa. “We have nearly 30% of women out of more than 600 developers based in Lagos, Nairobi and Kampala,” says Christine Magee, Andela’s director of communications.

Another success story is Ghana’s Ethel Cofie, whom Forbes business magazine calls one of the top five women affecting IT on the continent. She is the founder and CEO of EDEL Technology Consulting, a company that provides IT and software services for businesses.

Technology and GDP growth

Ms. Cofie studied computer science during the dot-com period (1995 to 2001) and took advantage of Africa’s emerging market to invest in technology, according to reports by the BBC and CNN. To promote diversity in the computer programming industry, particularly to “encourage African girls to get involved,” she founded Women in Tech Africa.

Many budding female techies from around the continent consider Ms. Cofie a role model.

“Computer programming is one of the world’s most in-demand skills,” and African girls must seize the opportunity, says Ms. Cofie.

Similar sentiments have been voiced at the World Economic Forum (WEF), a Geneva-based nonprofit that meets annually and bills itself as committed to public-private cooperation.

Information technology helps create new businesses in digital marketing, data sciences, and mobile money ecosystems, among others. In 2017, revenues for information technology products and services are forecast to reach $2.4 trillion, a 3.5% increase over 2016, reports International Data Corporation (IDC), which provides market intelligence for information technology, telecommunications and consumer technology markets. IDC adds that the figure could be $2.6 trillion by 2020.

Statistics by WEF also show that a 10% increase in broadband penetration can lead to a 1.4% increase in GDP growth in emerging markets. The GDP growth numbers can be seen in countries adopting mobile money or other technologies that facilitate financial transactions, for example.

Already top tech companies such as Facebook and Google are providing technical and financial support to institutions creating opportunities for African girls learning how to code.

AWELE Academy, a leadership and technology institution based in Lagos, is one of the schools receiving external support for its attempts to close the coding gap in Africa. But it can accept only 20 students at a time—a feeble effort at best.

Technology institutions are working to increase awareness about computer programming through local conferences where girls meet role models to discuss career prospects.

Gender equality enthusiasts are optimistic that the increase in women coders will help close the gender wage inequality gap in Africa. The next few years could witness more African women falling in love with coding, earning decent wages and transforming their countries’ economies, predicts Ms. Tesfamichael.
In this special coverage of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we focus on SDG 10: Reduced inequality within and among countries. The goal calls upon countries to adopt policies that promote the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. We look at Africa’s progress in inclusive economic growth, education, trade and women’s empowerment.

A Tanzanian woman walks to the market as a petrol lorry passes by. Alamy/Wietse Michiels Travel Stock

**Combating Africa’s inequalities**

Obscene disparities: new UNDP study highlights chasm between rich and poor

**BY ERNEST HARSCH**

Nelson Mandela, shortly after becoming the first democratically elected president of South Africa, spoke to both his countrymen and women—indeed, for Africans everywhere—when he declared, “We must work together to ensure the equitable distribution of wealth, opportunity and power in our society.”

As he spoke those words in 1996, South Africa was just emerging from a racist apartheid past in which non-whites, more than three-quarters of the population, were not only denied the vote but also denied land ownership, skilled jobs, and most basic services.

The country’s poverty rate, after a brief decline, has been on the rebound since 2015. While millions of South Africans have improved their educational and job prospects, overall income inequality in the country remains stubbornly entrenched.

According to a new study by the UN Development Programme (UNDP), South Africa has the highest recorded level of income inequality in the world. And in this, South Africa is not unusual among African nations. Of the 19 most unequal countries in the world, 10 are in Africa, according to the UNDP’s *Income Inequality Trends in sub-Saharan Africa*, a report released in New York during the opening week of the UN General Assembly this past September.

While many countries in the region, such as Côte d’Ivoire, Mauritius and Rwanda have registered remarkable economic performance over the past decade and a half, lifting millions out of extreme poverty and
Making schooling and health care available to larger shares of their populations, others have lagged.

One obstacle to higher incomes for all has been the region’s entrenched economic and social inequalities. The contrast between the visible wealth of elites and the daily misery of most ordinary people makes the disparities seem unjust, driving popular anger and contributing to protest and rebellion.

As President Hage Geingob of Namibia—a country that inherited the highest levels of income inequality in Africa when it gained independence from apartheid-era South Africa in 1990—told the UN General Assembly, “As long as the wealth of the country is disproportionately in the hands of a few, we cannot have lasting peace and stability.”

**Radical shift**

Until recently, income inequality received only sporadic attention from development practitioners and policy makers. Before the 1990s they focused mainly on stimulating economic growth. It eventually became clearer that growing markets alone does not necessarily benefit the poor and that excessive liberalization can in fact hurt them.

When the international community adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, their focus shifted more towards anti-poverty measures and improvements in social well-being.

Poverty subsequently fell in many African countries experiencing economic growth. Yet despite generally robust growth, nearly half the continent’s people still live on less than $1.25 a day. Studies have shown that where there is less inequality, the benefits of growth reach wider sectors of the population. In more unequal nations, however, the rich garner the biggest share and the poor get little.

That realization underlay the 2015 negotiations over the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The global goals call not only for ending poverty, but also for reducing inequalities within and among nations. The UNDP terms this a “radical shift” intended to address the “last mile of exclusion” that prevents many people from improving their lives.

In analyzing income inequality in Africa, the UNDP report focuses on 29 sub-Saharan countries (which account for 80% of Africa’s population) for which there is adequate data on household consumption. It shows that between 1991 and 2011, 17 of those countries managed to reduce their degree of income inequality. But the remaining dozen registered an increase in income inequality over the same period.

That divergence reflects the historical, economic, social and political factors affecting income inequality in each country.

Countries with higher—and rising—income inequality are mainly in Southern and Central Africa; they have capital-intensive oil and mining sectors with limited employment or are former settler societies that still have large landholdings.

Countries with declining income inequality, most of which are in West Africa, generally started out with lower levels of inequality and have predominantly small-holder agricultural sectors in which many people stand to benefit from improvements in productivity.

Income inequalities in different countries differ by degree, but the more important distinction is the factors that shape them. The root causes of inequality are rarely the same from country to country and may include restricted access to land, capital and markets; inequitable tax systems; excessive vulnerability to unfavourable global markets; rampant corruption; and the patrimonial allocation of public resources.

Although gender inequalities exist in all countries and are particularly severe in Africa, they are generally underestimated in most standard measures, which rely on household income or consumption data. Such estimates tend to assume equal spending powers among all family members.

While some countries have seen efforts to reduce economic disparities, others have been marked by opposition to such efforts by “incumbent elites,” according to researchers cited in the report.

The marginalization of certain geographical regions or the social and political exclusion of minority ethnic and religious groups can bring especially explosive consequences, the new UNDP report says, contributing to unrest and even armed conflict.

**No single solution**

Because of the complex, multidimensional factors influencing inequality, “There is no one ‘silver bullet’ to address its challenge,” observes Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, UNDP’s assistant administrator and director of its Africa bureau. “Multiple responses are required.”

In this issue of *Africa Renewal*, we examine many existing responses to income inequalities, including inequalities in education, those affecting a vulnerable group (albinos), those relating to business leadership, and those affecting Africa’s trade with other regions.

Whatever a country’s specific history and circumstances, a number of measures have proven especially fruitful in reducing inequalities across the region: increasing productivity among small-scale farmers, ensuring women’s access to land, reversing urban favouritism in services and economic opportunities, promoting labour-intensive industries, setting minimum wages, strengthening capacities to keep the wealthy from evading taxes, introducing strong social protection programmes and ending all forms of exclusion.

Ultimately, such efforts are intended to ensure that all Africans are able to live productive and fulfilling lives and to uphold the SDGs’ pledge to “leave no one behind.”

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**Mapping of income inequality in Africa**

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<th>Gini Coefficient</th>
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<tr>
<td>Very high (&gt;0.60)</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (0.53-0.599)</td>
<td>Orange</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medium (0.45-0.529)</td>
<td>Purple</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low (0.40-0.449)</td>
<td>Blue</td>
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<td>Very low (=0.399)</td>
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Sources: World Bank, as of December 2016
From “Africa Reeling” to “Africa Rising,” there’s a new narrative for the African continent, now showing promising signs of sustainable growth under more stable governments. McKinsey & Company, a global management consulting firm, predicts that Africa’s combined GDP will be $2.6 trillion by 2020 and that “Africa’s consumer spending by 128 million households with discretionary income is expected to be around $1.4 trillion.”

Among the countries attracting investors are Côte d’Ivoire, Benin, Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal and Togo.

But a new report from the United Nations Development Project (UNDP) finds that Africa’s new wealth is increasingly concentrated in a few hands. Disappointingly, 10 of the world’s 19 most unequal countries are in sub-Saharan Africa.

Economic inequality, sometimes referred to as income inequality, is the unequal distribution of a country’s wealth. In highly unequal societies, such as South Africa, most people live in poverty while a minority amasses enormous wealth.

South Africa, the continent’s most developed economy, is also the world’s most unequal. Botswana, Namibia and Zambia are also among the top 19.

While Ethiopia’s economy is growing at 8%, it is impossible to miss its impoverished citizens in the streets of its capital, pulling on donkeys to transport goods while the rich and famous drive around in luxury cars.

Inequality drivers

In Nigeria “the scale of inequality has reached extreme levels,” reports Oxfam, a UK-based charity, in a study published in May 2017. Five of Nigeria’s wealthiest people, including Africa’s richest man, Aliko Dangote, have a combined wealth of $29.9 billion—more than the country’s entire 2017 budget. About 60% of Nigerians live on less than $1.25 a day, the threshold for absolute poverty.

“Everything [in South Africa is] was skewed racially—education, access to finance, and access to land,” maintains Haroon Bhorat, an economics professor at the University of Cape Town.

Several factors drive inequality in Africa, according to the group of economists who authored the UNDP report Income Inequality Trends in Sub-Saharan Africa: Divergence, Determinants and Consequences.

First, under Africa’s two-track economic structure, growth often occurs in sectors characterized by low absorption of unskilled labour, high earnings inequality and high capital share in total income. The authors note that growth in those sectors may spur GDP headline growth but will also exacerbate inequality. It’s a rising tide that doesn’t lift all boats.

Second, infrastructure, human labour and land are highly concentrated in Eastern...
and Southern Africa. Third, authors of the report make reference to the “natural resource curse, an urban bias of public policy and ethnic and gender inequalities.” It appears, they note, that countries with abundant natural resources, such as Botswana and Zambia, are also some of the most unequal.

Inequality also results from regressive taxes [tax rate decreases when taxable income increases], unresponsive wage structures and inadequate investments in education, health and social protection for vulnerable and marginalized groups.

In the 1980s and 1990s, many African countries buckled under pressure from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and Western nations to implement structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), which led to cuts in subsidies for health, education, transportation and other sectors that help poor citizens.

Some historians and economists now say those cuts fostered inequality. “Under the influence of Western donors, austerity became African leaders’ default coping mechanism for periods of economic stress,” writes Nicholas William Stephenson Smith, a freelance researcher and historian.

Social unrest
For many countries SAPs widened the wealth gap rather than providing macro-economic stability, argues Said Adejumobi, director of Southern Africa’s subregional office for the UN Economic Commission for Africa.

Mr. Adejumobi adds that structural adjustment stalled mobility, frayed communities and sharpened divisions along socioeconomic lines. Currently “a tiny group of 4% captures a large chunk of the income and wealth in Africa’s changing tide of capitalist progress,” he says.

Inequality now threatens social cohesion on the continent. In recent months thousands of Ethiopians have been on the streets protesting harsh economic conditions, forcing factories, hospitals and public transportation to shut down operations.

Economic inequality is fueling conflicts in the Central African Republic, Libya, Nigeria and South Sudan, says Mr. Adejumobi. “The warped motive of Boko Haram insurgency may not relate to inequality but...ignorance and deprivation are two factors that may have made it possible for the terrorist group to recruit young people to kill and maim their fellow citizens.”

Expect deprive people to push back against inequality at some point, says renowned French economist Thomas Piketty, because the rich will always try to protect the status quo and resist efforts to achieve an egalitarian society.

Mr. Piketty’s book Capital in the Twenty-First Century makes a moral argument against excessive wealth accumulation, describing it as unfair and unjust and something to be resisted.

Countries adopted the Millennium Development Goals (2000–2015) to, among other targets, halve the number of people living in absolute poverty. Globally, after 15 years, some 50% of participating countries had met that target, 30% had made progress and 20%, mostly developing countries, had not made significant progress. The Gambia and Ghana met the target, but Ethiopia was among the countries that did not.

The authors of Income Inequality Trends in sub-Saharan Africa argued that poverty reduction efforts do not necessarily bridge the inequality gap, which was a conceptual underpinning of the MDGs.

To achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, an offshoot of the MDGs, experts hope countries will embrace a range of policies that tackle various forms of inequalities, not just poverty.

“Policies that help reduce poverty are not necessarily the same as those that help reduce income inequality,” writes Abdoulaye Dieye, director of UNDP’s regional bureau for Africa, in the preface to the report.

Closing the gap
Quality education may dent poverty but will not close the inequality gap unless accompanied by “progressive taxation [tax rate increases with increases in taxable amount] and well-targeted social protection,” Mr. Dieye further explains.

Also, countries need to focus on growth pattern rather than growth rate, because inequality falls when growth is in labour-intensive sectors, such as agriculture, manufacturing, and construction, and it rises when growth is in sectors high in capital and the use of skilled labour, such as mining, finance, insurance and real estate, according to the UNDP economists.

Currently most African countries allocate a significant share of their national
At the dawn of independence, incoming African leaders were quick to prioritize education on their development agendas. Attaining universal primary education, they maintained, would help post-independence Africa lift itself out of abject poverty.

As governments began to build schools and post teachers even to the farthest corners of the continent, with help from religious organizations and other partners, children began to fill the classrooms and basic education was under way.

Africa's current primary school enrolment rate is above 80% on average, with the continent recording some of the biggest increases in elementary school enrolment globally in the last few decades, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which is tasked with coordinating international cooperation in education, science, culture and communication. More children in Africa are going to school than ever before.

Yet despite the successes in primary school enrolment, inequalities and inefficiencies remain in this critical sector.

According to the African Union (AU), the recent expansion in enrolments “masks huge disparities and system dysfunction- alities and inefficiencies” in education subsectors such as preprimary, technical, vocational and informal education, which are severely underdeveloped.

It is widely accepted that most of Africa’s education and training programs suffer from low-quality teaching and learning, as well as inequalities and exclusion at all levels. Even with a substantial increase in the number of children with access to basic education, a large number still remain out of school.

A newly released report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Income Inequality Trends in sub-Saharan Africa: Divergence, Determinants and Consequences, identifies the unequal distribution of essential facilities, such as schools, as one the drivers of wide income disparities.

Ayodele Odusola, the lead editor of the report and UNDP’s chief economist, makes the following point: “Quality education is key to social mobility and can thus help reduce poverty, although it may not necessarily reduce [income] inequality.”

To address education inequality, he says, governments must invest heavily in child and youth development through appropriate education and health policies and programmes.

Higher-quality education, he says, improves the distribution of skilled workers, and state authorities can use this increased supply to build a fairer society in which all people, rich or poor, have equal opportunities. As it is now, only the elites benefit from quality education.

“Wealthy leaders in Africa send their children to study in the best universities abroad, such as Harvard. After studies, they come back to rule their countries, while those from poor families who went to public schools would be lucky to get a job even in the public sector,” notes Mr. Odusola.

Another challenge facing policy makers and pedagogues is low secondary and tertiary enrolment. Angela Lusigi, one of the authors of the UNDP report, says that while Africa has made significant advances in closing the gap in primary-level enrolments, both secondary and tertiary school-aged children are attending school, while only 7 to 23% of tertiary-school-aged youth are enrolled. This varies by subregion, with the lowest levels being in Central and Eastern Africa and the highest enrolment levels in Southern and North Africa,” Ms. Lusigi, who is also the strategic advisor for UNDP Africa, told Africa Renewal.

According to Ms. Lusigi, many factors account for the low transition from enrolments lag behind. Only four out of every 100 children in Africa is expected to enter a graduate and postgraduate institution, compared to 36 out of 100 in Latin America and 14 out of 100 in South and West Asia.

“In fact, only 30 to 50% of secondary-
primary to secondary and tertiary education. The first is limited household incomes, which limit children’s access to education. A lack of government investment to create equal access to education also plays a part.

“The big push that led to much higher primary enrolment in Africa was subsidized schooling financed by both public resources and development assistance,” she said. “This has not yet transitioned to providing free access to secondary- and tertiary-level education.”

Another barrier to advancing from primary to secondary education is the inability of national institutions in Africa to ensure equity across geographical and gender boundaries. Disabled children are particularly disadvantaged.

“Often in Africa, decisions to educate children are made within the context of discriminatory social institutions and cultural norms that may prevent young girls or boys from attending school,” says Ms. Lusigi.

Regarding gender equality in education, large gaps exist in access, learning achievement and advanced studies, most often at the expense of girls, although in some regions boys may be the ones at a disadvantage.

UNESCO’s Institute for Statistics reports that more girls than boys remain out of school in sub-Saharan Africa, where a girl can expect to receive only about nine years of schooling while boys can expect 10 years (including some time spent repeating classes).

More girls than boys drop out of school before completing secondary or tertiary education in Africa. Globally, women account for two-thirds of the 750 million adults without basic literacy skills.

Then there is the additional challenge of Africa’s poorly resourced education systems, the difficulties ranging from the lack of basic school infrastructure to poor-quality instruction. According to the Learning Barometer of the Brookings Institution, a US-based think tank, up to 50% of the students in some countries are not learning effectively.

Results from regional assessments by the UN indicate “poor learning outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa, despite upward trend in average learning achievements.” Many children who are currently in school will not learn enough to acquire the basic skills needed to lead successful and productive lives. Some will leave school without a basic grasp of reading and mathematics.

**Overcoming**

The drivers of inequality in education are many and complex, yet the response to these challenges revolves around simple and sound policies for inclusive growth, the eradication of poverty and exclusion, increased investment in education and human development, and good governance to ensure a fairer distribution of assets.

With an estimated 364 million Africans between the ages of 15 and 35, the continent has the world’s youngest population, which offers an immense opportunity for investing in the next generation of African leaders and entrepreneurs. Countries can start to build and upgrade education facilities and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

The AU, keeping in mind that the continent’s population will double in the next 25 years, is seeking through its Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016–2025 to expand access not just to quality education, but also to education that is relevant to the needs of the continent.

The AU Commission deputy chairperson, Thomas Kwesi Quartey, says governments must address the need for good education and appropriate skills training to stem rising unemployment.

Institutions of higher learning in Africa, he says, need to review and diversify their systems of education and expand the level of skills to make themselves relevant to the demands of the labour market.

“Our institutions are churning out thousands of graduates each year, but these graduates cannot find jobs because the education systems are traditionally focused on preparing graduates for see page 34
When a woman rises to the top rung of the traditionally all-male corporate ladder in Africa, it’s front-page news because women’s progress in business leadership on the continent continues to be achingly slow.

According to a groundbreaking 2015 study by the African Development Bank (AfDB) titled Where Are the Women? Inclusive Boardrooms in Africa’s Top-Listed Companies, in the 307 top African companies, women accounted for only 14% of total board membership. That translates to one woman out of every seven board members. And one-third of the boards have no women at all, adds the report.

Countries with the highest percentage of women board members are Kenya (19.8%), Ghana (17.7%), South Africa (17.4%), Botswana (16.9%) and Zambia (16.9%). Companies that have seated more than a small handful of women include the Kenya-based East African Breweries Limited (EABL) with a board that’s 45.5% women, followed by South Africa’s Impala Platinum Holdings Limited at 38.5% and Woolworths Holdings Limited at 30.8%.

On the downside, the country with the lowest percentage of women on boards is Côte d’Ivoire (5.1%), followed by Morocco (5.9%), Tunisia (7.9%) and Egypt (8.2%).

Uganda hangs around the continent’s average of 12.7%, according to the report.

Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, AfDB’s special envoy on gender, makes an economic and developmental case for more women on company boards. “Women serving on company boards sharpen the continent’s competitive edge and make inclusive growth a reality.”

Women Matter Africa, a report by McKinsey & Company, a US-based global management consulting firm, further highlights the financial benefits for companies having women on their boards. “The earnings before interest and taxes margin of those with at least a quarter share of women on their boards was on average 20% higher than the industry average.”

But women are underrepresented on all rungs of the corporate ladder—in non-management as well as middle and senior management positions, notes the McKinsey & Company report, which states that only 5% of professional women make it to top management in companies in Africa.

And even those women who join management may not necessarily wield influence because they usually occupy “staff roles rather than line roles from which promotion to CEOs usually come.”

The AfDB report concurs with McKinsey & Company’s finding that most women in corporate organisations are frozen at the periphery. The method used to appoint board members doesn’t favour women, maintains Ms. Fraser-Moleketi. “Board appointments are made through old-boy networks, locking women out,” she says, and the process of choosing a nominee is not always transparent.

Expected to combine work with family duties, women are further limited by patriarchal beliefs that channel them into low-wage careers such as teaching and nursing. The belief among many Africans that a woman’s career should complement—not interfere with—her family responsibilities is a traditional notion of a woman’s role that fails to acknowledge the benefits of gender diversity to society.

Women are “victims of ongoing socio-cultural prejudice,” says Viviane Zunon-Kipre, chair of the board of Société nouvelle d’édition et de presse based in Côte d’Ivoire.

African women can take some small solace in the fact that the continent ranks first in female membership of boards among emerging regions. Africa’s 14.4% is far higher than Asia-Pacific’s 9.8%, Latin America’s 5.6% and the Middle East’s 1%. Also, more African women are becoming board members in blue-chip companies, non-governmental organizations and financial institutions, and government enterprises are appointing women to their top management, says Mr. Wangethi Mwangi, a non-executive board member and former longtime editorial director of the Nation Media Group (NMG). The media company operates in Kenya, Rwanda Tanzania and Uganda.

Although the NMG has only two women among its 13 board members, Mr. Mwangi explains that “women head the digital, procurement, human resources, operation and marketing departments, while in editorial we have a female managing editor.” In departments such as procurement, advertising and marketing, women “perform very well,” he says.

EABL is the gold standard for women’s board membership in Africa. But just a decade ago women constituted only 16% of its board, Mr. Eric Kiniti, the company’s corporate relations director, points out.

The company’s policy is to take gender into account during the hiring process. “Before hiring at the senior management level, we ask that there must be a female candidate in all our short lists. And if there isn’t, we ask why,” he says.

Each member of EABL executive is individually responsible for tackling gender biases that might exist within the
business. "As signatories to the UN Global Compact and the UN Women’s Empowerment Principles, we have a set of codes internally to secure diversity in our workplace," maintains Mr. Kiniti.

One of the UN Women’s Empowerment Principles requests companies to “establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.” Companies promoting women to top management positions are therefore in sync with the 2030 global goals. Sustainable Development Goal 10, Reduced Inequalities, specifies that “everyone will have equal opportunities and nobody will be left behind.”

To increase diversity in companies, including on boards, McKinsey & Company recommends four administrative goals: the first is that companies “make gender diversity a top board and CEO priority.”

The second is to “anchor gender diversity strategies in a compelling case,” which means communicating relevant policies to employees. The third is to “confront limiting attitudes toward women in the workplace,” which means focusing on changing perceptions of women’s traditional responsibilities. The fourth is to “implement a fact-based gender diversity strategy,” which involves using metrics and data to understand women’s contributions within a company.

The AfDB agrees with these recommendations, adding that companies should publish gender-aggregated data in their annual reports and that corporate governance codes should impose quotas for women’s representation on boards.

“To kick-start the process of increasing the numbers of women on boards, quotas have been shown to be very effective in many European countries, notably Norway, Finland and more recently France,” says Ms. Fraser-Moleketi.

Norway adopted a gender quota policy in 2003, requiring firms operating in the country to increase the percentage of women on their boards to at least 40%, from an average at the time of 7%. The government warned it would deregister companies not complying with the regulation.

At 40.1% currently, Norway has the world’s highest percentage of women on company boards. The global average is 15%.

Unlike in Norway, African countries adopting policies that support women’s leadership in companies are not necessarily enforcing those policies. The Kenyan constitution requires that of the elective or appointive bodies of a company, no more than two-thirds of the members be of the same gender. Unfortunately, the law is silent on penalties for noncompliance.

South African laws generally promote gender equity in state-owned institutions, but women constitute about 33% in those institutions.

Morocco’s 2011 constitution guarantees gender equality in all appointments, yet only a negligible 0.1% of those in management positions in private companies are women. In 2016, the Global Gender Gap Report published by the World Economic Forum ranked Morocco 139 out of 145 countries in narrowing the gender gap. A 2015 study by the International Labour Organization found no female CEO in any large company in Morocco.

Irina Bokova, director general of UNESCO, observes, “A sustainable society and a thriving democracy depend on all of its citizens being included and involved in public debate and decision making at every level.”

Many African companies claim to be equal-opportunity employers. They must now match their words with actions.
Tackling inequality by ‘lifting stones’

Energy, agriculture sectors key to bridging gap between rich and poor in rural communities

BY RICHARD MUNANG and ROBERT MGENDI

If you wish to move mountains tomorrow, you must start by lifting stones today”—so goes an African proverb, crystallising the solutions to the continent’s socio-economic inequalities.

Africa is second only to Latin America in economic inequalities. Dollar millionaires in Africa doubled to 160,000 between 2000 and 2015, while people living on less than $1.25 a day—the poverty threshold—increased from 358 million to 415 million between 1996 and 2011, according to the Brookings Institution, a US-based research group and think tank. Brookings Institution adds that by 2024 the number of African millionaires will rise 45%, to approximately 234,000.

The effects of climate change compound Africa’s worsening inequality, constraining productivity in economic sectors that are critical to inclusive growth. Climate experts therefore posit that a first step in denting inequality is for governments to channel investments into sectors that can create socio-economic opportunities, enhance ecosystems’ resilience and combat climate change by offsetting carbon emissions.

African governments agree with climate experts on the sectors to target for investments. Meeting in Libreville, Gabon, last June, under the auspices of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), the continent’s environment ministers identified two sectors requiring investments to bridge the inequality gap: energy and agriculture driven by ecosystem-based adaptation (EBA).

An EBA-driven agriculture relies on biodiversity and ecosystem services to help people adapt to climate change effects. The ministers said that both sectors can boost agricultural productivity through value addition and curtail postharvest losses, which are currently about $48 billion per annum.

In addition to the huge postharvest losses is the $25 billion African governments spend annually on importing food. Reversing postharvest losses would mean recovering lost food while saving billions that could be invested in other sectors.

Labour productivity on the continent is currently 20 times lower than in developed regions, notes the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals Report 2016. An optimised agro-value chain and its ancillary chains of clean energy and logistics could create high-value jobs and increase labour productivity. Deploying clean energy to power EBA-driven agriculture will achieve the twin goals of combating climate change and creating economic opportunities.

An example of such an integrated approach can be found in Cameroon’s Jakiri municipality, where UN Environment, based on its EBA for Food Security Assembly (EBAFOSA) policy-action framework, is supporting efforts to use an off-grid micro-hydro power to support the processing of EBA-produced cassava and Irish potato into varied product lines. The farmers subsequently use a mobile app to link these products to markets and supply chains.

The off-grid micro-hydro power offsets carbon emissions in energy generation, incentivizes EBA use for climate adaptation and creates income opportunities along the agriculture, clean energy and ICT value chains—all enhancing socio-economic resilience.

Studies show that EBA-driven agriculture increases production by 128%. For instance, in Jakiri, 10 youth groups of 700 each were engaged in ICT, clean energy and marketing since 2016. They created many green jobs for young people, while giving over 5,000 women access to value addition services. The youth groups reduced postharvest losses and enhanced income stability and food security.

A growing middle class

The 350 million Africans in the middle class could potentially enhance ongoing efforts to achieve a single market. Minimizing postharvest losses in a consolidated agro-market dominated by raw commodity exports could rake in an extra $20 billion annually, according to the World Bank.

Experts project the raw commodity value added, currently $150 billion, to increase to $500 billion by 2030. Such a market could significantly boost agricultural industries. At 12% of its total trade, Africa has the lowest rate of intra-regional trade for any region. (Europe’s rate is 65%, North America’s 45% and Southeast Asia is 25%).

Forty countries have so far adopted an EBAFOSA initiative known as a compliance standard in their energy and agriculture sectors. The initiative guarantees quality control along the value chain, in addition to consolidating the markets of all 40 countries, including Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda.

The compliance standard builds on the acclaimed International Organization for Standardization standards and other national standards already in use in different countries to ensure that certified products can be exported to other markets. For example, under EBAFOSA’s standard, attiéké, a Côte d’Ivoire staple food made from processed cassava, is to be marketed in Kenya and the rest of East Africa.

Africa’s development experts anticipate the consolidation of a continental food

45% is the percentage increase of the number of African millionaires by 2024
market in the coming years, hoping that Africa’s 54 countries will eventually adopt the compliance standard.

Plans for a consolidated African food market may face headwinds, including restrictive intra-Africa air travel. Although in 2002, 44 countries signed the Yamoussoukro Decision to promote seamless intra-Africa air travel, many countries still restrict their air services markets to protect local airlines, especially state-owned carriers.

**Climate change effect**

Also, African countries have some of the strictest visa requirements in the world. Only 11 of Africa’s 54 nations offer 100% access to other Africans. This contrasts with the European Union, where member states’ citizens enjoy 100% freedom of movement within the EU countries.

Strict visa requirements constrict deployment of continental labour and complicate efforts to create income opportunities and combat poverty. The poor are disproportionately vulnerable to climate change, as they lack the resources to adapt to, or quickly recover from, climate shocks, reports the World Bank.

The African Union’s plan for a visa-free continent for Africans by 2020, if fully implemented, will foster human capital flow for income generation and, by extension, increased climate resilience.

To address development needs, Africa cannot rely only on traditional public assistance, including the rapidly dwindling official development assistance (ODA), according to the African Development Bank. Currently ODA accounts for only 3% of the continent’s GDP, which accentuates the need for innovative approaches to financing development projects.

In its 2015 African Adaptation Gap report, UN Environment proposed domestic and innovative financing approaches, suggesting among other things that African central banks leverage the continent’s cash reserve to strengthen their lending capacity and adopt a unitary credit policy that guarantees commercial loans are issued to enterprises whose operations mitigate carbon emissions and enhance ecosystem resilience. EBA-driven agriculture like Jakiri’s will boost food security and create income opportunities.

What should be Africa’s next steps in tackling inequalities?

Another African proverb sets the tone: “To get lost is to learn the way.” While Africa lags behind other regions in bridging inequalities, it has also demonstrated that it can learn. Many landmark policy frameworks, such as the AU Agenda 2063, the Yamoussoukro Decision on open skies, the Sirte Declaration on the African Central Bank and recently the 16th AMCEN Decision on Innovative Environmental Solutions, coupled with practical policy implementation frameworks such as EBA-FOSA, prove that the continent is making the right choices.

For these policies to work, however, Africa must start lifting the stones of implementation. In other words, Africa must begin to implement strategies that create incomes out of its catalytic sectors while combating poverty and its accompanying climate vulnerabilities.

Dr. Richard Munang is UN Environment’s Africa regional climate change programme coordinator. Mr. Robert Mgendi is UN Environment’s adaptation policy expert. These are the authors’ views, not necessarily those of the institution they represent.
Internet penetration is creeping up in Africa, bringing the prospect of digital dividends to a continent long marked by digital divides.

“Africa has reached a penetration which has broken the barrier of 15%, and that’s important,” says Nii Quaynor, a scientist who has played a key role in the introduction and development of the internet throughout Africa. He is known as the “father of the Internet” on the continent.

However, Africans have not developed the ability to produce enough software, applications and tools to give economies the dividends they sorely need.

The shift to low-cost submarine connections from satellite connections is less than a decade old. The new undersea fibres have led to a remarkable increase in data transmission capacity that drastically reduces transmission time and cost.

Today 16 submarine cables connect Africa to America, Europe and Asia, and international connectivity no longer presents a significant problem, reports Steve Song, founder of Village Telco, an initiative to build low-cost telephone network hardware and software. This has allowed countries to share information, both within the continent and worldwide, more directly.

It has created more space for innovation, research and education.

“Networks have ended the isolation of African scientists and researchers. You now have access to information from the more developed countries, and this is changing the way people think,” says Meoli Kashorda, director of the Kenya Education Network.

Internet penetration on the continent has not kept pace with mobile phone diffusion. In 2016 only 22% of the continent’s population used the Internet, compared to a global average of 44%, according to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the UN agency that deals with issues concerning information and communication technologies. And only 11% of Africans could access 3G internet, which allows mobile operators to offer a high data-processing speed.

Access to technology

The ITU notes that the people most likely to have access to digital technology in Africa are males living in urban areas or coastal cities where undersea fibres are available.

McKinsey & Company, a global management consulting firm, estimates that if Internet access reaches the same level of penetration as mobile phones, Africa’s GDP could get a boost of up to $300 billion. Other experts concur that better access to technology could be a game changer for development and the closing of the income inequality gap in Africa.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the richest 60% are almost three times more likely to have internet access than the bottom 40%, and those in urban areas are more than twice as likely to have access as those in rural areas, according to the World Bank’s World Development Report 2016.

The World Bank’s development report of 2016 notes that digital dividends, which it describes as “broader development benefits from using these technologies” have not been evenly distributed. “For digital technologies to benefit everyone everywhere requires closing the remaining digital divide, especially in internet access,” maintains the Bank.

Businesses that incorporate digital technologies into their practices will create jobs and boost earnings, according to the African Development Bank (AfDB).

The bank reported in 2016 that two million jobs will be created in the ICT sector in Africa by 2021. Analyst programmers, computer network professionals, and database and system administrators will find jobs in the sector.

Although the World Bank paints a less rosy picture for digital dividends in
Africa, the potential for millions of jobs in the sector is encouraging news for the continent’s youths, who make up 60% of Africa’s unemployed and are jobless at a rate double that of adults. Youths can easily take advantage of the jobs that digital revolution brings, says Bitange Ndemo, a former permanent secretary in Kenya’s ministry of information and Communication.

Technology can also help bridge inequalities caused by the education gap. According to the UN UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, over one-fifth of children between the ages of six and about 11 are out of school, along with one-third of youth between the ages of about 12 and about 14. Almost 60% of youth between the ages of about 15 and about 17 are not in school.

On the bright side, as mobile Internet access expands, so will the Internet’s potential to narrow the continent’s education gap. E-learning continues to grow due to its affordability and accessibility. In fact, IMARC Group, a market research company with offices in India, the UK and the US, reported earlier in 2017 that the e-learning market in Africa will be worth $1.4 billion by 2022. It will improve the education level of Africa’s workforce that will contribute positively to the continent’s economies.

Eneza Education, for example, a Kenya-based learning platform, surpassed one million users in 2016. The platform allows users to access learning materials using various devices. They can access courses and quizzes via text messages for only 10 Kenyan shillings ($0.10) per week. Eneza caters to students and teachers in rural areas where opportunities are limited.

Also, Samsung’s Smart Schools initiative equips schools around the world with tablets, PCs and other devices, and builds solar-powered schools in rural areas. Currently 78 Smart Schools are operating in 10 African nations, including Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya and Uganda. The company’s strategy is to encourage underprivileged students to use digital devices.

With women 50% less likely to use the internet than men, some organisations are now making efforts to attract women to the digital world. Digital technologies can provide opportunities for women in the informal job market by connecting them to employment opportunities.

**Analogue complements**

High digital penetration is good, but good governance, a healthy business climate, education and health, also known as “analogue complements,” will ensure a solid foundation for adopting digital technologies and more effectively addressing inequalities, advises the World Bank. Even with increased digital adoption, the Bank says, countries neglecting analogue complements will not experience a boost in productivity or a reduction in inequality.

“Not making the necessary reforms means falling farther behind those that do, while investing in both technology and its complements is the key to digital transformation,” notes Bouthenia Guermazi, ICT practice manager at the World Bank.

Yet digital migration is receiving pushback from obsolete analogue operators who are concerned about the risks of digitizing. Automation poses a threat to those whose jobs can be done by cheaper and more efficient machines, a phenomenon that primarily affects already disadvantaged groups. For example, many banks and insurance companies have automated customer services.

The United Nations has set the goal of connecting all the world’s inhabitants with affordable, high-speed internet by 2020. Likewise, the African Union launched a 10-year mission in 2014 to encourage countries to transition to innovation-led, knowledge-based economies. This mission is part of its ambitious Agenda 2063, aimed at transforming the continent’s socio-economic and political fortunes.

Rwanda is leading the charge via its Vision 2020 programme, which aims at developing the country into a knowledge-based middle-income country by 2020. Earlier this year, Rwanda rolled out its Digital Ambassadors Programme, which will hire and train about 5,000 youths to teach digital skills to five million people in the rural areas.

Unfortunately, digitization ranks low on the priority lists of many developing countries. And according to a recent report by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), productivity gains from digitalization may accrue mainly to those already wealthy and skilled, which is typical in internet platform-based economies, where network effects (additional value for service as more people use it) benefit first movers and standard setters.

In the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries, an intergovernmental economic organization of 35 countries, where the digital economy has evolved the most, growing use of ICT has been accompanied by an increasing income gap between rich and poor.

The UNCTAD report also states that developing the right ICT policies depends on countries’ readiness to engage in and benefit from the digital economy, but the least-developed countries are the least prepared. To ensure that more people and enterprises in developing countries have the capacity to participate effectively, the international community will need to expand its support.

Ms. Guermazi urges leaders to develop a comprehensive approach to transforming their countries rather than rely on ad hoc initiatives.

“Digital dividends are within reach,” Ms. Guermazi insists. “The outlook for the future is bright.”
Called mitumba (bundles) in Kenya, obroni wawu (dead white men’s clothes) in Ghana and salaula (select by rummaging) in Zambia, imported used clothing is frequently blamed for the low level of domestic apparel manufacturing in Africa.

Pressed by local industrialists, the East African Community (EAC), a regional economic grouping, agreed in 2016 to a complete ban on used clothes imports by 2019. Among other reasons, the EAC claimed the low prices of such items were holding back development.

Global trade in used clothes has grown steadily over the last decade and half, with worldwide exports reaching $4.8 billion in 2015, according to UN Comtrade, the UN Commodity Trade Statistics Database, which contains more than three billion records.

In 2015, East Africa imported $151 million worth of used clothes and shoes, mostly from Europe and the United States, where consumers regularly buy new clothes and dispose of old ones, often giving them away to charities. At least 70% of donated garments end up in Africa, according to Oxfam, a British charity that also sells used donated clothes on the continent.

With a combined 36.1% of the global share, the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany were the top three used clothes exporters in 2015. The United Arab Emirates (7.3%), Pakistan (5.0%) and India (4.4%) were the top importers, while Kenya, a distant 12th in global ranking, was sub-Saharan Africa’s top destination with 2.2% (US$95 million) of global import.

Matia Kasaija, Uganda’s minister for finance, planning and economic development, told The Independent, a Ugandan newspaper, that the government took a decisive position to protect its local textile industries and will not bow to pressure, locally or internationally, to remove the taxes on used clothes.

“No one goes around proudly showing off someone else’s discards,” noted Joseph Rwagatare, a columnist for The New Times, a Rwandan newspaper.

Rwandan president Paul Kagame also weighed in: “Do you choose to be a recipient of secondhand clothes under threat of AGOA [the Africa Growth and Opportunities Act], or to grow the textile industry that Rwandans deserve?” He added that “Rwanda and other nations under AGOA have to do other things; we have to grow our economies, our industries.”

Under the act, products including oil, coffee and tea are allowed access to American markets with low tariffs. But the White House has the right to terminate the agreement with a country if it feels that the relationship doesn’t benefit the United States.

Imposing taxes
Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda are raising taxes on secondhand clothes imports and at the same time offering incentives to local manufacturers. Kenya has signalled it will not respect the 2019 deadline to impose a ban because it lacks the capacity to meet both the domestic demand for used clothing and the export demand for its textiles.

Countries eager to sustain local textile manufacturing industries are trying to ban used clothes imports, but exporters are pushing back, arguing that any such ban violates international trade agreements.

In 2016, Uganda increased an environment levy on used clothes from 15% to 20%, and Rwanda is now taxing imported used clothes at $4 per kg—it will be $5 per kg in 2018. Two years ago the tax was $0.20 per kg. “These taxes will increase as a way of supporting locally made products and industries, while also minimising the health risks that come with the used product,” Rwanda’s finance minister Claver Gatete said in 2016.

Doctors warn that the health risks associated with wearing used clothing include skin candidiasis, scabies, ring worm, body lice, among others.

US lobby groups strongly object to the EAC’s import ban and proposed tax increases. They maintain that 40,000
stipulates, among others, that African countries must eliminate barriers to US trade and investment.

Following a petition filed by the Secondary Materials and Recycled Textiles Association (SMART), an American association of textile companies, the US Trade Representative (USTR), an agency that develops and recommends trade policy to the US president, is reviewing relationships with Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania. African trade experts fear that the USTR may recommend that these countries forfeit AGOA benefits.

Edward Gresser, who is in charge of trade policy and economics at the USTR commented, “Through the out-of-cycle review, USTR and trade-related agencies will assess the allegations contained within the SMART petition and review whether Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda are adhering to AGOA’s eligibility requirements.”

On Kenya, Mr. Gresser further explained, “We have determined that an out-of-cycle review of Kenya’s AGOA eligibility is not warranted at this time due to recent actions it has taken, including reversing tariff increases and committing not to ban imports of used clothes through policy measures.”

Smart protectionism

The loss of US trade could be painful should AGOA be cancelled for the three countries. US imports under AGOA from Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda totaled $43 million in 2016, up from $33 million in 2015, while exports to the three countries rose from $257 million in 2015 to $281 million in 2016, according to a statement from USTR.

While campaigning in June for reelection, President Kagame spoke of hard choices for sub-Saharan African countries attempting to build strong economies through industrialization. With the backdrop of globalization, it’s not in African countries’ interest to embrace unfettered liberalization, the Rwandan president maintained.

Instead some experts are calling for “smart protectionism,” a term that refers to making policies to protect strategic industries in order to advance countries’ national development goals. “All countries that have industrialized started with some degree of protectionism,” Carlos Lopes, a former head of the UN Economic Commission for Africa, told Africa Renewal in an earlier interview.

Ahead of the AGOA review of the EAC members’ eligibility, a report by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) warned that a ban on used clothes imports could cause the EAC to lose approximately 355,000 jobs and $230 million in income. In addition, without AGOA benefits, “the EAC has the potential to lose 219,000 full-time jobs derived from the trade preference program, leaving 500,000 people in the region without income,” USAID stated.

The economic consequences of a ban do not daunt Mr. Kagame. “This is the choice we find that we have to make. As far as I am concerned, making the choice is simple, we might suffer consequences. Even when confronted with difficult choices, there is always a way.”

Time will tell whether Mr. Kagame is right.
Africa Renewal: NEPAD recently released a skills and employment strategy. What are the aims of that strategy?

Mayaki: The main purpose of the skills strategy is to allow a sound interaction between technical and vocational training centres and the private sector. In the past, governments invested in technical and vocational training centres without interacting with the private sector. And people coming out of these centres could not find jobs. The new model will ensure that this mismatch is tackled. This will mean mapping out these vocational centres, which have been neglected in the past 20 years, analyzing their capacities, their limits, their adaptation to employment markets, and identifying sectors where people leaving the centres could be employed. Thereafter, platforms of private sectors will allow for interactions and better planning of needs and an employment strategy. We have started this in some countries, including Cameroon, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Tunisia.

Is this an Africa-wide initiative?

Absolutely! We have the support of the African Union [AU]. The idea is to allow
the sharing of best practices and to have a policy framework that can be disseminated all over.

**What is the endgame?**
The outcome is employment. This programme will not guarantee massive employment, but at least it will present a mechanism and an instrument that can give governments a system through which to tackle massive unemployment. The ambition is to demonstrate that there is a functioning mechanism.

**How can employment address inequality on the continent?**
That’s a good question. Inequality equation is very simple: if you have 75% of the population under 25 years, and you have an unemployment rate that is more than 25%, de facto you have inequality because a massive proportion of the population doesn’t have a means to survive. The worst thing about Africa is that there is inequality, and the bulk of the population is young. The young people are not waiting for inequality to be solved in the medium or long term; they want inequality solved now. This puts pressure on public policy makers. And if we are not careful it can be a source of conflict and governance instability. We have seen it in Tunisia, Egypt, indirectly in Mali and Burkina Faso.

**How does your initiative benefit women?**
When we speak about youth it includes young women. When we speak about rural transformation and diversification of rural economies, we realize that most small-scale farmers in Africa are rural women. So if we want micro, small and medium enterprises to be the engine of rural economic diversification, we need to empower women as private sector operators.

**What’s the status of the hundreds of projects in the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA)?**
I will explain. Before PIDA became the continental framework six years ago, we had RECs [Regional Economic Communities] defining their master plans, but these master plans did not connect at the continental level. So what the AU and the African Development Bank did was to bring coherence into all these REC master plans and come up with a continental plan—PIDA. This continental plan is like a basket where we pool these 250 projects. These then need to be segmented into projects that are in the stage of idea, prefeasibility and projects that have gone through feasibility studies and are bankable.

**Are you implementing all 250 projects?**
We did a prioritization of the 250 projects, and we came up with a priority action plan of PIDA that consisted of 50 projects. Out of these we liaised with the private sector to see the potentially most feasible projects, and we identified 16 of them. Now we have a basket of about 20. These are regional projects, such as the Lagos-Abidjan transport corridor, the Zambia-Tanzania-Kenya power transmission line, the Lagos-Algiers highway, the Brazzaville-Kinshasa bridge, etc. Now we have the issue of getting these projects to bankability, to a financial close. We cannot do that without the private sector. We created the Continental Business Network two years ago as a platform for private-sector operators to engage with heads of state and discuss their involvement and whatever issues affect their operations in terms of regulatory frameworks.

**What’s the status of the Lagos-Algiers Trans-Sahara highway?**
It is done. You can consider it done because we have only less than 30 km left.

**You have said before that financing is not Africa’s problem. Really?**
Yes. To develop a quality project and have it be bankable, you need capacity such as financial engineers, sector engineers, transport, energy and others. The reality is that our RECs do not have these capacities. Second, if you want to bring investors to cross-boundary projects, you need to solve the issue of regulatory harmonization. For example, if in Togo there is a rule and in neighbouring Benin there is a different rule, investors will not be interested. In this regard, the Economic Commission for Africa is supporting us and has gone very far in formulating a model law based on harmonization of regulatory frameworks that will help attract private investors to cross-boundary projects. It’s a house we are constructing.

**How far have you gone toward strengthening the capacities of RECs?**
Their capacities differ. The East African Community has a strong capacity; the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community too. The Economic Community of Central African States has a weaker capacity. But wherever RECs are strong it means the leaders of the region want their region to be strong and they believe in regional integration.

**Is there a correlation between the extent of regional integration and the level of regional development?**
Absolutely, because the main objective of a REC is a strong regional market, which translates to good infrastructure and increased levels of movement of goods.

**Why do you think investors mostly target Africa’s extractive industry?**
I will answer you indirectly. [Former South African] President Thabo Mbeki’s report on Illicit Financial Flows [IFFs] states that up to $50 billion could be getting out of Africa annually and 75% of that is from internationals not paying their taxes. Who are these internationals? They are the ones in the mining sector. So you have the answer to the question.

**Have you figured out the solution to IFFs?**
The solution is to strengthen our governance and taxation systems.

**Africans also collude with internationals.**
You need to be two to be corrupt. But fundamentally, corruption exists but is largely inferior to fiscal evasion.

**How do you foresee Africa’s development in the next 10 years?**
Africa is progressing, but not everywhere, and not everybody is progressing. The best way to solve inequality is to create jobs; the best way to create jobs is to establish labour-intensive industries, and agricultural transformation is fundamental.

**Is Africa a hopeless or a rising continent?**
I never believed in “hopeless” nor in “rising.” The phrase “Africa is rising” was mostly promoted by big consultancy firms that wanted to attract clients to the continent. Even when we had a high growth rate, the growth rate did not create jobs. So today I will say that Africa is “learning.”

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UN-AU decry absence of women in crucial peacebuilding activities

A high-level delegation to Nigeria and the DRC urges countries to promote gender equality

BY LEON USIGBE

Reporting back from a trip to Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), United Nations deputy secretary-general Amina Mohammed expressed deep disappointment that women were significantly marginalized in critical peacebuilding efforts in the two populous countries.

Ms. Mohammed had led a team of UN and African Union (AU) officials earlier this year to raise awareness of the vital role of women’s participation in peace and security processes and in the fight against sexual violence.

The team included UN Women’s executive director, Phumzile Mlambo-Nguka, the UN special representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, and the African Union special envoy on Women, Peace and Security, Bineta Diop.

During the trip, described by the UN as the “first of its kind,” the delegation hoped their voices against sexual violence and for women’s empowerment would resonate in other African countries.

Ms. Mohammed reported that “Both [countries] have dismayingly low levels of women’s political participation and are experiencing conflicts marked by extremely high levels of sexual and gender-based violence.”

There is widespread sexual violence in the DRC, while abductions, forced...
marriages and the use of women as suicide bombers are rampant in Nigeria, reported Ms. Mohammed.

Nigeria was their first port of call. After meeting with some of the girls once held by Boko Haram kidnappers but freed two months earlier, Ms. Mohammed lamented, “We heard stories that young girls should not have to tell, and these [stories] have been a tragedy for all of us.”

In April 2014 the Boko Haram militant Islamist group abducted 274 schoolgirls from Chibok, near Maiduguri, in northeast Nigeria, and spirited them away into Sambisa forest. Over the years many were rescued or managed to find their own way out of the forest.

Ms. Mohammed did not elaborate on the freed Chibok girls’ stories, but a UN Women press release preceding the trip provided some details: “Boko Haram since 2014 has abducted more than 7,000 women and girls in Nigeria, subjecting them to sexual violence, including sexual slavery, forced marriage, as well as physical and psychological abuse.”

Ms. Mohammed recalled that the freed Chibok girls “refused to be victims…. We saw girls who talked about their dreams—no longer their nightmares. It shows there is hope.”

Visit to the DRC
The International Crisis Group, an organization committed to preventing and resolving deadly conflict, reported in 2017 that “while men have disproportionally been killed [in the Boko Haram insurgency], women are an overwhelming majority among the estimated 1.8 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in northeast Nigeria.”

The group then visited the DRC, including the Mugunga camp for internally displaced persons on the outskirts of Goma, the capital of North Kivu Province. At the camp the delegation met with women engaged in small-scale trading. Still, Ms. Mohammed stressed that the women have a right to return home in “dignity and humanity…. It is not a favour.”

Almost a million people have fled the armed conflict in the DRC that began in 1994. The war was so bad between 1994 and 2003 that it earned the moniker “Africa’s first world war.” A central government has asserted control, but skirmishes in the interior continue to put thousands of women, children and others at risk.

According to Peace Direct, a United Kingdom–based nongovernment organization supporting vulnerable people in conflict environments, women make up about 80% of people fleeing their homes during conflicts.

The number of women raped in the DRC has topped 200,000 since the war began, reports the NGO, which is now working to support war-affected women, particularly female ex-combatants, wives of ex-combatants and women abused by militia groups.

Ms. Mohammed and her team expressed frustration at the level of violence in both countries. “Without peace we cannot have development. Whatever investments we are putting into development, we are seeing them being eroded by the lack of peace,” she said, a sentiment she expressed repeatedly at several meetings in both the DRC and Nigeria.

What role could women play in achieving peace in conflict countries?

“Evidence shows that women’s meaningful participation helps with the conclusion and implementation of peace agreements,” notes UN Women, “yet women are almost completely missing from peace negotiations.”

In the book Women and Power in Post-conflict Africa by Aili Mari Tripp, a professor of political science and of gender and women’s studies at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, in the US, the author noted that women’s involvement in resolving conflicts often leads to higher rates of female political representation post-conflict.

As evidence, Professor Tripp points out that “post-conflict Liberia was the first African country to elect a woman president. As early as 1994, post-conflict Uganda had already had a woman vice president for 10 years. Post-conflict conflict Rwanda today has the highest rate of female legislative representation in the world—63.8% of its legislators are women—and has held that spot since 2003.”

She further explains that during conflicts in Africa, “women are among the most engaged in behind-the-scenes peace-making, pressuring militia to lay down their arms, demonstrating for peaceful elections and negotiating the release of kidnapped civilians.”

But the professor maintains that women’s rights advance faster if the conflict ends through peaceful negotiations than if one side wins decisively.

Whether women will engage in conflict resolution efforts in the DRC and Nigeria will depend on those countries’ authorities.

The UN and AU team urged both governments to foster gender equality to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. “Women often account for half of the population…. We are not able to achieve our goals if we are only investing in half of the population,” said Ms. Mohammed, speaking in Nigeria.

The Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill, designed to protect human rights and eliminate cultural practices that impede women’s progress, remains stalled in Nigeria’s legislative process. The delegation urged the Nigerian government to expedite the signing of the bill into law.

“It’s about action,” Ms. Mohammed told a group of journalists. “It’s about implementation.”
Would an Africa in which Africans require no visas to travel boost prospects for intracontinental trade?

The African Union (AU) and many of the continent’s economic organisations think so and want it to be a reality by 2020. It is not an entirely original concept (the European Union already has a visa-free policy for its citizens), and many experts laud the AU’s position, at least in principle.

The idea of an African passport dates back a quarter of a century but has failed to catch on with countries that fear an increase in smuggling, illegal immigration, terrorism, and the spread of disease as well as a negative impact on local job markets. With migration, legal and illegal, blamed for recent outbreaks of xenophobia in South Africa, some of these fears seem credible.

Visa-free travel for Africans in Africa could be a logistical nightmare given that some citizens do not have travel documents and others lead nomadic lives. Individual countries may need to enact legislation to adopt the African passport. Few African nations use the biometric data that an African passport requires.

African passport

Last year the AU launched an African passport, a signature project of former chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma. However, the passport is currently available only to senior diplomats and top officials of AU’s 55 member states.

Of those member states, only Seychelles offers visa-free access to all African countries. “The large and fast-growing economies aren’t following suit because the visa regime itself has created a bureaucratic habit,” notes Daniel Silke, director of the South Africa–based Political Futures Consultancy.

“Old habits are hard to break, although there is justification for hesitation in terms of the legitimate layer of security that visas provide.”

Mr. Silke adds that growing and large economies worry about the impact that increased population movements might have on labour markets and cities. Some of Africa’s fast-growing economies are Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guinea, Senegal and Tanzania. Out of desperation, thousands of immigrants travel to South Africa, the continent’s largest economy, to find work.

“With urban cities expanding rapidly across Africa, government institutions are strained, and cities that offer opportunities...
Mr. Kalibata told *Africa Renewal* that between 2013 and 2016, the number of Africans receiving visas on arrival at Rwandan entry points increased by more than 100%. “We have also hosted many more conferences as a result of the removal of travel restrictions,” he said.

He maintained that crime rates in the country did not increase because of visa on arrival, contrary to fears initially expressed by skeptics.

“Most of the people entering our country do so for good reasons,” said Mr. Kalibata. He pointed out that Rwanda has “laws governing criminality associated with the movement of people. We also believe in competitiveness in terms of skills... So, opening our borders has attracted new talent and investment.”

Like Rwanda, Ghana now offers visa-free access to a third of AU member states and visas on arrival to the other two-thirds. In so doing, the country has made the most progress of all African states toward a visa-free Africa for Africans, according to the *Africa Visa Openness Report 2017* by the African Development Bank (AfDB).

Senegal is offering visa-free access to 42 African countries in a bid to reenergize its tourism sector.

At his swearing in as Kenya’s president last November, Uhuru Kenyatta announced that all Africans will henceforth receive visa on arrival.

An alternative to adopting visa-free access or visas on arrival is for countries to enter into reciprocal arrangements with other nations. Namibian authorities are making efforts to finalise such arrangements, meaning that citizens of countries allowing Namibians visas on arrival will receive reciprocal service at Namibian ports of entry.

Although Rwanda already offers Africans visa on arrival, it is also receptive to reciprocal arrangements with other countries, explained Mr. Kalibata. “We’ve proven just how effective unrestricted regional travel can be through the issue of a unified national identity card and border pass for citizens of Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda.

Another border pass agreement between Rwanda, the DRC, Burundi, Tanzania and Uganda has fostered regional social cohesion, and we’ve seen cross-border trade in our countries now contributing 42% to GDP, which is very significant,” he added.

Rwanda’s experience, however, is not enough to change the perception of the negative impacts of liberalizing entry visas. Jean-Guy Afrika, AfDB’s principal policy expert and a contributor to the *Africa Visa Openness Report 2017*, notes, “The 2016 analysis of Africa’s visa policy regimes demonstrated that on average Africans needed visas at departure to travel to 54% of other African countries (from 55% in 2015); could get visas on arrival in only 24% from 25% in 2015); and do not need visas to travel to just 22% (from 20% in 2015).”

The reasons African countries remain closed to each other, says Mr. Afrika, vary significantly. “The key reasons advanced by policy makers generally relate to fears of job losses and security concerns. But there could also be issues of culture and trust. The answer probably lies somewhere in the nexus between politics, culture, history and economics.”

**Visa liberalization**

Mr. Afrika confirms that at the regional level, East and West Africa lead in visa openness. “In the 2017 rankings of the Africa Visa Openness Index, 75% of countries in the top 20 are in these two regions. Only one is in the North and none in Central Africa.”

The AfDB, the AU and the World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on Africa collaborated on the *Africa Visa Openness Report 2017*, the second of its kind. Researchers gathered data from the International Air Transport Association and from responses to questionnaires administered to national focal points.

“Overall the trend is positive, given that just four years ago only five countries offered liberal, arrival or no visa, access to citizens of all African countries. Today that number stands at 14, but we want that number to keep moving up,” Mr. Afrika says.

Visa liberalization is not a magic bullet, he cautions, even if it can foster Africa’s integration. He recommends other reforms and massive investments in connectivity to complement visa liberalization, citing Rwanda as an example of a country benefiting from coordinated investments and policy reforms, including in business and air transport infrastructure.

“Visa openness may only be one piece of the interconnected African states puzzle, but it is nonetheless a very important one,” concludes Mr. Afrika.
When Moses Swaray stepped onstage to sing “Amazing Grace” in the auditorium of the Unity Conference Centre in Monrovia, Liberia, the audience, including President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, stood up to applaud; some wiped away tears.

Mr. Swaray, who is living with albinism, beat 11 other finalists to win the 2007 edition of A Star is Born, the national talent hunt organised by the United Nations and the Liberian government.

President Sirleaf warmly embraced Mr. Swaray on stage, calling him “a blessing to our country.”

Mr. Swaray might have been killed as a child had his father heeded the warnings of a close friend to get rid of the infant because albinos have supernatural powers and bring misfortunes to a family.

People living with albinism suffer from abnormal skin pigmentation resulting from a hereditary inability to produce melanin in their skin cells, according to the US National Library of Medicine. Melanin is a dark pigment that is responsible for producing skin, hair and eye colouration. Albinos suffer from vision problems and are susceptible to skin cancer.

While growing up, “some people treated me as less of a human being because they believed I had supernatural powers,” Mr. Swaray told Africa Renewal in an interview. Having relocated to the US some years ago, he is now a highly sought-after gospel artist within the African diaspora community.

Not all albinos in Africa have the same luck and talent as Mr. Swaray. Malawian authorities announced that between January and May 2016 alone, six albinos were murdered, including 17-year-old Davis Fletcher Machinjiri, who had gone to watch soccer.

The human rights organization Amnesty International quoted the Malawian police’s description of the gruesome murder of Mr. Machinjiri: “About four men trafficked him to Mozambique and killed him. The men chopped off both his arms and legs and removed his bones. Then they buried the rest of his body in a shallow grave.”

There are superstitions in some parts of Africa that albinos bring wealth, power or sexual conquest, and that having sex with a person living with albinism cures HIV and AIDS. Attackers sell albinos parts to witch doctors for thousands of dollars, according to Amnesty International.

In Tanzania, some 75 albinos were reported killed between 2000 and 2016. There have also been reports of albino killings in South Africa, although such crimes are less common there than in Malawi, Tanzania and Burundi. Last February, a South African court sentenced a traditional healer to life in prison for murdering a 20-year-old woman living with albinism.

Alarmed by rising incidences of albino killings, the UN Human Rights Council (which works closely with OHCHR) in June 2015 bestowed on Ikponwosa Ero, herself living with albinism, the title of

SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Ending albino persecution in Africa
Governments, UN and human rights groups step up advocacy to enlighten communities

BY PAVITHRA RAO
“Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism.”

In an interview with Africa Renewal, Ms. Ero termed the albino situation in Africa “a tragedy.” She referred to the 7,000 to 10,000 albinos in Malawi and thousands of others in Tanzania, Mozambique and other countries as “an endangered people” facing a “risk of extinction if nothing is done.” Tanzanians call albinos zeru zeru, meaning “ghosts.”

People living with albinism are found in every country. In the US, one in 20,000 persons has albinism, while the figure is generally believed to be one in 1,500 in Tanzania, and one in 5,000 to 15,000 in other sub-regions of Africa, according to the BBC, which acknowledges a lack of full-scale studies of the albino population.

Lacking pigmentation, albinos are particularly vulnerable to what advocacy groups call a “silent killer”—skin cancer. Sixmond Mdeka, a Tanzanian reggae star, has been battling skin cancer since birth. Mr. Mdeka told the BBC, “I used to go all around without protective clothing. I was burned by the sun everywhere....Sun is our number one enemy.”

Without the right treatment, up to 90% of albinos die before the age of 40 in Africa, medical experts say. Mr. Mdeka, who is almost 40 years old, is already experiencing health complications. Doctors operated on his left ear last September to remove a facial skin cancer called melanoma.

There are very few health services in Africa to manage albinism, and many of those living with the condition cannot afford badly needed sunscreen and protective clothing. For example, a bottle of sunscreen that lasts for two weeks sells for about $15 in Tanzania, a country where most people live on less than $1.50 a day.

**Exclusion**

Threats to albinos’ lives are compounded by “exclusion, stigmatization and denial of basic rights such as the right to education and health,” according to Amnesty International. Ms. Ero recounts her childhood experience: “Isolation and stigma came from peers and adults, including name-calling and mockery, and exclusion from certain community activities.”

She didn’t receive support for her impaired vision, and was sometimes flogged when she tried to explain her difficulties in a classroom.

“I went through high school without glasses and struggled very hard to see the writing on the blackboard,” recalls Mr. Swaray.

“Even mothers of children living with albinism are often abandoned after being accused of infidelity or...deemed accursed or abnormal. Whole families can be excluded or ostracised for having a member with albinism,” says Ms. Ero, who is now advocating for “massive and sustained public education.”

Raising awareness to debunk albinism myths may change some people’s attitudes, but Ms. Ero lists other practical steps countries can take, including dedicating “an office and budget to the issue, creating a telephone hotline to report crimes and threats, regulating ‘witchcraft’ and traditional medicine practitioners, among others.”

“It’s time African governments paid attention to how albinos are treated. It’s time we all spoke out. We need actions,” insists Mr. Swaray.

Governments and other organisations are already taking actions. Under the Same Sun (UTSS), a non-governmental organization with offices in Tanzania and Canada, is distributing educational materials in Tanzanian schools that dispel the myths surrounding albinism.

To raise awareness of albinos’ plight, the UN named 13 June each year as International Albinism Awareness Day. Every September is Albinism Awareness Month in South Africa. Earlier this year South African model and inventor Mala Bryan introduced a doll with albinism. Named Alexa, the doll is intended to help change misconceptions around albinism.

Some countries are stepping up efforts to prevent attacks on people with albinism. Mostly due to Tanzanian police interventions, albino murders dropped from 22 in 2008 to 11 in 2015. Ms. Ero commended the Tanzanian government and civil society for providing visual aids and other assistance to albinos.

“There have been positive measures [by the Tanzanian government] to address witchcraft practices, including the registration of traditional healers, [but] full oversight over their work has still not been achieved, and confusion still exists in the minds of the general public between witchcraft practice and the work of traditional healers,” Ms. Ero added.

Malawi’s President Peter Mutharika and other top government officials have condemned attacks on albinos. In 2015 the government announced a National Response Plan and appointed a special legal counsel to assist with investigations.

While she commends the Malawian government’s response plan, Ms. Ero pointed out that “the absence of resources attached to the plan has drastically delayed its implementation.” And Amnesty International notes that while some perpetrators have been convicted, most of the country’s crimes against albinos are still unsolved.

Albino rights groups are hopeful and eager for people to understand albinism and accept those with the condition. Albinos are just like everyone else, says Mr. Swaray. “When I look in the mirror, I see a man on his way to greatness; I do not see an albino,” he quipped.
GMO

African solutions urgently sought for agricultural revolution

An unprecedented wave of mergers among world’s top GMO producers worries regulators

BY HANS WETZELS

Professor Richard Mulwa knows his way around scientifically modified seeds—also known as genetically modified organisms (GMOs). In his laboratory at Egerton University in Kenya, the professor, who has genetically modified grapes, is currently researching ways to curtail naturally occurring cyanide in cassava grown in the cooler temperatures of Kenya’s highlands.

“If we can isolate the genetic pathway in the plant responsible for producing the poison, we can also develop edible cassava for higher altitudes,” he told Africa Renewal in an interview.

That could open a whole new range of possibilities for farmers in the highlands,” the professor explained in the sedate atmosphere of his laboratory, which contrasted sharply with the streets clogged with the noisy minibuses known as matatus outside the university gates.

Maize is Kenya’s most important staple, but frequent droughts resulting from climate change are affecting production. An increase in the production of cassava, a second staple, could prove a lifesaver. “Cassava is a good crop to have because it survives very well in dry circumstances,” Professor Mulwa says.

GMOs were introduced in 1996 by the American chemical giant Monsanto, which had managed to make maize seeds resistant to pests and soybeans resistant to a weed killer called glyphosate. Glyphosate killed all weeds in farmlands sown with the treated soy. Within a decade global GMO acreage increased a hundredfold. But consumers began to get worried about genetic tinkering with their food. And farmers planting in neighbouring fields saw their crops die as sun-dried glyphosate blew over from treated farms to untreated ones.

Professor Mulwa’s efforts to genetically modify cassava were hindered by a 2012 Kenyan government ban on GMOs after consumers raised concerns. “We just finished our research in the lab and want to continue testing it in the field. Our work has stalled,” complained Professor Mulwa. Earlier in 2017, Kenya’s National Biosafety Authority had announced field trials for GMO crops, defying the health ministry. The task force formed by the government to investigate the safety of GMOs would like the ban lifted on a case-by-case basis.

Green Revolution

The Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC), which assesses climate science, notes that climate change effects in the coming decades could be worsened by exponential population growth. Africa’s population of approximately one billion is expected to double by 2050, according to UN figures. By 2040, for example, Kenya’s population alone is forecast to increase from 45 million to 80 million. A growing population requires greater agricultural output.

To address an anticipated shortfall in agricultural productivity, African leaders committed in 2003—through the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), a continental master plan—to invest 10% of national budgets in the agricultural sector. Countries agreed to spend more money on rural development, reliable electricity systems in the countryside, better irrigation, storage facilities and quality infrastructure to connect farmers to local markets.
But more than a decade after adopting CAADP, only nine of Africa’s 54 countries have lived up to their commitments. The failure to invest in agriculture creates an opportunity for companies such as Monsanto, Bayer and others, argues Stephen Greenberg, a research coordinator at the Johannesburg-based African Centre for Biodiversity (ACBio).

At the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in 2016, billionaire philanthropist Bill Gates suggested that GMO technology could kick-start “an agricultural revolution” in Africa.

However, developing GMOs is a highly specialized and costly business. Currently a handful of multinational companies (Monsanto, Bayer, Syngenta, Dow Chemical, DuPont and BASF) monopolise the industry. Referred to as “the big six,” these companies are beginning to make inroads into developing countries, including in Africa.

The first major effort to introduce GMOs in Africa took place in the year 2000. A showcase project led by a Monsanto-trained Kenyan biotechnologist, Florence Wambugu, was initiated by the World Bank, the US government and Monsanto itself. The goal was to develop a virus-resistant sweet potato. After three years of field trials the genetically modified potatoes proved no less vulnerable to viruses than the untreated ones.

Adding insult to injury, a conventional breeding program in Uganda yielded virus-resistant sweet potatoes much faster and for far less money. In early 2004 the UK-based journal New Scientist dubbed the effort a “Monsanto failure.”

After several years of experimenting, the next big African GMO project was announced in 2008 in the Ugandan capital, Kampala. Under the moniker WEMA (Water Efficient Maize for Africa), several international scientists teamed up with national research institutes in Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda. WEMA aims to develop drought- and insect-resistant genetically modified maize suited for East African conditions.

Monsanto donated the genetic material, and the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF), a Nairobi-based NGO funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, USAID, Syngenta and PepsiCo, coordinated the project. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation also invested $85 million in the development of WEMA.

Kenya sees up to $90 million in postharvest losses each year, says WEMA project manager Sylvester Oikeh, adding, “Making WEMA maize widely available is our answer to African farmers calling for innovative solutions to these issues.”

Currently, GMOs are being grown in only four African countries: Burkina Faso, Egypt, South Africa and Sudan.

In 2015 ACBio published a critical report on WEMA. Its researchers concluded that the drought-resistant maize Monsanto had donated to the project had delivered no meaningful results in North America, where it is sold under the name DroughtGard.

Adopting hybrid maize varieties (the conventional drought-tolerant maize and the GM variety) is a good idea, but farmers must lead the way, experts advise. “Many answers are to be found in farmers’ knowledge of, for example, how to create healthy soils that store more water under drought conditions,” notes Lim Li Ching, a senior researcher for Third World Network, an international network of organisations that produces and analyses policies on ecological sustainability.

Simultaneously, the insect-resistant trait Monsanto also donated to WEMA underperformed so heavily in South Africa that it was silently withdrawn from the market.

South African farmers have been cultivating GMO maize for two decades now, Mr. Greenberger explained. Currently almost 90% of all maize grown in the country is genetically modified. “Farmers are running into trouble because insects become immune to the GMOs. But the market has become so monopolized over the years, the farmers have no option left besides waiting for Monsanto to develop a new GMO.”

The first batch of experimental WEMA maize was harvested in Mozambique in August 2017. The pressure to introduce standardized GMO crops in the huge and largely unserved African food market will not lessen now that the big biotechnology companies are merging into global behemoths, ACBio fears. Already Monsanto and the German chemical giant Bayer are exploring a $63.5 billion merger.

Taking a leaf from the merger activities of the big six, the Chinese conglomerate ChemChina announced in 2016 the acquisition of the Swiss company Syngenta, and DuPont and Dow Chemical have also begun merger talks. It is an unprecedented wave of consolidation that both EU and American regulators are scrutinizing.

In February 2017 ACBio released a study on the Monsanto-Bayer merger to highlight possible consequences for African farmers. “If smallholders collectively switch to generic GMO maize, African agriculture and biodiversity will suffer, and [it will] eventually limit farmers’ options because of the strong market dominance of a few big players,” maintained Mr. Greenberg.

“Especially when seed prices start to rise, that will heavily affect small farmers while failing to address the underlying problems of rural poverty. But Monsanto can make a lot of money by selling this kind of high-technology agriculture to as many farmers as possible.”

Unfounded fears

Professor Mulwa says that while consumer fears about GMOs may be unfounded, there is room for criticism of the approach of the GMO tech giants.

GMO technology should be strategically embedded in local agriculture, he advises. “I am of course pro-GMO. From a scientific perspective, farmers have a lot to gain from GMO technology. But as a scientist, I am bound by ethical standards, not corporate interests. I go out into the field and talk to farmers. I want to solve problems by using biotechnology,” says Professor Mulwa.

The adoption of GMO technology in Africa may therefore depend on whether the tech companies are in it for profits without regard to Africa’s food security.

“That is an important distinction. I think GMO development should be taken out of the hands of those powerful companies. As most things in life, GMOs can be used for good or for bad,” concludes Professor Mulwa.
Development experts and political leaders agree that Africa’s enormous agricultural potential, if tapped, can feed the continent and spur socio-economic growth.

In its 2016–2025 strategy for agricultural transformation in Africa, the African Development Bank (AfDB) advises governments to empower smallholder farmers to sustainably and profitably produce more food and achieve a food-secure continent.

That means strengthening the bargaining power of small-scale farmers and giving them access to improved soil that will increase yields, fertilizer and markets to enhance their incomes and well-being.

At a ministerial roundtable in the margins of the 2016 Korea-Africa Economic Cooperation Conference in Seoul, South Korea, AfDB’s president Akinwumi Adesina said, “To achieve food sufficiency and turn the continent into a net food exporter, Africa must empower smallholder farmers, who constitute 70% of the population and produce 80% of the food consumed in the continent.”

Bukar Tijani, the assistant director-general and regional representative for Africa at the UN’s Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), reinforces that “the key to Africa’s food security lies in the smallholder farmer.”

Africa is home to more than half of the world’s unused arable land, but the continent remains food insecure, with millions of people experiencing chronic hunger and facing famine, according to the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), an organization that provides support to smallholder farmers, in its Africa Agriculture Status Report 2017.

In addition to helping smallholder farmers, governments and other stakeholders need to look at ways of empowering youth with knowledge, skills and other resources. According to Agnes Kalibata, the president of AGRA, it is important to “invest in modern technologies and give the youth and women more resources to venture into productive agriculture.”

For Alex Awiti, the director at the East African Institute, a policy research organization, the key to food security is to develop policies and strategies that address the needs of smallholder farmers. Agricultural policies are not in short supply on the continent; the problem has always been the implementation of policies.

“Improving agricultural productivity is a complex public policy problem—it is influenced by a number of complex socio-economic and political factors,” says Dr. Awiti.

Factors inhibiting smallholder farmers include the ineffective application of fertilizers; farmers do not use fertilizer deep placement (FDP), which increases yield. In addition, good-quality seeds and fertilizers are often difficult to come by and unaffordable to smallholder farmers even when they can be found. All of this often leads to low agricultural productivity.

“Fertilizer use in smallholder farms in Africa is 13 to 20 kilogrammes per hectare. This is about a tenth of the global average,” explains Dr. Awiti.

Large-scale farms

Despite the obvious socio-economic benefits of investing in small-scale farming, African governments prefer to focus on large-scale commercial farms, due to the perceived difficulty of dealing with tens of thousands of smallholder farmers.

Dr. Awiti says that a lack of fertilizers, a weak value chain and production losses during storage and distribution stages destroy agricultural economies and demotivate smallholder farmers who lack basic storage and processing facilities and technical knowledge. When smallholder farmers can produce more without fear that their yields will be wasted, the agricultural sector will grow.

“Many smallholder farmers in Ghana farm on poor and degraded soils and lack access to affordable and appropriate inputs, including quality seeds, fertilizers and pesticides,” says Kofi Yeboah, a young Ghanaian entrepreneur. These farmers are now calling on their government to subsidize the prohibitive costs of fertilizers.

A small group of Ghanaian companies import fertilizers to the country and further negotiate with the government to set prices. Farmers in remote areas complain that fertilizers do not reach them.

In South Africa, smallholder farmers do not have adequate access to research and extension services, says Mabine Seabe, who advocates for the empowerment of farmers. Worse, they lack strong negotiation skills and information about prices. All of this means that South African smallholder farmers do not receive optimal earnings for their produce. Even when farmers have the right information
regarding prices, they are unable to access the big markets and are therefore compelled to sell their produce to middlemen who own distributive networks and make most of the profit.

“Small-scale farmers and the youth do not receive necessary funding and support from government and financial institutions due partly to high risks associated with farming,” says Mr. Seabe, adding that government has been slow to enact land reforms and redistribution policies. Land reforms are a difficult issue; only Zimbabwe has implemented them, and it was a politically and racially charged undertaking.

**Maputo declaration**

Ethiopia is facing food shortages caused by drought. Meanwhile, over 20% of the total crop yield in Ethiopia is lost to poor post-harvest handling (PHL). To address this problem in Ethiopia, Shayashone, a nonprofit organization dealing in agricultural logistics, strategy and business model development, among other things, is supporting smallholder farmers with storage technology. Yared Sasa, the head of the organization, says, “Farmers need adequate new technology and capacity building to mitigate crop damage during storage by pests.”

Shayashone has partnered with Cooperatives for Change (C4C), a nonprofit international development organization from Netherlands, to promote in Ethiopia’s Oromia region the use of an improved storage bag created by the PICS (Purdue Improved Crop Storage) project.

Despite multiple constraints faced by African small-scale farmers, government investment in agriculture has doubled since 2010, the Brookings Institution, a US-based nonprofit public policy organization, reported this year. But such investments are still less than 2% of national budgets—far below the 10% threshold African leaders agreed to invest in the sector in their Maputo Declaration in 2003.

In 2017, 14 years after the Maputo Declaration, most countries have not yet met the 10% target. The few that have met the target include Ethiopia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali and Namibia.

Mr. Tijani of FAO advises African governments and other investors in agriculture to raise awareness among the youth of the benefits of agriculture and how its value chains work. Young people should
Perhaps no major political or humanitarian disaster is as overlooked as the ongoing crisis in Libya. For example, although the New York Times in September 2017 published a total of seven articles mentioning Libya, only one of them touched on the violence ripping it apart. Even the Times’ gesture merely highlighted the latest permutation of the US government’s foreign military decisions.

The article, by Eric Schmitt, cited the Pentagon’s Africa Command and stated that the United States military had carried out a half-dozen “precision strikes” on an Islamic State training camp in Libya, killing 17 militants in the first American air strike in “the strife-torn North African nation” since Donald Trump was inaugurated as president.

Two of the Times’s September 2017 articles on Libya are about the Trump administration’s travel ban, which affects Libyans, among others. One is about Libyans seeking asylum in Germany only to find “hatred,” and the other is about the threats, including racism and violence, that sub-Saharan African migrants using Libya as a route to Europe face in that country.

Contrast the current media coverage of Libya with that of the period just before the NATO military action that led to the squalid death of Libyan president Muammar Gaddafi. In February 2011 alone—a month before the US, Britain and France began bombing that country to oust Mr. Gaddafi—the New York Times carried well over a hundred articles on Libya. One editorial, on 24 February 2011, confidently asserted that “unless some way is found to stop him, Gaddafi will slaughter hundreds or even thousands of his own people in his desperation to hang on to power.”

However, months after the dictator’s enemies, aided by Western powers, had overrun the country, the same paper ran a telling story by veteran correspondent Rod Nordland entitled “Libya Counts More Martyrs than Bodies.” “Where are the dead?” he asked, referring to the mass killings that Mr. Gaddafi had been accused of planning. No evidence of such killings was to be found anywhere in the country.

Here’s what is currently happening in Libya, which is unlikely to be covered in corporate media. On 28 August 2017, Ghassan Salamé, the special representative of the secretary-general and head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, told the Security Council that on his first night in the capital, Tripoli, after taking the job, “I fell asleep to the protracted staccato of gunfire.” Civilians, he said, “are killed or injured across Libya as a result of sporadic armed clashes... Thousands are also detained for prolonged...
periods of time, many with no prospects of a fair trial.”

Libya’s current state is one of near anarchy. A UN-led initiative resulted in a Libyan Political Agreement in December 2015 and a so-called Government of National Accord (GNA), bringing together two warring “governments,” the Council of Deputies (elected in 2014) and the Islamist General National Congress (GNC).

The GNA is backed by the UN and is internationally recognised. Its authority, however, is both unclear and limited; the country’s capital, Tripoli, the haven of the GNC, is still contested and riven by violence.

The components of the GNA still compete for authority, legitimacy and control over state resources and infrastructure. In effect, there are still two competing, even warring, governments in the country, and there is no leader commanding anything approaching national clout, let alone support or legitimacy.

Oil production in Libya reached 1 million barrels a day in early October 2017, far below the 1.6 million it produced before the crisis. Mr. Salamé said that the “impression of a now well-rooted political economy of predation is palpable, as if the country were fuelling its own crisis with its own resources to the benefit of the few and the frustration of the many.”

When a convoy of UN personnel was attacked with gunfire and rocket-propelled grenades on 28 June 2017 by militant groups in the country, Mr. Salamé reported that the active “presence of ISIS, Al Qaida–affiliated terrorist groups, foreign fighters and mercenaries, the trafficking of arms and the cross-border black market economy are challenges which extend across Libya’s borders and impact its neighbours and the wider international community.” Yet this was not a major news item in mainstream US media.

In June, UN investigators reported that terrorists, militants, mercenaries, and partisans have been targeting the two “governments” in the country, as well as residential areas, with improvised explosive devices, causing the death and injury of many civilians. The investigators reported summary executions of civilians, mass killings and bodies found with “bullet wounds and signs of torture.”

Kidnappings are routine, and so is the “arbitrary detention and torture of journalists and activists involving Haytham al-Tajuri, the commander of the Tripoli Revolutionaries Brigade. Armed groups affiliated with the National Salvation Government were involved in several cases of kidnapping and torture,” the investigators stated in their report.

Thousands have perished in the near-anarchic violence that these multiple groups and their foreign backers perpetuate, and an estimated 435,000 of Libya’s population of just over six million are internally displaced.

September ended with the report of the killing of 26 people and the wounding of 170 by rival armed groups in the city of Sabratha after two weeks of fighting.

In October, CNN reported slave trading in Libya, with a footage of black Africans being auctioned for around $400 each. The footage caused the African Union (AU) chairman, president Alpha Conde of Guinea, to demand prosecutions for crimes against humanity. He condemned the resurgence of a “despicable” trade “from another era.”

Why no action?
So why isn’t the world focused on Libya following the humanitarian catastrophe it has become since Mr. Gaddafi’s death? Last year the United Nations high commissioner for human rights estimated that more than 9,000 people were detained without trial in the country. Sectarian killings are now commonplace, black migrants are brutalised and in some cases summarily executed by militia groups, and last year a report by the United Nations high commissioner for human rights estimated that more than nine thousand people were being detained without trial in facilities operated by the Ministry of Justice and the Department for Combating Illegal Migration of the Ministry of the Interior. It is now clear that those who ousted Mr. Gaddafi wanted a regime change but were unprepared for its consequences.

The latest Security Council resolution on Libya, adopted on 14 September, made a point of reiterating support for the GNA “as the sole legitimate government of Libya, with Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj as the leader of the Presidency Council.”

The resolution also expressed the Security Council’s “strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Libya,” a country that, before its so-called revolution in 2011, was one of Africa’s most influential states, a prime actor in the transformation of the Organisation of African Unity into the AU.

Writing in the March/April issue of the journal Foreign Affairs, Ivo Daalder, then the US’s permanent representative to NATO, and James Stavridis, then supreme allied commander Europe, described NATO’s operation in Libya as “a model intervention” that “succeeded in protecting...civilians” from an impending genocide. In fact, it provides a cautionary tale for trigger-happy humanitarians and those the British journalist Simon Jenkins once called “sofa strategists and beltway bombdardiers.”

African Union’s role
Libya’s ongoing problems raise questions about the role of the AU, of which Libya was once a prominent member. At the height of NATO’s bombing of Libya, in July 2011, Mauritania’s foreign minister Hamady Ould Hamady briefed the UN Security Council on the AU’s position.

Mr. Hamady spoke about the “indescribable suffering of the Libyan population” and then described the AU’s road map to peace: “the immediate cessation of all hostilities; the cooperation of the relevant Libyan authorities in facilitating the effective delivery of humanitarian aid to populations in need; the protection of foreigners, including African migrant workers living in Libya; and the adoption and implementation of the political reforms necessary to eliminate the causes of the current conflict.” The AU road map was routinely shelved as a Security Council document.

The AU could make greater efforts to resolve Libya’s crises. Its Peace and Security Department, which spearheads its efforts to promote peace, security and stability in Africa, is headed by Commissioner Smail Chergui from Algeria, a country that in the past played a prominent role in regional mediation efforts.

The current regimes in Libya may not have the same sentimental or rhetorical attachment to the AU that Mr. Gaddafi had, but experts believe that the regional body is still uniquely placed, despite the minimal interest displayed in Libya by major powers, to be more actively involved in containing the crises, whose impact has been seen in many of the neighbouring countries of the Sahel and even West Africa.
Towards a food-secure Africa
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not engage in farming only for lack of better opportunities; they need to be aware that it is a gainful occupation, he says, adding, “African youth can be powerful drivers of change to lift themselves and others out of poverty, hunger and malnutrition.” Unfortunately, many don’t consider agriculture a potentially lucrative venture.

About 200 million Africans are between the ages of 15 and 24, and these young people are an untapped reservoir for spurring growth in the agri-food sector. Governments should give them property rights, farming and digital technologies, and other value-chain opportunities, says Mr. Awiti. “This will place them at the nerve center of agricultural e-commerce.”

Yara International, an organization fighting famine globally, helped create the Southern Agricultural Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT), an ambitious government-led public-private initiative aiming to revitalize 300,000 square kilometers of arable land. The initiative is expected to boost the incomes of thousands of farmers.

Over the last decade, the Tanzanian government has encouraged investment in commercial rice, sugar and maize farming and processing facilities. “This created ready markets for produce, as government targets, supports and links rice farmers to the market,” says James Craske, Yara’s country manager in Kenya.

already the anticipated increase in productivity has triggered a demand for more fertilizers. To meet such demand, Yara set up a $26 million fertilizer terminal in the capital, Dar es Salaam, even as the organization and Tanzania’s government are working with local banks to provide financing for farmers. The model will create thousands of new jobs and raise incomes for millions of farmers.

The Tanzanian model addresses food insecurity, youth unemployment and socio-economic exclusions. It can potentially spur rural development. However, the model has been criticized for destroying state-owned mangroves that provided food security for many citizens.

Head of the Africa Progress Panel and former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan believes that Africa can close the productivity gap in the agriculture value chain. “Africa’s smallholder farmers are more than capable of feeding the continent as long as they make use of the latest agronomic practices in combination with appropriately adapted seeds and fertilizers to boost their crop yield.”

The question remains: How far and how quickly are African governments willing to go to empower smallholder farmers to achieve the goal of a food-secure continent? Raphael Obonyo is Africa’s representative to the World Bank’s Global Coordination Board on Youth and Anti-Corruption.

Closing Africa’s wealth gap
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budgets to recurrent overheads and/or debts, leaving little or nothing for other projects.

Corruption, mismanagement and illicit financial flows (IFFs) also deplete state coffers.

According to a 2015 report by a high-level African Union panel on IFFs headed by former South African president Thabo Mbeki, Africa loses up to $50 billion annually to illicit financial flows. Mr. Mbeki urges countries to punish multinational companies that are over invoicing, underpricing or funneling money to tax havens.

“Gender inequality is costing sub-Saharan Africa “on average $US95 billion a year, peaking at US$105 billion in 2014—or six percent of the region’s GDP—jeopardizing the continent’s efforts for inclusive human development and economic growth,” according to the UNDP publication Africa Human Development Report 2016: Advancing Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Africa.

The authors of the UNDP report highlight that in sub-Saharan Africa, household income disproportionately favours adult males and “gender discrimination is acute and endemic.”

The UNDP correlates gender equality with human development. Mauritius and Tunisia Mauritius have low levels of gender equality and high levels of human development. Conversely, Chad, Mali and Niger have high levels of gender inequality but low levels of human development.

Former vice president of the World Bank’s Africa division Obiageli Ezekwesili said last November that men are mostly to blame for Africa’s economic problems. “When many more women are at the decision-making level, there is less corruption. Nobody does any favour to women by involving them in governance.”

Mr. Ayodele Odusola, the lead author of the UNDP report, maintains that no single solution can address inequalities on the continent. “You have to take countries’ context into consideration,” he says, advising countries to adopt progressive taxation, invest in education and agriculture, increase direct taxation and institute efficient tax administration.
**BOOK REVIEW**

**Africa in Transition: A New Way of Looking at Progress in the Region**

*by Ejeviome Eloho Otobo*

In his book *Africa in Transition: A New Way of Looking at Progress in the Region*, Ejeviome Eloho Otobo presents an original paradigm for measuring development on an evolving continent.

The author finds fault with the approach of measuring Africa’s development by considering either economic or political trends. Instead he proposes considering both.

Commenters tend to focus on socio-economic and political indicators of progress, such as gross national product, trade deficit or surplus and literacy levels, but the book proposes including technology as a development yardstick. The continent’s development, powered in part by technology, supports the author’s suggestion.

To avoid the “wild swings between ‘Hopeless Africa,’ ‘Africa Rising’ and ‘Africa Reeling’” narratives, the author endorses the integration of “stability, organizational, scientific and technological perspectives.”

African countries are in the midst of a variety of transitions, he writes, including democratic transition, from one-party or military regimes to multiparty democracies; economic transition, from state-controlled to market-oriented economies; and peace transition, from civil wars to durable peace.

Mr. Otobo, who is an expert in peacebuilding and global economic policy, pinpoints Africa’s development challenges. First, he argues, conflicts, coups, and the absence of the rule of law are symptoms of a “stability deficit” that can lead to fragile states.

Second, a lack of institutional infrastructure, such as governance structures, norms, and work ethic, is a symptom of an organizational deficit, which can result in a serious lack of capacity and in corruption.

Lastly, a scientific and technological deficit makes it difficult for countries to add value to their commodities.

Overlapping deficits make it difficult to distinguish between problems caused by a stability deficit, for example, and those caused by an organizational deficit.

In sum, the author, who once acted as a UN assistant secretary-general, provides a rich history of the continent’s economic evolution, and by identifying the root causes of development challenges, he identifies solutions. The book reads like a call to action.

While at times overfreighted with policy analyses, the 358-page book is readable. Development experts and students of Africa will find it a useful resource. ♥

— Pavithra Rao

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**APPOINTMENTS**

UN secretary-general António Guterres has appointed Kim Bolduc of Canada as his deputy special representative for the UN Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). She will also serve as UN resident coordinator, humanitarian coordinator and resident representative of the UNDP. She succeeds Mamadou Diallo of Guinea.

Major-General Francis Vib-Sanziri of Ghana has been appointed as head of mission and force commander of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). He most recently served as director-general of the International Peace Support Operations at General Headquarters of the Armed Forces. He succeeds Major General Jai Shanker Menon of India.

Mamadou Diallo of Guinea has been appointed as deputy special representative of the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUSTAH) as well as UN resident coordinator, humanitarian coordinator and resident representative of the UNDP. He most recently served as deputy special representative of the secretary-general of the MONUSCO. He succeeds Mourad Wahba of Egypt.

Bintou Keita of Guinea has been appointed as assistant secretary-general for peacekeeping operations. She most recently served as deputy joint special representative for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). She succeeds El Ghassim Wane of Mauritania.
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