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YACINE BRAHIMI

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Don't forget to send your comments about the magazine. The editorial team invites and welcomes your input, letters, opinionated articles, well-researched stories and contributions.

From The Publisher

As we, hopefully come to the end of this year, we highlight on the good news that reached all loving Eastern Africans and their friends in the Diaspora about the withdrawal of the International Criminal Court (ICC) charges against Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta.

Kenyatta, whose charges at the world court have been ongoing along with his deputy William Ruto and journalist, Joshua Sang, said he had repeatedly declared his innocence to the people of Kenya and the whole world.

As the Presidential statement issued in Nairobi said after receiving the news, the president was excited by this news, which he had been waiting for since the day his name was announced to the world in connection with the case. The President was also deeply relieved by this decision, which was overdue by six years," the statement said.

In neighbouring Tanzania, while other countries are turning away refugees, over 162,000 former Burundian refugees were recently granted Tanzanian citizenship.

"These are now citizens and our constitution provides that a citizen has the right to live anywhere in the country," Mathias Chikawe, Tanzania's Home Affairs Minister said, The new citizens will enjoy all citizenship rights including land ownership, free movement and participation in political activities, Mr. Chikawe said, however, that they would not be eligible to run for the presidency "because that right is reserved for those who are Tanzanian citizens by birth."

In South Sudan, recently, following talks in Arusha-Tanzania at the invitation from Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete, both South Sudan leaders President Salva Kiir and rebel leader Riek Machar accepted mutual responsibility for a 10-month civil war in which thousands were killed.

"The parties acknowledge a collective responsibility for the crisis in South Sudan that has taken a great toll on the lives and property of our people," said the deal signed by Kiir and his sacked former deputy Machar.

In South Africa and the World at large on the 5th of this month we commemorated the first anniversary of Nelson Mandela's death. Hundreds of South Africans, liberation war veterans, government officials and members of the Mandela family gathered at the government offices at the Union Buildings in Pretoria,

Addressing the attendees, Graca Machel urged the world and South Africa to carry on Mandela's legacy in whatever way possible.

"Mandela's legacy is huge. It covers all of us and no one can claim a single ownership of it," she said. "It is up to each one of us to take the stage and do what you think you can afford to honour his legacy. His legacy is the goodness to save others, which is present in every human being," Machel said.

All sports lovers would like to know, that after a record number of votes were submitted from fans in 207 Fifa-registered countries, the 24-year-old Algerian midfielder Yacine Brahimi was voted as the BBC African Footballer of the Year 2014.

Finally, as we come to the end of this year, I wish you all a MERRY CHRISTMAS AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR. ■



DEO KAMUHANDA



[Cover Photo: Benedikt von Loebell]

A jubilant President Kenyatta waves to his supporters [Photo By Ben Curtis/AP]

Kenyan Leader Buoyant after ICC Drops Charges

By Chrispinus Omar and Peter Mutai

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta said that he received the news of the withdrawal of the International Criminal Court (ICC) charges against him with excitement.

"I am excited by this news, which I have awaited ever since the day my name was announced to the world in connection with the case. I am also deeply relieved by this decision, which is overdue by six years," Kenyatta said in a statement issued in Nairobi.

Kenyatta, whose charges at the world court have been ongoing along with his deputy William Ruto and journalist, Joshua Sang, said he had repeatedly declared his innocence to the people of Kenya and the whole world.

"I repeat this even now: as relates the incidents comprising the Kenyan cases at the ICC, my conscience is absolutely clear," he said.

He said it has always been his position that the Kenyan cases at the ICC were rushed there without proper investigation or preparation, and sustained by a strong interest to stigmatize accused persons.

As an institution of the international community, he said, victims of serious crimes and people around the world had a right to expect the Court to dispense justice with integrity and without undue considerations.

Kenyatta, Ruto and Sang, who are not subject to arrest warrants have pledged to continue voluntarily appearing before the ICC. Charges



against the three Kenyans were confirmed on January 23, 2012. They face crimes against humanity charges for their alleged roles in murders, deportation or forcible transfer of population, and persecution during Kenya's 2007-2008 postelection violence.

Charges against former Head of Civil Service Francis Muthaura, ex-Police Commissioner Hussein Ali and ex-Industrialization Ministry Henry Kosgey were dropped.

Kenyatta said the government has sustained its efforts to restitute and reintegrate the victims of the post-election violence (PEV) as best as it can.

"Our justice system continues to process the cases which have been instituted. I have supported these efforts because ultimately, the victims must get justice. The world may have failed them, but they will not be let down at home," Kenyatta said.

He said the Prosecutor opted to selectively pursue cases in a blatantly biased manner that served vested interests and undermined justice.

"Our justice system continues to process the cases which have been instituted. I have supported these efforts because ultimately, the victims must get justice. The world may have failed them, but they will not be let down at home," said President Uhuru Kenyatta.



President Kenyatta dressed in full military gear at State House, Nairobi, early this year

"As a result, the Court has had to pay a steep reputational price, which it will continue to face unless a serious and systemic rethinking of the International Justice framework is undertaken," he added.

The Kenyan leader said there is no justice when human rights clubs and an international tribunal conspire to betray victims of human rights abuses and persecute the innocent, adding that the tragedy of this travesty is beyond words.

"The victims in this case will get no satisfaction from the ICC, owing to the Prosecutor's decision to compromise a quest for justice in favour of political considerations," Kenyatta said.

The country has in the recent past witnessed counter accusations over the authenticity of some of the anonymous prosecution witnesses used by the ICC during the confirmation of charges hearings against Kenyans accused of bearing the greatest responsibility over the infamous post-election violence.

In dropping the charge, ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda accused the Kenyan government of failing to furnish the court with several documents which it wants to use to show that President Kenyatta funded the attacks.

Senator Kipchumba Murkomen said the trials president Kenyatta and his deputy have been going through will only make them stronger to serve Kenyans.

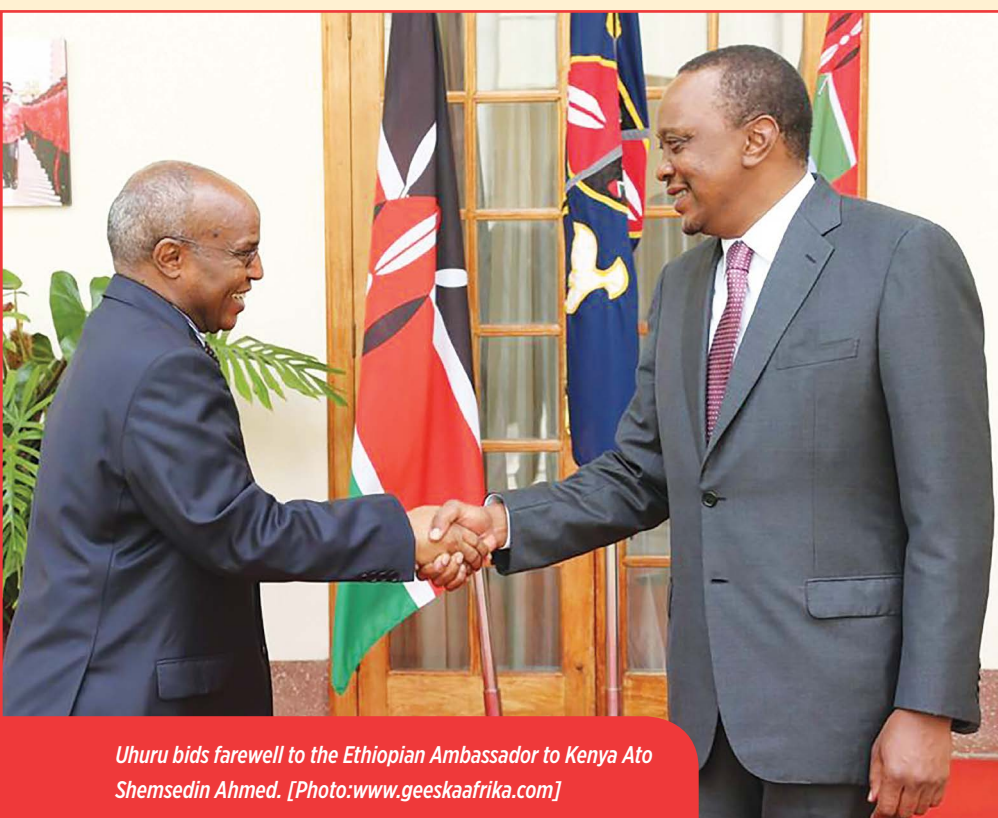
Foreign Affairs Cabinet Secretary Amina Mohammed said the government will pursue the dropping of the charges against Ruto and Sang with the same "energy and passion."

She expressed optimism that the cases facing Deputy President William Ruto and Journalist Joshua Sang would also be terminated.

"It is our hope and prayer that the two other Kenyan cases at the ICC will also be dropped in due course," the Foreign Affairs Cabinet Secretary said.

The court did not, however, acquit the president of the charges as his lawyers had requested. War crimes prosecutors said fresh allegations could be filed if new evidence surfaces. ■

Kenya, Ethiopia Programme for Border Communities



Uhuru bids farewell to the Ethiopian Ambassador to Kenya Ato Shemsedin Ahmed. [Photo:www.geeskaafrika.com]

in the region. He assured the President of the Ethiopian Government commitment to the implementation of the agreement saying it will ensure security and stability within the region.

Ambassador Ahmed said conflict between border communities has also contributed to border insecurity.

The outgoing Ethiopian envoy congratulated President Kenyatta for having been relieved of the International Criminal charges at the ICC, saying his Government will continue to stand with Kenya in the remaining two cases. He said the Ethiopian Government will continue working closely with Kenya to ensure the remaining two cases are also shelved.

He said the ongoing construction of Isiolo-Moyale road onwards to Ethiopia will facilitate economic growth and that the Ethiopian Government is committed to border trade without much bureaucracy.

"Issues of currency will not matter when it comes to border trade. We will allow our people to trade freely with their neighbours with no restrictions," said the Ethiopian envoy.

President Kenyatta said the agreement will not only accelerate the implementation of the infrastructural projects but also enhance relations between the people of the two countries.

"Everybody will gain; no one will lose in this agreement. This agreement will help our people move freely and develop together. It will help us move from government to government engagement to people relations," said the President. - **Kenya Presidency** ■

Kenya and Ethiopia have signed an agreement that aims at creating opportunities for communities at the border, President Uhuru Kenyatta has said. This will create stability and security, he said.

Speaking recently when bidding farewell to the Ethiopian Ambassador to Kenya Ato Shemsedin Ahmed, President Kenyatta assured the envoy that his Government is determined to implement the special status agreement signed between the two countries.

"A busy person will have no time thinking of taking a gun to commit crime, rather he would be

so committed to their businesses which he/she knows will ensure they get their daily livelihoods," the President added.

On terror, President Kenyatta said Kenya is committed to winning the war and that his Government will continue working with and borrowing best practises from Ethiopia, which also neighbours Somalia.

The Ethiopian envoy condoled with the President and the people of Kenya following the recent terror massacre in Mandera saying the Ethiopian Government will work closely with Kenya to ensure they root out the Al-Shabaab menace

Chinese Firms Roll Out New Initiatives to Empower Kenyan Communities



Kenya's First Lady Mrs. Margaret Kenyatta being introduced to officials from Chinese telecom firm ZTE and Forum for African Women Educationists (FAWE) who have rolled out a financial empowerment program for women in Western Kenya to support their entrepreneurial efforts

By Christine Lagat

Chinese telecommunications giants, ZTE and Huawei, last month announced a new partnership with Kenyan grassroots organizations to promote girl child education, female entrepreneurship and the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Kenyan First Lady, Margaret Kenyatta, witnessed the signing of the agreement between Kenyan civil society organizations and Chinese firms to advance sustainable development in the east African nation.

"For the past 50 years, relations between Kenya and China have spectacularly blossomed and the benefits are visible across all human endeavours," Margaret said.

Chinese firms have rolled out robust corporate social responsibility projects to tackle poverty, illiteracy, disease and environmental depletion in Kenya.

Margaret noted that Kenya-Chinese ties have reached a new milestone as the two countries

"For the past 50 years, relations between Kenya and China have spectacularly blossomed and the benefits are visible across all human endeavours," Margaret said.

partner in areas that guarantee mutual benefit.

"It is important to note that ties between Kenya and China are based on sound values alongside shared aspiration. They have for the past half a century followed the course of mutual respect and development," said Kenyatta.

She added that China's support in diverse areas like infrastructure development, education, health, agriculture and energy has propelled socioeconomic revival in Kenya.

The Chinese Ambassador to Kenya, Liu Xianfa, said China will support initiatives that foster peace and sustainable development.

"Chinese and Kenyan institutions will partner to promote shared interests identified in the China-Africa people to people friendship launched in 2012," said Liu.

He revealed the Chinese Embassy will hold a series of activities under its flagship Love for Kenya programme to promote socioeconomic renewal in the east African nation.

ZTE Corporation has partnered with the Nairobi-based Forum for African Women Educationists to provide entrepreneur skills to 100 women in western Kenya.

Liu Sen, CEO of ZTE Corporation, Kenya, said financially challenged women will be able to access seed capital and training to initiate micro-enterprises. "Our project focuses on long-term solution to poverty that denies women a chance to realize their potential," Liu said.

Meanwhile, Huawei Technologies has partnered with a community-based organization, Shades of Hope, to fight the AIDS pandemic in Samburu County.

Yu Dingpeng, CEO of Huawei Technologies, Kenya, said his company has financed community-led interventions to reduce HIV transmission in remote villages.

"We have supported Shades of Hope to implement the voluntary male circumcision and other innovative programs to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS," he said. ■

Limited Support for Key Populations Undermines Ugandan HIV Control

According to studies, the most at-risk populations (MARPs) in Uganda, who account for HIV prevalence rates often more than double the national average, include fisher folk, transactional sex workers and their partners, men who have sex with men (MSM) and men in uniformed services.

Uganda's HIV/AIDS control efforts have been undermined by a lack of consensus and clarity over which people constitute Key Populations (KPs) to be targeted in various prevention, care and treatment efforts, say experts. There is no consensus on the definitions of, and who to include as, KPs, with activists noting that the lack of clarity on KPs at policy level has an adverse impact on HIV prevention, care and treatment.

"The fight against HIV-AIDS will continue to be jeopardized if marginalized groups are not well defined and included in the fight against HIV/AIDS, yet we all agree that [these] are the highest drivers of HIV," said Moses Kimbugwe, the advocacy and programme director with Spectrum Uganda, a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) advocacy organization. →

A clinic on the outskirts of Kampala, Uganda, that receives money from the United States for AIDS prevention. [Photo: Rodney Muhumuza/AP]



According to studies, the most at-risk populations (MARPs) in Uganda, who account for HIV prevalence rates often more than double the national average, include fisher folk, transactional sex workers and their partners, men who have sex with men (MSM) and men in uniformed services. The Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS uses the term “key populations” to describe these groups.

In Uganda, the national HIV prevalence rate is 7.3 percent, a rise from 6.4 percent over the past five years. This is compared to the estimated prevalence rates of 15-40 percent in fishing communities, 37 percent among sex workers, 18 percent in the partners of sex workers, 13 percent in MSM, and 18.2 percent among men in the uniformed services

A recently released Uganda AIDS Commission (UAC) mid-term review report of the 2011-2015 national HIV/AIDS strategic plan notes that “limited interventions addressing key populations... [are] exacerbated by inadequate knowledge about the context and extent of the problem of key population groups.”

“The specialized clinics came into existence because the Ministry of Health has failed to open up its centres to LGBTI persons receiving health services without discrimination,” Kimbugwe of Spectrum Uganda, told IRIN. “Sometimes these specialized clinics continue to stigmatize our people and it’s the reason we orient healthcare service providers in the health needs of LGBTI people so that they are free to receive services at any place of their choice.”

“Moreover, the legal environment and programming design issues intervene to undermine interventions for KPs,” it adds.

The “legal environment” refers to issues such as Ugandan government attempts at criminalizing homosexuality. In August, the country’s constitutional court threw out the Anti-Homosexuality Act (AHA), which would penalize those guilty of “homosexual acts” with jail terms of up to 14 years and life sentences in “aggravated” cases, such as those committed by an HIV-positive person, or those involving minors, the disabled and serial offenders. AHA also prohibited the “promotion” of homosexuality. Related to this is the HIV/AIDS Prevention and Management Act 2014, which criminalizes wilful transmission of HIV with fines and jail terms of up to 10 years.

Confusion

According to Sylvia Nakasi, the policy and advocacy officer with Uganda’s Network of AIDS Service Organizations (UNASO), “the lack of clarity and

consensus on key populations and MARPs creates confusion especially to the programmers, donors and service providers. There is confusion on who to target their services to and in the end [they] leave out the right target.”

“They [key populations] should be mapped out to know how many there are, where they are and what their needs are, so [that] interventions are targeted to meet their needs and curb the HIV incidence among them and the general population.”

Asia Russel, international policy adviser for the US NGO Health Gap, added: “Key populations such as MSM need access to prevention and treatment services delivered in a friendly environment, without discrimination or fear of stigma. This means establishing specialized clinics, but it also means training health workers in existing, non-specialized clinics for the general population so that they meet a minimum standard for non-discrimination and quality provision of care in service delivery.”

While Uganda’s Health Ministry has opened some specialized MARP clinics in Kampala and other HIV/AIDS hot spots in the country, needs remain with discrimination persisting.

“The specialized clinics came into existence because the Ministry of Health has failed to open up its centres to LGBTI persons receiving health services without discrimination,” Kimbugwe of Spectrum Uganda, told IRIN. “Sometimes these specialized clinics continue to stigmatize our people and it’s the reason we orient healthcare service providers in the health needs of LGBTI people so that they are free to receive services at any place of their choice.”

Denial and stigma

According to UNASO’s Nakasi, “the denial of the existence of MSM increases stigma and discrimination against MSM in the communities, limiting access to HIV services especially prevention, and also deters donors and service providers from planning for them.”

“Given that MSM are part of the general community, majority end up bisexual in order to fit in and be acceptable socially hence spreading the risk of HIV transmission to the general population.”

The denial of the existence of some MARPs by some government officials is a challenge too. “People know that homosexuality is not Ugandan or an African issue. It’s few individuals here in Kampala who are practising and trying to promote it,” Sarah Achieng Opendi, Uganda’s acting minister for health, told IRIN.

The UAC report recommends expanded access and provision of comprehensive packages for HIV prevention, care and treatment. According to a 2014 Ministry of Health and UAC report, there are an estimated 10,533 MSM, 54,549 transactional sex workers, two million fisher folk, 650,000 uniformed forces and 31,588 truckers in Uganda. As of 2013, the number of KPs reached with HIV interventions in Uganda had doubled from 139,758 in 2010 to 287,302, according to the US President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. - IRIN ■

Chimps Filmed Raiding Farms to Find Food

By Victoria Gill

Camera traps have caught wild chimpanzees in the act as they carried out night-time raids on farmland.

The footage, captured by researchers from the Museum of Natural History in Paris and the Uganda Wildlife Authority, shows the chimps adapting to human pressure on their habitat. The team says this is the first record of “frequent and risky” nocturnal raids to find food.

It is **published in the journal Plos One**.

The researchers carried out their study in Kibale National Park in Uganda, setting up their camera traps on the edge of the park.

“[It’s] surrounded on the outside by smallholder farms, forest fragments and tea estates,” the researchers said in their paper. They think that humans encroaching on chimp habitats may have “promoted” the animals’ foraging trips into cropland. But the scientists were still surprised by how daring the chimps’ raids were.

Major threats to wild chimps

- **Habitat destruction** by “slash-and-burn agriculture”. Deforestation across West and Central Africa has severely reduced chimpanzee habitats. It is estimated that more than 80% of the region’s original forest cover has been lost;
- **Logging, oil and gas mining** also pose a threat, especially through road building to access remote areas. This can degrade and fragment chimp habitats;
- **Poaching**: Low population densities and slow reproductive rates mean that hunting can quickly wipe out local populations. Chimps are hunted for meat, the pet trade and even medicinal purposes. Farmers may also try to protect their crops and livelihoods by setting traps for animals that raid their land;
- **Disease** is a leading cause of death in chimpanzees. Because chimps are so similar to humans, they succumb to many diseases that afflict humans. And as the number of encounters between chimpanzees and humans increase, this increases the risk of transmission of diseases including common human respiratory infections.

Groups of about eight chimpanzees took part in each raid; these groups included vulnerable animals, such as females with clinging infants. They would raid during the day as well, but during night-time raids the chimps stayed longer in the maize



It’s natural for animals to seek food elsewhere when sources run dry. Venturing into corn fields is one way chimpanzees are adapting today.

[Photo : USAID Africa Bureau]

fields. They also showed fewer signs of vigilance and anxiety, such as looking around or scratching themselves roughly - a recognised signal of stress.

Dr Catherine Hobaiter, an expert in chimp behaviour from the University of St Andrews, said the observations were fascinating. Habitat loss, she explained, was a much greater threat for the chimpanzees than natural predators.

“It forces chimps to explore new food sources, like human crops,” she told BBC News.

“Raiding fields is extremely dangerous - chimps may be attacked or even killed by people defending their crops, but by raiding at night [these chimps] seem to have reduced this threat.”

Despite how adaptable the chimps have shown themselves to be, Dr Hobaiter says the behaviour is also worrying.

“Such a dramatic change suggests the chimpanzees are responding to a very strong pressure to obtain the basic foods they need to survive - a response to the widespread destruction of their natural forest home.

“While it might be working for now, this won’t be a long-term solution.

“As local people become aware of these nocturnal raids they may try to defend their fields in the dark, and the risks of conflicts escalating and injury to both chimps and people is likely to increase,” she said.

“From a conservation perspective, the only long-term solution is the protection of the remaining forests.” - **BBC.** ■

Uganda to Build Low-Cost, Affordable Houses

"If we had many such big and well supported institutions we could have our people get comfortable accommodation affordably and without a hassle," Prime Minister Ruhakana Rugunda said when meeting officials of the company.

Uganda is expected to kick off a project to build low-cost houses early next year in various places in the country to benefit local people, according to the Office of the Prime Minister. The project will be implemented by Kenya-based Shelter Afrique (SAf) with the cooperation of the Ugandan government, backed by the African Development Bank and Africa Reinsurance Company, the Office said in a statement recently...

Under the proposed five-year project, 4,000 housing units and a number of schools, health centres and waste management facilities will be constructed on land owned by the Uganda Land Commission and the private sector.

At least 20,000 Ugandans will benefit from the 200 million U.S. dollars housing project.

SAf, also known as Company for Habitat and Housing in Africa, was a Pan-African

finance institution which was founded in 1982 to exclusively support the development of affordable housing and real estate sector in Africa.

The major shareholders of Shelter Afrique include 44 African governments as well as the African Development Bank.

"If we had many such big and well supported institutions we could have our people get comfortable accommodation affordably and without a hassle," Prime Minister Ruhakana Rugunda said when meeting officials of the company.

SAf Chief Executive Officer James Mugerwa said they have undertaken similar projects in Rwanda and Kenya. ■



Residential homes on the outskirts of Kampala City, Uganda
[Photo: www.uganduh.blogspot.com]

Why More Global Airlines are Flying to Tanzania

By Our correspondent in Tanzania

Since last year, when Tanzania was named as one of the world's most sought after destinations for leisure travellers, and is blessed with numerous national and international tourist attractions including Mt. Kilimanjaro, the wildlife-rich national parks of the Serengeti, and the spice island of Zanzibar, the aviation industry has continued to attract more key players, creating a favourable platform for growth of the tourism sector and its contribution to the economy.

It must be remembered that Tanzania is a country renowned for its natural beauty and its extraordinary wildlife. Dar es Salaam is Tanzania's economic hub and offers a picturesque seaport and a wealth of cultural and historic attractions. Known as the Spice Island, Zanzibar is encapsulated by white sandy beaches and is bursting with culture, history and endemic wildlife. In addition, the snow-capped peaks of Mount Kilimanjaro welcome tourists for hiking and skiing all year round.

Moreover, Tanzania has the second largest economy in East Africa, and Dar es Salaam provides a strategic gateway for the transportation of goods and commerce to the surrounding six land-locked countries of Zambia, Malawi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi.

Tourism to a large extent depends on active aviation industry and in many countries it drives up economic development and job creation. The sector is currently the top foreign exchange earner after overtaking gold exports which suffered global price decline and reduced output. Statistics from the Bank of Tanzania (BoT) show that earnings from tourism climbed to 1.97 billion US dollars in the year ended June 2014 compared to 1.757 billion US dollars of the previous period.

Tanzania is a regional hub for tourism in East Africa and in 2013 the country welcomed over



An Air Tanzania plane taking off [Photo: Ralph T. Schulz]

1 million tourists. According to the Tanzania Tourism Board (TTB), this figure looks set with to double with 2 million tourists forecast by 2017.

Some of the global airlines flying to Dar es Salaam and Kilimanjaro International Airports include the Turkish airlines, Qatar Airways, KLM Royal Dutch airlines, Edelweiss Air, Condo Air, Emirates and Ethiopian Airlines.

Active tourism and effective marketing strategies coupled with the rehabilitation and maintenance project at the airports attracted international flights to some new destinations while local network is expanding.. Recently Air Seychelles launched direct flights between Dar es Salaam and Victoria, which is once again an important

milestone in increasing connectivity amongst the people of the two countries.

The entrance of Fastjet into domestic aviation market boosted competition in the local travel industry, but older players namely Precision Air and Air Tanzania Company Ltd (ATCL) continued with their active operations.

Fastjet began commercial flight operations on 29 November 2012, flying passengers from Dar es Salaam to Kilimanjaro and Mwanza in Tanzania on its A319 aircraft. Since then, the airline has expanded its network with the introduction of its third domestic route to Mbeya in Tanzania. The international route network now includes flights from Dar es Salaam to Johannesburg in South

Tanzania has the second largest economy in East Africa, and Dar es Salaam provides a strategic gateway for the transportation of goods and commerce to the surrounding six land-locked countries of Zambia, Malawi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi.

Africa, Lusaka in Zambia, Harare in Zimbabwe and Entebbe in Uganda.

Fastjet continues to expand across the African continent with the airline recently announcing that its new operation - fastjet Zambia - has received an Air Service Permit (ASP) from the authorities in that country. It has also announced that fastjet Tanzania has received permission from the Uganda Civil Aviation Authority to operate flights from Uganda to Juba, Nairobi, Kigali and Johannesburg under Fifth Freedom Rights.

"Affordable air travel is key to the growth of economies across Africa - particularly in the business and tourism sectors," says Mr Jimmy Kibati, fastjet's General Manager East Africa, who also observed, "Even if there are existing airlines connecting two cities, the flights typically involve at least one stopover. Furthermore, the exorbitant fares charged by airlines on these routes exclude the majority of citizens from enjoying the convenience and time-saving benefits of airline travel." Mr Kibati said that with its low-cost fares, Fastjet believes it is making air travel more accessible to even more Africans.

"There are more than one billion people on the African continent, which is home to just three per cent of the world's aviation business, and the continent remains in desperate need of improved and affordable aviation connectivity," Mr Kibati says.

Supporting this belief is the research undertaken by the airline shortly after its launch, which showed that 38 per cent of its passengers were first time flyers who would otherwise not have been able to afford to travel by air.

"In spite of major regulatory challenges that we encountered as we rolled out our international route expansion, the encouragement that we have received from the Tanzanian government has been remarkable - for which we are extremely grateful," says Kibati. He said that this makes them very positive about the future, combined with their view that economic growth in Tanzania will continue, driven by an emergent middle class, increasing levels of discretionary income, significant growth in entrepreneurship and substantial infrastructure investment.

"There are more than one billion people on the African continent, which is home to just three per cent of the world's aviation business, and the continent remains in desperate need of improved and affordable aviation connectivity,"
Mr. Kibati, General Manager - Fastjet (EA)

Mr Kibati cited that on the importance of having the airlines hub in Tanzania's commercial capital saying that Dar es Salaam would continue to grow as a major African and global industrial

and trade hub, driven by its position as a gateway to East Africa, the development of offshore oil and gas reserves and substantial infrastructure investment.

Recently, the Dubai-based flydubai announced the launch of flights to Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar and Kilimanjaro in Tanzania and Etihad Airways' the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, will expand its African route network with the launch of a daily service to Dar es Salaam, the largest city in Tanzania.

Meanwhile, South African Airways (SAA) has now plans for direct flights to Mwanza and Mbeya from Johannesburg as the airline seeks to gain a foothold in the lucrative East African aviation industry.

The SAA Regional General Manager for Africa and Middle, Aaron Munetsi said in Dar es Salaam last month that the airline had plans for the two routes in Tanzania as their operations in the country have been a success story. "In two decades we have increased our flights from Johannesburg to Dar es Salaam from two in a week to 14. Our future plans includes direct flights from Johannesburg to Mbeya and Mwanza," he said at a ceremony to award its clients and stakeholders in the country. The airline was celebrating its twenty years of operations in Tanzania, its 80th Anniversary and 20 years of frequent flyer programme. He said the airline was strategically eyeing Tanzania to grow to next level its aviation business in East Africa and had pegged its growth in the country on continued peace, stability, economic growth and rosy bilateral relations between Tanzania and South Africa. ■

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"These are now citizens and our constitution provides that a citizen has the right to live anywhere in the country,"

Mathias Chikawe, Tanzania's Home Affairs Minister

Burundian refugees who are now naturalized Tanzanians. [Photo: Reuters]

Tanzania's New Citizens to Get Land, Voting Rights

Over 162,000 former Burundian refugees, who were recently granted Tanzanian citizenship after living in the country for over four decades, will now be able to buy and own land and vote, said a senior government official.

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has hailed the move. Most of the former refugees have been living in camps in the western Tanzania regions of Tabora and Katavi since 1972.

"These are now citizens and our constitution provides that a citizen has the right to live anywhere in the country," Mathias Chikawe, Tanzania's home affairs minister, told IRIN. Those of their children born in the country will also be allowed to become citizens.



The 39th World Congress of Africa Travel Association (ATA) in Kampala, Uganda



Ugandan President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni delivering his Keynote speech during the 39th World Congress of Africa Travel Association (ATA) in Kampala, Uganda.



Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism Hon. Lazaro Nyalandu (right) addressing the participants during the 39th World Congress of Africa Travel Association (ATA) in Kampala, Uganda. With him is the Executive Director of ATA Edward Bergman.



Tanzanian delegation standing during the playing of the Ugandan National Anthem. From right is Dr. Ladislaus Komba, Tanzanian Ambassador in Uganda; Hon. Grace Kiwelu (MP), MP Committee on Lands, Natural Resources and Environment; Hon. James Lembeli, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Lands, Natural Resources and Environment and Ibrahim Mussa, Director of Tourism and Marketing from Tanzania National Parks.



Part of the Tanzanian delegation



Ugandan President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni shaking hands with the Tanzanian Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism Hon. Lazaro Nyalandu after the official opening of the 39th World Congress of Africa Travel Association (ATA) in Kampala, Uganda.

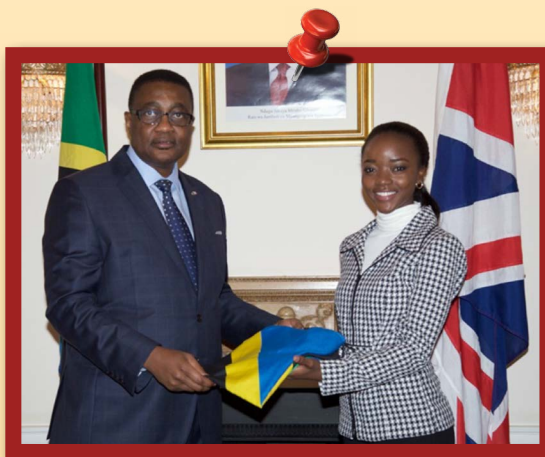
[Photo Credit TANAPA]

Tanzania Tourism Board (TTB) Strengthens its Relationship with the UK Sunderland Football Club



[Photo Credit: TTB]

Miss Tanzania in UK for the Miss World Beauty Event



Miss Tanzania receives
the Tanzania Flag from
the Tanzanian High
Commission in UK - H.E.
Peter Kallaghe.



Miss Tanzania meets the
Director of New Deal
Africa - Mr. Ayoub Mzee
at the Tanzania High
Commission - UK.

Miss Tanzania Meets
the Publisher of
this magazine - Mr.
Deo. Kamuhanda at
the Tanzania High
Commission - UK



[Photo Credit: Rashid Dilunga]



Maasai children herd their sheep and goats around their boma as a group of volunteers collaborate to build a Living Wall. The Living Wall, an idea conceived by the Maasai people, works to reduce human-wildlife conflict by effectively protecting the Maasai livestock from predators . [Photo: Charlotte Thorson]

UNDP Teams Up With Tanzania Researchers in Addressing Human-Wildlife Conflicts

"...and when carnivores like lions, hyenas and leopards jump over the fencing into Maasai kraals at dusk, attacking and stealing livestock therein, the Maasai would later retaliate by setting out with weapons to hunt down those wildlife species," said Longido District Commissioner James Ole Millia

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has teamed up with Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute (TAWIRI) in executing a special project which is aimed at reducing wild carnivores' attacks on livestock in northern part of the country.

Simon Mduma, director general of TAWIRI, said recently that the project is reinforcing the Maasai kraals against the ferocious beasts that have been attacking people and livestock in Longido district.

"While communities lose cattle, goats and sheep during droughts, livestock predation is also a serious problem in Maasai-range lands, causing significant economic losses to the people who already suffer negative impacts of climate change," Mduma said.

Between 2009 and 2010, Longido District lost 166,582 cattle, 229,622 goats, 88,194 sheep



← and 14,600 donkeys due to drought which affected the northern zone within that period. The famine also hit wildlife with herbivores succumbing to annihilation or migration due to depleted grassland, while the carnivores turned into attacking domesticated livestock.

Longido District Commissioner James Ole Millia said for many years the Maasai have been living in harmony with wildlife, sharing grazing lands and water holes with the nomadic people's livestock. He however linked climate change as among the key factors that led to diminished resources which means people, livestock and wildlife are compelled to scramble for whatever is available.

"..and when carnivores like lions, hyenas and leopards jump over the fencing into Maasai kraals at dusk, attacking and stealing livestock therein, the Maasai would later retaliate by setting out with weapons to hunt down those wildlife species," he said.

"Among the major impacts of climate change is its influence on human-wildlife-livestock interface where the three parties get adversely affected while the surrounding environment somehow also gets to suffer the

consequences," said Maurus Msuha, one of the researchers at TAWIRI.

UNDP through TAWIRI has hatched a novel approach for reducing livestock attacks in Maasai land under the new project known as "Adaptation to Climate Change through Improvement of Livestock Management Practices and Managing Human-Wildlife Conflict to Reduce Deforestation and Predator Attacks in Longido District."

The Maasai bomas are now being rebuilt using acacia logs and wire meshed fencing to inhibit penetration of large and small predators into the enclosures, ensuring safe passage through the night for livestock.

Since the fencing will now be permanent, forests and other natural bushes will be saved from harvest because old hedges had to be frequently replaced which called for regularly cutting down of bushes and trees to renew the traditional hedges.

Carnivores like lions, leopards have been falling onto the sharp ends of Maasai spears when they attack cattle and goats in their whole-meat menus when other wild herbivores become scarce. ■

From Pg. 13

"The [Tanzanian] government will also start the naturalization process for many of their children benefiting some 200,000 people overall," said UNHCR, noting that "this is the first time in UNHCR's history that naturalization is offered as a solution to such a large group of refugees in a country of first asylum."

"Those to be granted citizenship are refugees who have stayed in Tanzania since 1972 and [who] have voluntarily opted to stay in the country," added Chikawe, noting that about 10,000 Burundian refugees had not applied for citizenship. "These are maintaining their refugee status and could be repatriated to their home country," he explained.

Emphasizing that the new citizens will enjoy all citizenship rights including land ownership, free movement and participation in political activities, Chikawe said, however, that they would not be eligible to run for the presidency "because that right is reserved for those who are Tanzanian citizens by birth."

Tanzania's President Jakaya Kikwete began the refugees' naturalization process on 14 October during an event to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the death of the country's first

president, Julius Nyerere. "They have been in the country for a long time and some don't know where to go if asked to go back to Burundi," said Kikwete.

Many Burundians fled their country following a genocide in 1972, while many more left during the 1993-2005 civil war.

While many Burundians have returned home from Tanzania since 2002, others remained behind, with the host government in 2008 offering either to grant them citizenship or repatriate them.

Mixed feelings

According to Chikawe, former Burundian refugee settlements will now be converted into villages to accommodate the new citizens though some may decide to live elsewhere in the country.

"We hope they will obey the law and abandon hostile tribal relations in their home countries. We are also worried [about] increased cases of crime. There are stories that some refugees still maintain contacts with relatives in Burundi and bring firearms to the camps"

This is, however, raising concerns among some Tanzanians. "These villages will mean a single tribe - all Hutu - will appear as islands or another nation within a nation," said Beatus Chambala,

a resident of the area of Mpanda. Most of the Burundians who fled the country in 1972 were Hutu.

Dar es Salaam resident Hassan Lesso said: "We hope they will obey the law and abandon hostile tribal relations in their home countries. We are also worried [about] increased cases of crime. There are stories that some refugees still maintain contacts with relatives in Burundi and bring firearms to the camps."

Minister Chikawe told IRIN that the Home Affairs Ministry could revoke the citizenship of former refugees implicated in crimes such as murder or treason. "We have powers to deal with them and kick them out of the country," he said.

A senior political science lecturer at the University of Dar es Salaam, Benson Bana, welcomed the move, saying: "It was a reflection of the Tanzania's domestic policy of peace, tranquillity, national unity and concord which extends to foreign policy as well."

Tanzania previously naturalized 32,000 Rwandan refugees in 1982. In February, it concluded the naturalization of some 3,000 Somali Bantu refugees (ethnic Wazigua from Tanzania) who had fled Somalia in 1991, after civil war broke out, according to UNHCR. - IRIN ■

In Burundi, UN Envoy Lauds Role of Women, Youths in Bringing Peace to Great Lakes

Women and young people must play a central role in establishing a long-term peace for Africa's Great Lakes Region amid the area's renewed efforts to overcome a past scarred by conflict, a top UN official said recently.

Following his visit to Burundi, where he met with the country's President, Pierre Nkurunziza, as well as key political figures and other civil society stakeholders, Said Djinnit, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, expressed his commitment to ensuring a regional peace through the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, and by working with its 13 signatories.

Established on 24 February 2013, the PSC Framework is a diplomatic push aimed at ending the recurring cycles of conflict and violence that have regularly afflicted the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the wider Great Lakes region for the past 17 years. 13 African countries have signed the Framework which is seen as an avenue of hope for the region's people to build stability by addressing the root causes of the conflict and fostering trust between neighbours.

As part of his mandate, one of Mr. Djinnit's responsibilities is to draw attention to the insecurity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where fighting and a decrease in financial resources is causing millions of people to go hungry.

Described as a "hallmark" agreement by the Special Envoy's office, the Framework calls on signatories to respect the sovereignty of neighbouring countries in terms of international affairs and territorial integrity; to neither tolerate nor provide assistance to armed groups; to strengthen regional cooperation, including economic integration and judicial cooperation; and, to neither harbour nor provide protection to any person accused of war crimes or crimes against humanity.

In Burundi, Mr. Djinnit also met with leaders of both the country's ruling political party, the National Council for the Defence of Democracy - Forces for the Defence of Democracy, and of the opposition coalition, whom he urged "to work toward opening the political space and promoting inclusiveness." He added that such an approach would be "the best way to achieve lasting stability," according to a press release.

At the same time, in a meeting with a cross-section of Burundian women groups, the Special Envoy informed them of the establishment of a Great Lakes coalition of civil society actors to develop and coordinate a regional approach for the monitoring and evaluation of the Framework's implementation. Moreover, he reassured them of his intention to support the enhancement of initiatives targeting women and youths while stressing "the centrality of the role for women and youths" in the Framework. - **UN** ■

Barthi Airtel Rwanda Launches Cross-Border Mobile Money in East Africa

With growing competition in mobile banking in the telecoms sector in Rwanda, Barthi Airtel, an India mobile operator, has launched a cross-border mobile money transactions within the East African region, to beef up its position as a leading telecoms.

In a statement issued recently, Barthi Airtel said that it is especially looking to harmonize the mobile money platforms to allow its subscribers to send money across the border within five member countries of the East African Community (EAC)

Mobile money -- the use of cell phones for money transfers, payments and more sophisticated financial activities such as credit, savings, and insurance -- is increasingly popular in East Africa.

Telecoms experts note that Mobile banking is another milestone in achieving a cash-lite economy, where sending and receiving money through the mobile phone is more flexible, convenient, and faster than using cash. Experts believe that the shift to cross-border transactions by telecoms will help boost their revenues that have been facing low returns in voice revenues and fragile data that is yet to be conquered by the low cost internet usage.

Expected to be implemented soon, the Barthi Airtel's cross-border mobile money will come as a new tool for the leading giant to shove off the competition from its rival MTN-Rwanda and Tigo Rwanda which launched the same product with their sister company in the East African region

It is said that the India's leading mobile operator has already received a great response from customers, including customers with family ties between Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi, as well as businessmen doing cross-border trade.

"This is the result of deep understanding of consumer needs combined with an innovative portfolio of products including money transfers, payments, airtime reloads, cross-border transfers and bank integration," the statement said.

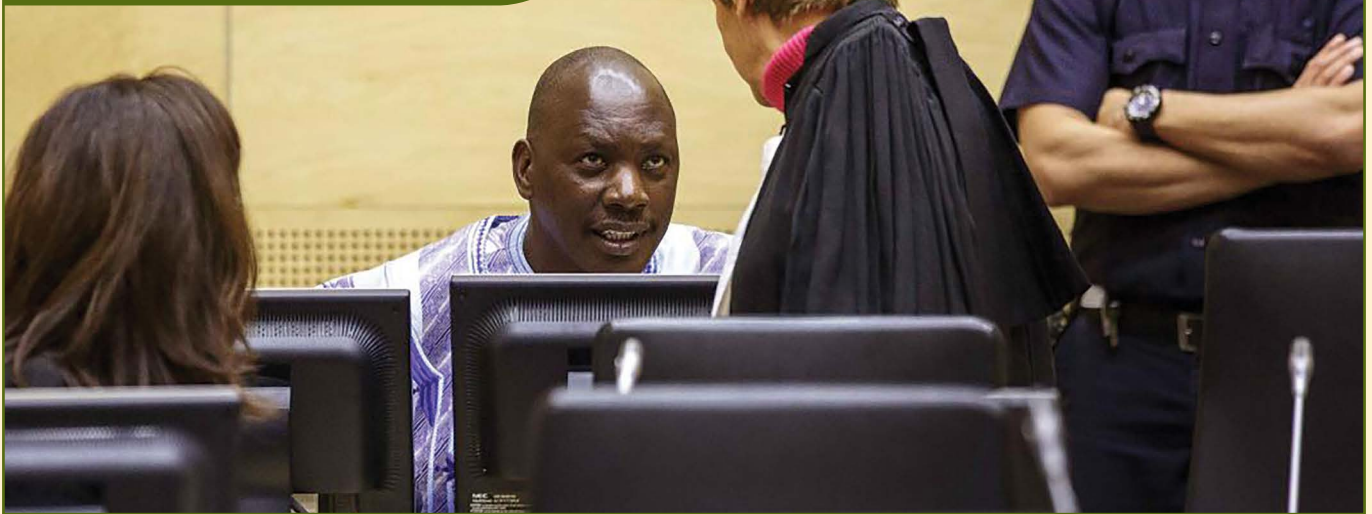
In March 2012, Barthi Airtel launched its operation in Rwanda in a move to expand its footprint on the African continent to 17 countries. Ericsson, the world's leading provider of services and technology to telecom operators, was selected to manage the network from end-to-end, including OSS/BSS solutions and managed services.

Airtel has also partnered with IBM in a move that will enable the telecom to offer superior customer experience in Rwanda.

Rwanda is among the fastest growing telecom markets in Africa and, according to the National Statistics Institute of Rwanda, mobile penetration in the country was at 62 percent as of August 2013. ■

ICC Rejects Congolese Warlord Thomas Lubanga's Appeal

Thomas Lubanga in his first appeal judgment in The Hague, where the International Criminal Court upheld his sentence of 14 years in prison on Monday 1 December 2014. [Photo: REUTERS/Michael Kooren]



The International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague has rejected an appeal by the Congolese militia leader, Thomas Lubanga, against his conviction for using child soldiers.

Prosecutors said boys as young as 11 had been abducted to fight in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo that started in 1999. Girls were used as sex slaves, the trial heard.

In 2012, Lubanga became the first person to be convicted by the ICC.

He had been the leader of the Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC), an ethnic Hema militia which was active in the war that started in the Ituri region in north-eastern DR Congo.

'Deterrent'

During his trial, the court heard how the influential leader would go to people's homes

asking them to donate something for the war effort - cash, a cow, or a child to fight for his rebel army.

The ICC convicted him of recruiting children under the age of 15 and sending them to the battlefield. He was sentenced to 14 years in prison. The five-judge panel dismissed or rejected all seven parts of Lubanga's appeal in a majority decision.

"The trial chamber's assessment of the facts was reasonable," said presiding judge Erkki Koroula. The court also rejected Lubanga's appeal against the length of his sentence.

Thomas Lubanga

- Leader of the Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC), an ethnic Hema militia
- Head of the UPC's military wing, the Patriotic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (FPLC)
- Accused of recruiting children under the age of 15 as soldiers
- Arrested in Kinshasa in March 2005
- Held by the ICC at The Hague since 2006
- Born in 1960, has a degree in psychology

A BBC correspondent at the court, Anna Holligan, said the ICC hopes the guilty verdict will act as a deterrent to other military leaders who use children to fight their battles.

The eight years Lubanga has spent in jail will count towards his sentence. This means he could become eligible for early release as soon as next year, when he will have served two-thirds of the term.

The military wing of the UPC, the Patriotic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (FPLC), was one of six militias which fought for control of gold-rich Ituri until 2003. The conflict began as a local struggle for control of land and resources, and escalated as arms proliferated and members of the Ugandan army became involved.

The dispute became a battle between the Hema and Lendu communities, in which an estimated 50,000 people died and hundreds of thousands were made homeless. - **BBC** ■

Somali President says Relationship with China “Has Never Been Cut”



Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud

Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud recently praised the bilateral relations between Somalia and China as long and historical and has never been severed since diplomatic relations between the two nations was established.

In an exclusive interview with Xinhua in Mogadishu, the Somali leader said that ties with China “has always been there” and that it was the insecurity that had prevented Chinese diplomats from operating in Somalia.

“China and Somalia had a very long relationship and a very historical and ancient one. And in modern times Somalia and China are friendly countries,” said the Somali leader who spoke with Xinhua journalists shortly after he returned to Mogadishu following tours to regions retaken from the militant Al-Shabaab group. The Chinese government has been providing humanitarian support for Somalia since the collapse of the central government back in 1991, he said.

The president said Chinese Embassy in Somalia had been closed for more than 20 years, but its recent reopening and the appointment of the new ambassador will further strengthen the bilateral relationship of Somalia and China.

The Somali President said the security situation in Somalia has changed for the better and that the country is now conducive for foreign investment by Chinese and international companies.

Somali government forces backed by African Union peacekeeping forces have launched a major offensive to retake key towns that remained under Al-Shabaab control. At least seven major towns were recaptured since September when the new onslaught was launched.

“I would not say the security is perfect but in the two years the security has improved considerably and now it is improving further” the Somali President told Xinhua.

The Somali leader said the end of Al-Shabaab terrorism is coming closer and that his government will defeat the group “as a military force” before the end of year as its fighters are on the run in the face of Somali government forces and AU troops in many parts of the horn of Africa country.

He said there are now no regions that are under Al-Shabaab control, though there are few rural districts under the militant group’s rule which will soon be brought under government authority.

Rival Leaders Accept 'Responsibility' for Civil War

South Sudan President Salva Kiir and rebel leader Riek Machar said recently that they accepted mutual responsibility for a 10-month civil war in which thousands were killed, AFP reported.

"The parties acknowledge a collective responsibility for the crisis in South Sudan that has taken a great toll on the lives and property of our people," said the deal signed by Kiir and his sacked former deputy Machar.

The talks in Arusha followed an invitation from Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete, who also had met separately with both leaders. It was the first time the bitter rivals had met since signing a ceasefire agreement in August in Ethiopia, which like three previous agreements swiftly collapsed.

Political and military leaders have repeatedly broken promises made under international pressure, including visits to South Sudan by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and US Secretary of State John Kerry.

This time the two South Sudanese leaders said the now divided ruling party, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), should be reunited. The SPLM brought the country independence after a long war with Khartoum.

"A divided SPLM will automatically fragment the country along ethnic and regional fault lines," the deal said, calling for "genuine and honest dialogue that puts the interest of the people and the nation above all".

Kiir vowed commitment to "the peaceful resolution of the crisis" in the impoverished but oil rich nation, which is three years old yet riven by war.

"There is no reason for our people to suffer again after independence," he said. Machar also said he wanted this deal to last.

"We do not want this opportunity to go away like other opportunities before," he said. "We shall do our utmost to see that this process can be completed."

A third SPLM faction -- senior leaders imprisoned for months after war broke out in December, but also not allied to Machar -- signed the same deal to unite the party. - **Sabahi**. ■



South Sudan's rebel leader Riek Machar (R) and South Sudan's President Salva Kiir (L) exchange signed peace agreement documents in Addis Ababa Reuters

From Pg. 20

The Somali President however admitted that "cleaning up" Al-Shabaab from Somalia all together will take time as the fighting melt into civilians once they are defeated militarily in order to regroup and relaunch guerrilla-style attacks on government targets.

Since security is improving in much of Somalia, President Hassan said the country is open for business and called on Chinese companies and entrepreneurs to invest in Somalia where he said there is a lot of opportunities for investment. He said now is the right time that foreign investors including Chinese companies should come to Somalia and invest in various sectors of the economy.

"Today Somalia is a place that can be invested. There are a lot of opportunities. This is a very rich country in terms of maritime resources, in terms of agricultural resources, in terms of livestock, and in terms of very vibrant people who are entrepreneurs and business-minded," the Somali leader explained.

He said as the country is emerging from years of conflict his government would give priority to companies that come to Somali and invest early.

"We will give priority to those who pioneer to invest now in Somalia than those who come after five years from now. Those first comers are the real partners for us," President Hassan said.

Somali President told Xinhua that foreign private companies have already started investing in the country's sea and airports as two Turkish companies are in joint venture with the Somali government. He said Somalia hopes China will take a bigger role in investment on key infrastructures and rehabilitation of previously implemented Chinese infrastructure projects including the national theater, the hospital and university in Mogadishu. ■

President Mutharika Urges Private Sector to Make Local Investments from Proceeds

By Ida Kazembe

President Professor Peter Mutharika has urged players in the private sector to make huge local investments with proceeds from their businesses as a way of helping government to develop the country.

President Mutharika made the call recently during the official opening of Hard to Defeat (HTD)-Abdul Majid Motor City at Ginnery corner in Blantyre.

“Don’t take money outside, use it to develop Malawi as HTD has done by coming up with this magnificent structure without acquiring a loan but rather using business proceeds,” said Mutharika.

The president then commended the Abdul Majid Aboobakar family which owns HTD for showing

a sense of patriotism by investing in a building which he noted, had transformed the face of Blantyre.

“I call on all those wishing to contribute to the infrastructure development of this country to ensure high quality and energy efficiency buildings of international standard,” added Mutharika.

The president also called for Public Private Partnership-PPP on government’s community colleges to enable production of highly skilled youths who would provide efficient labour force.

President Mutharika then assured the private sector of government’s support in creating an enabling environment for easy establishment, growth and expansion of local and foreign investments.

Speaking earlier, Minister of Trade and Industry Joseph Mwanamveka said government had stepped up efforts aimed at encouraging growth of the private sector.

Said Mwanamveka: “As Government, we understand that the private sector is the engine and driving force for every economy as such we are committed to create a conducive investment in the country.”

HTD Limited Director Modecai Msiska commended Government for creating a conducive environment for the private sector in the country.

“HTD realises that as a private company we cannot operate effectively in the absence of befitting environment that government can create to enable companies to thrive,” said Msiska.

“Malawi is lucky to have a president who understands that a nation needs a thriving private sector to assist in revenue generation as well as job creation and for the private sector this is the time to invest,” said Msiska.

Msiska also revealed the company’s plans to build similar structures in Lilongwe and Mzuzu.

HTD is a car Dealer Company incorporated in 1993. By 2013, the company owned 8 percent of market shares in the Malawi motor vehicle sales. The company also owns two fully fledged branches in Blantyre and Lilongwe plus a service centre in Mzuzu.

Recently, the Government of Malawi established a One Stop Centre at the Malawi Investment and Trade Centre-MITC in Lilongwe aimed at ensuring that many foreign conglomerates establish companies in the country.

Established on September 1 this year the centre will help reduce the cost and time of establishing businesses as all registration activities will be done under one roof. - **MANA** ■



President Professor Peter Mutharika [Photo: Malawi Voice]

IMF Praises Economic Performance, Warns of Risks

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) considers that Mozambique's economic performance remains robust, with a projected growth in GDP this year of 7.5 per cent, but warns of the risks posed by the decline in the prices of key commodities which Mozambique exports, such as coal and natural gas.

At a Maputo press conference recently, Doris Ross, the head of an IMF technical team that had been in the country since 22 October, said the IMF and the Mozambican authorities were agreed on the need to maintain efforts to improve the collection of revenue and to slow down the growth in public expenditure, particularly the wages bill.

Reiterating a statement issued the previous day, Ross said that GDP growth was the result of "strong activity in all sectors, especially extractive industries, construction, transport and communication, commerce and financial services".

Despite the current low commodity prices, the IMF was optimistic that the Mozambican natural resource boom will bring in enormous revenues in the years to come - provided the government can provide the necessary institutional framework.

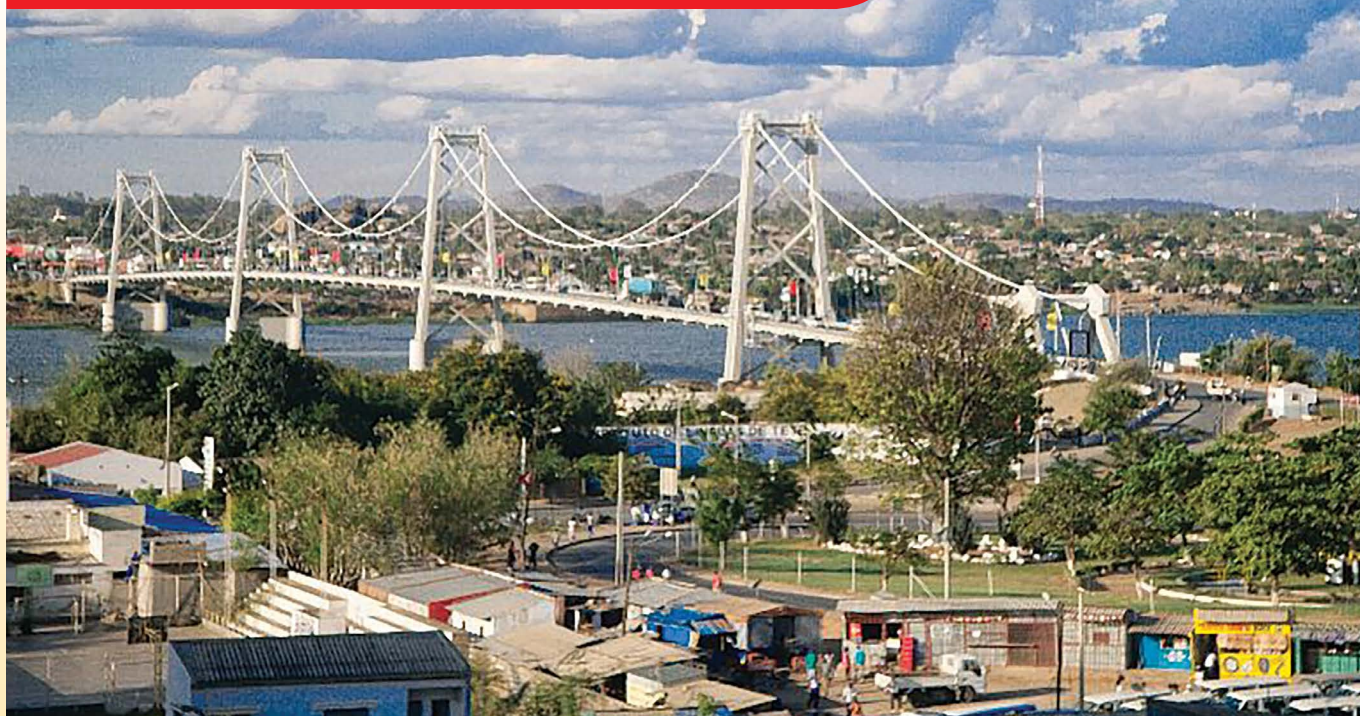
"While substantial natural resource revenues are 6-10 years away, efforts are needed to put in place adequate institutional arrangements and capacity to address the large new challenges associated with this sector and the promise it holds for the country", she said.

Ross praised the government for keeping inflation low. Average inflation over the year stood at 1.4 per cent in September and Ross expected it not to exceed three per cent by the end of the year, well below the government's ceiling of six per cent.

However, the external current account deficit remained large "due to imports for big



The Samora Machel Bridge on the Zambezi River in Tete city, central Mozambique. The bridge is one of the two major highway bridges across the Zambezi River, linking northern and southern provinces of the country. [Photo: Xinhua Photo - Mauro Vombe]



From Pg. 23

investment projects financed by foreign direct investment”, she added.

She claimed agreement with the authorities on the need not only to slow down public spending but to increase its efficiency “in order to preserve debt sustainability in the medium term”.

The IMF is no longer proposing massive cuts in social services, as it used to in the past.

Instead Ross said “while the 2015 budget should begin to narrow the fiscal deficit, this should be achieved in a manner that protects social spending such as basic health and education, and social assistance programs”.

Strengthened management of public resources, she added, would involve disclosing the audited annual reports of the largest publicly owned companies - including EMATUM (Mozambican Tuna Company).

EMATUM is singled out for mention because it could add very significantly to the public debt.

EMATUM financed the purchase of 30 fishing vessels and patrol boats by issuing bonds on the Eurobond market in 2013. The bond issue was initially for 500 million US dollars, but it was oversubscribed and EMATUM ended up issuing bonds for 850 million dollars. The government has guaranteed the bonds which will have a final yield of 8.5 per cent.

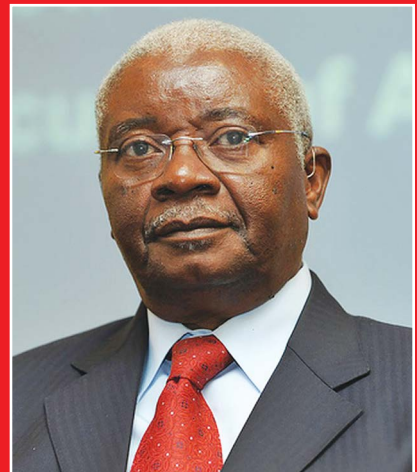
The government expects to pay off the bondholders out of profits from tuna fishing, but if anything goes wrong, the public debt will soar.

Ross praised the Bank of Mozambique, saying that its “commitment to keep money growth in check is welcome and will help to moderate the recent rapid pace of credit expansion to more prudent levels”.

“Real interest rates in Mozambique are still high by international standards, and reforms should address the underlying structural factors to make financial markets more flexible, and thus reduce borrowing costs”, she added. These remarks simply ignore the extortionate nature of Mozambique’s commercial banks, which continue to charge their clients interest rates which are often more than twice as high as the central bank’s own reference rates. - AIM ■

Successes were Collective, Says Guebuza

Mozambican President Armando Guebuza (right) recently declared that the successes enjoyed during his two terms of office were the result of team work between all members of the government. He was speaking at a dinner offered in his honour by members of the government, as he nears the end of his tenth year in office.



Prime Minister Alberto Vaquina told Guebuza “with you we learnt to work selflessly in building an ever better Mozambique, a country that redeems its patriotic values, engaged in looking for solutions to a sustainable economy, guided towards the creation of better living conditions for Mozambicans”.

“We take inspiration from you”, Vaquina said, “and in you we find the light, the guide whose vision does not only allow us to see further, but also shows us that we are Mozambicans who should embrace the path of well-being and prosperity”.

But Guebuza insisted that he had not worked alone, but as a member of a collective.

“For me, it was an enormous pleasure to lead this team over two terms of office”, he said.

He believed that, over the past decade, “through our collective work we have strengthened national unity, we have raised the self-esteem of the Mozambican people, reducing substantially the attitude of holding out our hands and waiting for help”.

The work of the governments he had led, he continued, had awakened the spirit of enterprise in each Mozambican. “Today we see a flurry of activity by many of our fellow countrymen”, he declared. “Together with the assistance of our development partners, they have converted this pearl of the Indian Ocean into a beehive from which has emerged Comrade Nyusi, the winner of the 15 October elections”.

Former defence minister Filipe Nyusi was the presidential candidate of the ruling Frelimo Party, and, according to the figures released by the National Elections Commission (CNE), he won with 57 per cent of the vote.

“We have built many social and economic infrastructures”, said Guebuza. “We have attracted a great deal of foreign and domestic investment, public and private, in a wide variety of areas. We have raised the prestige of our beloved motherland. Let each of us be proud of the contributions made so that our country could be what it is today”. - AIM ■

Moody's Says Zambia's Economy to Remain Strong

An international rating agency has projected that Zambia's real economic growth will remain strong next year because of the government's robust fiscal strength, a statement obtained by Xinhua recently said.

Moody's Investors Service announced in its latest annual Credit Analysis report that Zambia's real economic growth will rise above seven percent in 2015, slightly higher than the government's estimate for 2014 of more than 6.5 percent.

The rating agency said strong economic growth and robust government fiscal strength have continued to support the country's stable credit profile but warned that the small size and relatively undiversified nature of its economy exposes the country to adverse conditions in the agriculture sector and volatility in global copper prices.

The rating agency's report is an update to the markets and does not constitute a rating action, according to the statement.

"Zambia's economy continues to register robust growth rates, averaging 7.8% per annum in real terms since 2005. We expect that economic growth will remain at around the same level in the coming years, supported by the development of infrastructure projects," Matt Robinson, senior credit officer at Moody's said in the statement.

"The government's fiscal position is also strong, though deficits have increased and high dependence on a single export commodity, copper, leaves Zambia exposed to adverse price movements," he added.

The rating agency further said the country's increasingly noisy political scene ahead of a presidential election next January presents

rising risk to policy predictability, the investment climate and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

With nominal gross domestic product (GDP) estimated at 26.3 billion U.S. dollars in 2014, Zambia's economy is on par with the sub-Saharan Africa median, but ranks below the median for BI-rated sovereigns globally, the statement added.

While acknowledging that high poverty levels, income inequality and limited economic diversification continue to constrain the country's credit quality, Moody's applauded government's ongoing efforts to address the country's infrastructure deficiencies.

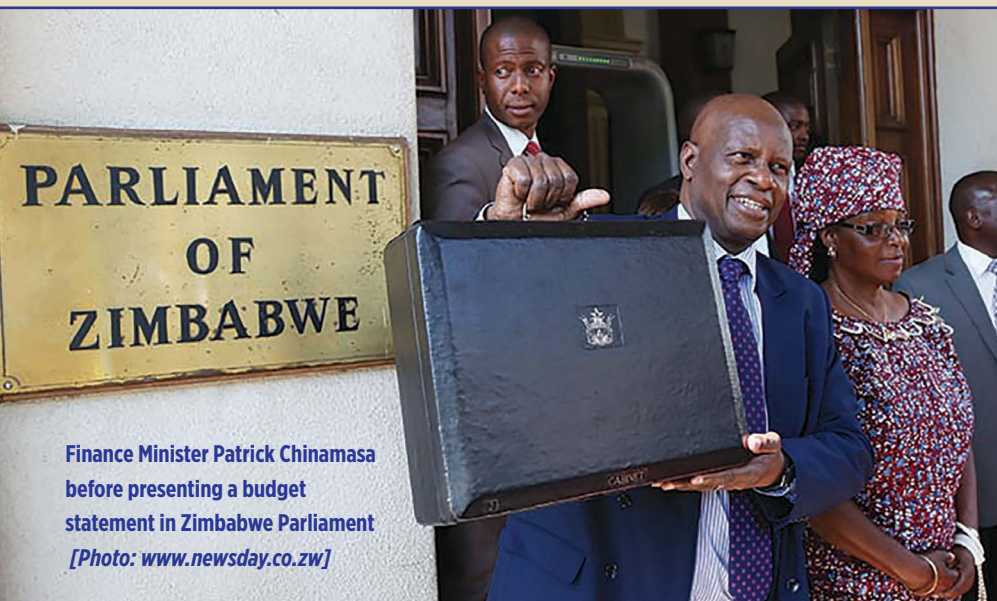
The rating agency has also applauded government's commitment to fiscal consolidation but warned that pressure on the fiscal position will continue amid growing demand for higher public sector wages and development expenditure. ■



Zambia's Vice President, Guy Scott, greets defense and security chiefs in Lusaka shortly after taking over following the death in London of President Michael Sata. Scott, a white Zambian of Scottish descent, became the first white leader of a sub-Saharan African nation since F.W. de Klerk, the apartheid-era head of South Africa who was voted out of power in 1994.

[Photo: AP]

Zimbabwe Relaxes Taxes to Boost Economy



Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa before presenting a budget statement in Zimbabwe Parliament
[Photo: www.newsday.co.zw]

The Zimbabwean government will lower taxes, scrap royalties, and extend import rebates across sectors to boost the ailing economy, whose growth has been cruising between 3 to 6 percent over the past few years.

Announcing his 4.1 billion U.S. dollars 2015 national budget statement in parliament last month, Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa announced the removal of royalties imposed on locally cut and polished diamonds to encourage beneficiation and exportation of finished products. The policy will take effect from January next year.

The Zimbabwean government had in January this year increased tax on diamond royalties to 15 percent from 10 percent.

Zimbabwe is said to hold one of Africa's richest diamond reserves, but the bulk of Zimbabwean gems are exported raw. The government has been increasingly making calls for beneficiation of

minerals before they are exported for the country to derive more revenue.

As part of efforts to incentivise the mining sector -- a key sector expected to drive economic growth -- Chinamasa also deferred a 15 percent export tax on raw platinum that was scheduled to come into effect in January next year to 2017.

He said this was to allow the biggest platinum miner Zimplats, a local subsidiary of South Africa's Impala Platinum, to commission its planned 200 million U.S. dollars base metal refinery in the next 12 months.

"Platinum producers have demonstrated efforts to beneficiate platinum and I have therefore decided to defer export tax on raw platinum to Jan. 1, 2017 to allow Zimplats to commission its plant," Chinamasa said.

To incentivise exporters and boost the local industry, he also introduced a lower corporate tax

regime for companies that export more goods with effect from January next year.

Companies that export 30-40 percent of their manufactured products will attract corporate tax of 20 percent, those that export between 41-50 percent will be taxed at 17.5 percent while those that export 51 percent of their products will be taxed at 15 percent, Chinamasa said.

The government predicts the economy to grow by 3.2 percent in 2015, slightly higher than the 3.1 percent growth projected for 2014.

High labor and transport costs, power shortages, poor trade and tariff logistics as well as high taxation levels were some of the cost drivers affecting business competitiveness.

To enhance local industry viability which he contended was also under threat from cheap imports, Chinamasa unveiled a number of measures aimed at enhancing business performance.

Among these was the extension by another 12 months of the rebate on duty on raw materials for the clothing sector that was due to expire this year.

He also extended by a year the suspension of duty on milk powder imports to boost viability of dairy processors, as well extending by 12 months rebate of duty on capital goods for the tourism industry.

The suspension of duty on imported motor vehicles by safari operators was also extended by a year.

He reduced excise duty on clear beer from 45 percent to 40 percent with effect from January next year in order to stimulate beverages growth through volumes.

The individual income tax free threshold was also increased to 300 U.S. dollars from 250 dollars to encourage Zimbabweans to spend more in a slow economy affected by a severe liquidity crunch and low foreign investment. ■

Among these was the extension by another 12 months of the rebate on duty on raw materials for the clothing sector that was due to expire this year.

South Africans Remember Late Mandela at First Anniversary



Graca Machel (front C), widow of former South African President Nelson Mandela, arrives with her family members before laying wreaths during the official commemoration ceremony marking the first anniversary of his death at the world's largest Mandela statue at the Union Buildings in Pretoria December 5, 2014. [Photo: REUTERS]

Hundreds of South Africans, liberation war veterans, government officials and members of the Mandela family gathered at the government offices at the Union Buildings in Pretoria on the 5th of this month, at a wreath laying ceremony to commemorate the first anniversary of Nelson Mandela's death.

Mandela's family, led by his wife Graca Machel and Mandla Mandela, laid the first wreaths at the foot of Mandela's massive statue just outside the Union Buildings.

This was followed by liberation war veterans and Mandela's great grandchildren all wearing white T-shirts.

Delivering her speech on behalf of the Mandela family, his wife Graca Machel thanked the world icon for choosing her.

"My singular privilege was for him choosing me to be the shoulder he would lean on at the sunset of his life. On the day of his passing I was not able to think because I was numb," said Machel.

"Today I see him tall and pride as all people receive him. I will forever be grateful that he chose me," Machel said.

Machel also gave a hint on what happened during Mandela's last moments at his Houghton home in Johannesburg.

She said that Mandela was surrounded by both the Mandela and the Machel family when passed away.

"We could see in his face the tranquillity and peace indicating that he was saying, I leave in peace and I want you to live in peace," said the former president's widow.

Machel also urged the world and South Africa to carry on Mandela's legacy in whatever way possible. "Mandela's legacy is huge. It covers all of us and no one can claim a single ownership of it."

"It is up to each one of us to take the stage and do what you think you can afford to honour his legacy. His legacy is the goodness to save others, which is present in every human being," Machel said.

She called on South Africans to honour Madiba by fighting the challenges of racism, inequality, poverty and unemployment.

Ahmed Kathrada, one of the liberation war veterans who was tried for treason together with Mandela and went on to spend time with him at the Robben Island prison, also gave a moving speech at the wreath laying ceremony.

"Madiba was charismatic, courageous and a democrat. He treated every one of us equally. He fought for freedom and for that freedom he was prepared to die," the comrade-in-arms said.

"We will always be able to remember him as a father and family man," added Kathrada.

He explained how Mandela gave them courage in prison and during the many trials they went through and described him as a man who gave it all for the nation.

Different speakers at the wreath laying ceremony also called on the nation and citizens of the world to dedicate their lives in serving their nations as Mandela did.

Mandela died on December 5, 2013, after spending 67 years of his life fighting for political, economic and social freedom of others. He was buried at his rural home in Qunu, Eastern Cape Province. ■

Brahimi Wins BBC African Footballer of the Year Award 2014

Yacine Brahimi has been voted the BBC African Footballer of the Year 2014.

The 24-year-old midfielder becomes the first Algerian to win the award, which is decided by football fans. Brahimi told BBC Sport: "It's a big honour for me to receive this wonderful trophy. I owe it to my country, Algeria, and to all the people who voted for me.

"It's also a trophy for the whole of Africa, because it rewards an African player. So I am really very happy."

After a record number of votes were submitted from fans in 207 Fifa-registered countries, Brahimi came out on top ahead of Nigerian Vincent Enyeama, Gabonese Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Ivorian pair Gervinho and Yaya Toure.

And he is thrilled to have been acclaimed as the best player on the continent for the past year.

"This trophy is going to give me more strength, more desire to work, to get better, to learn so that I can keep having great performances," Brahimi added.

During 2014, Brahimi has shone for both club and country.

He starred for Algeria at the World Cup in Brazil, helping them reach the last-16 for the first time and scoring his first international goal in the 4-2 win over South Korea in the group stage.

Domestically, Brahimi started the year at Spanish club Granada, where his strong performances led to him being named best African player in the country last season - and earned him a move to Portuguese giants Porto.

He has scored six goals in 15 appearances for his new club and is revelling in the challenge of



European Champions League football, where he hit a hat-trick in the club's first group match.

"First I won the award because of the people who voted for me. So once again I need to thank them.

"Then it's thanks for FC Porto - they allowed me to play in the Champions League, to play in big games and to have great performances. The club has allowed me to express myself and to perform well on the pitch."

Brahimi will also be part of Algeria's squad to play in the Africa Cup of Nations in Equatorial Guinea from 17 January to 8 February.

"The Africa Cup of Nations is also coming. There are big opportunities for me," he said. "And I hope I'll be able to achieve big things this year both with my national team and my club.

"I'm sharing this trophy with my family, with all the African countries and with all the Algerian who have always supported me. Thanks again."

Previous winners of BBC African Footballer of the Year award:

2013: **Yaya Toure** (Manchester City & Ivory Coast)

2012: **Chris Katongo** (Henan Construction & Zambia)

2011: **Andre Ayew** (Marseille & Ghana)

2010: **Asamoah Gyan** (Sunderland & Ghana)

2009: **Didier Drogba** (Chelsea & Ivory Coast)

2008: **Mohamed Aboutrika** (Al Ahly & Egypt)

2007: **Emmanuel Adebayor** (Arsenal & Togo)

2006: **Michael Essien** (Chelsea & Ghana)

2005: **Mohamed Barakat** (Al Ahly & Egypt)

2004: **Jay-Jay Okocha** (Bolton & Nigeria)

2003: **Jay-Jay Okocha** (Bolton & Nigeria)

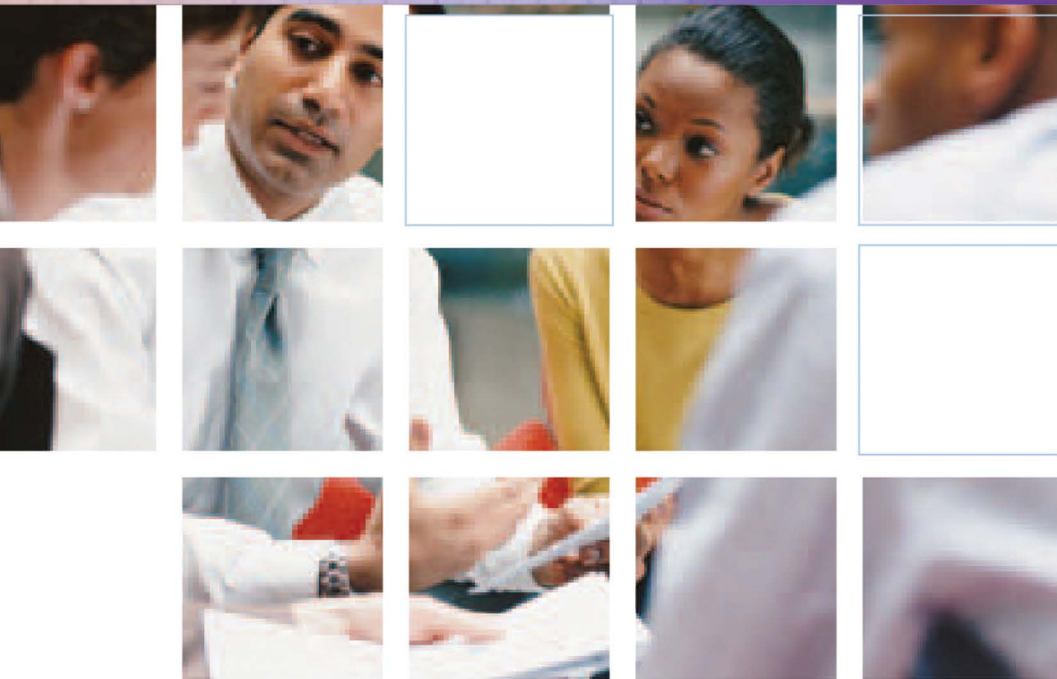
2002: **El Hadji Diouf** (Liverpool & Senegal)

2001: **Sammy Kuffour** (Bayern Munich & Ghana)

2000: **Patrick Mboma** (Parma & Cameroon) -BBC ■

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