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African Tourism: A Game Drive to Transform the Continent

Nigeria's New President: The Task ahead for the Leader of Africa's Biggest Economy

Africa's Top 25 Finance Leaders 2023

HE Wamkele Mene

Secretary-General, African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

Unlocking Africa's Future through Trade

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ISSN 2006 - 9332

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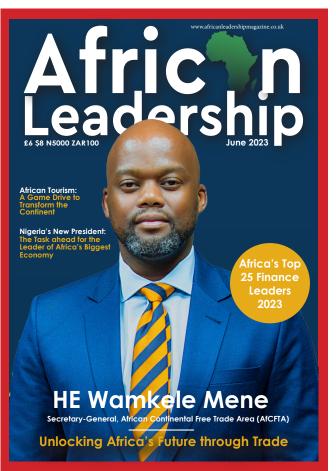
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WHAT NOTABLE LEADERS ARE SAYING ABOUT AFRICAN LEADERSHIP MAGAZINE



H.E. JOHN MAHAMA Fmr. President of Ghana

"It is always an honour to be in the company of such distinguished fellow Africans, that the African Leadership Magazine events bring together - Africans who have committed their lives to changing the negative narrative about our continent."



H.E. MRS. AMEEN GURIB-FAKIM Fmr. President of Mauritius

"It is very gratifying that we now have an organization like African Leadership Magazine, which endeavors to promote good governance and impactful leadership in Africa - bring the best of Africa to the global stages."



DR. GOODLUCK JONATHAN Fmr. President of Nigeria

"African Leadership Magazine has become a brand for Africa and I am pleased to be associated with it. especially because of the caliber of African Leaders on it's board."



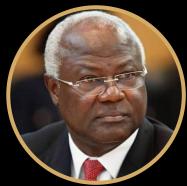
H.E. JOHN KUFOUR Fmr. President of Ghana

"I believe people are more important than power and anything that promotes good people and leadership is what we need in Africa, and that is what African Leadership Magazine is doing."



H.E. JAMES A MICHEL Fmr. President of Seychelles

"I wish to express my sincere thanks and deep appreciation to the African Leadership Magazine for the work that it is doing on the continent, and especially in advancing the cause of small Islands Developing states, Any effort aimed at increasing the visibility of the good work being done by leadership in Africa does positively impact on the continent and that is what the African Leadership Magazine is doing."



H.E. ERNEST BAI KOROMA Fmr. President of Sierra Leone

"I am delighted to be associated with the sterling work that the African Leadership Magazine is doing on the continent. Democratic governance is the elephant in the room, and the continent needs to reaccess its governance systems. The agenda on global sustainable development shows that Africans are lagging behind. Africa will need to reinvent its governance system with its youth growing population."

WHAT NOTABLE LEADERS ARE SAYING ABOUT AFRICAN LEADERSHIP MAGAZINE



MRS. ELLEN JOHNSON - SIRLEAF Nobel Peace Prize Winner & Fmr. President, Republic of Liberia

"I feel deeply honored to be associated with the African Leadership Magazine as it is a veritable platform to honor true service in Africa. I commend your efforts and assure you of my continued support and the support of the good people of Liberia."



H.E JAKAYA KIKWETE Fmr. President of Tanzania

"African Leadership Magazine is doing a wonderful job of speaking for Africa and Africans. The magazine remain a good example of what young people in Africa can do in the world. Best wishes in keeping the African dream alive."



H.E DAVID MABUZA Deputy President Republic of South Africa

"It is an honour to participate at this African Leadership Magazine's 2020 Ceremony, and I commend the magazine's focus to reshape positively, the dominant narratives about the African continent, especially towards the pursuit of peace-building and democracy on the continent".



DR. AKINWUMI ADESINA President, African Development Bank

"I thank you so much, African Leadership Magazine for the great work that you are doing for the continent. Your tradition of awarding excellence as I have seen in the line up of African Leaders who have received the African Leadership Awards, is something very commendable"



DR. MO IBRAHIM Founder, Mo Ibrahim Foundation

"The future of African people and improving the quality of Leadership on the African continent is my vision and I find in African Leadership Magazine - a true partner. I am also happy that the African Leadership Awards is doing at a lower level, what I intend to achieve at the Head of State level. That is why I flew to Paris just to be a part of what you are doing here at the African Leadership Magazine".



MO DEWJI Tanzania Businessman & Philanthropist

"The African Leadership Awards truly captures the essence of my message which is that, success shouldn't be solely defined by wealth. It should be about the positive impact and influence that one has had in his community."

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RE-LAUNCHING THE AFRICAN LEADERSHIP COUNCIL, ALC







Today, from the stables of the African Leadership (UK) Limited - publishers of African Leadership magazine and other leading pan-African titles, I am happy to announce the relaunching of the African Leadership Council (www.africanleadershipcouncil.com) - a global leadership coalition for enabling excellence, achievement, and development in Africa.

The council's formation is centred on the premise that celebrating outstanding achievement and leadership is good for humanity, and especially good for Africa as it has the potential to create a ripple effect in society by inspiring others to aspire to serve humanity for the greater good of all.

The council shall, among other things focus on enabling top African achievers and corporate leaders to create more prosperity for stakeholders of the Africa project. These African achievers are already heavily invested in making a difference on the continent through their toils, sweat, and blood. They had choices to do other things, but they chose to contribute their quota by exemplifying leadership and achievement. Each of them has their stories to tell, tales that are written with the rigours of arduous work, pain, and discomfort, as most successes anywhere in the world require no pain, no gain. These leaders - were job creators, wealth generators, and servantleaders who even when unrecognised and uncelebrated still forged forward in helping their communities move forward.

When the coronavirus pandemic, arrived in late December 2019, snowballing into unprecedented proportions with impacts on every aspect of our human life, and affecting every country in the world, it became clearer that it would take spirited and committed leaders to manage the unprecedented times that COVID-19 represented. Such leaders move society forward, become positive references for what is possible, help promote self-sufficiency and inspire a generation of upcoming leaders to aim to solve some of humanity's biggest problems. They are the true stakeholders in the Africa project. They are worthy partners of progress for Africa's future. It is for this kind of leader that



A member of the ALC, President Bio of sierra Leon with Dr. Ken Giami, Founder ALO

we have put together the African Leadership Council (ALC)

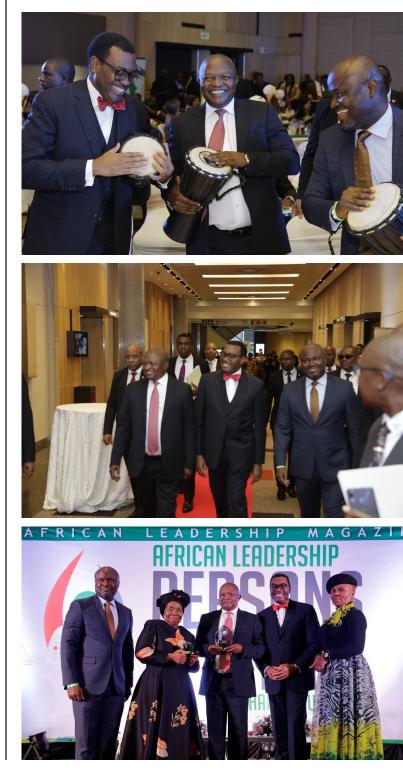
African Leadership Council is therefore founded on the hope to mobilise the critical mass required to galvanise multi-dimensional change at various levels of leadership in the continent. It is indeed possible to live in Africa, where the continent is not only solving most if not all of her problems, but contributing her optimal value to the global system, earning the respect of all sections of society, and leading the world in several respects.

The African Leadership Council is indeed an exclusive platform for political and business leaders, policy titans, opinion leaders, entrepreneurs, and executives who are committed to deepening unrivaled African access, developing lifetime relationships and partnerships across the continent while taking action to grow their global citizenship status as a force for good - enthroning SDG Gol1 1 and Goal 4 by contributing to educational development on the continent and continuing to help in eradicating poverty in Africa. ALC members are provided with pan-African visibility, recognition for their contributions, and cementing their thought leadership - all in a bid to enable greater contribution and participation in leapfrogging Africa's development.

JOIN ALC TODAY

As most of the world, and especially Africa is still reeling from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people and businesses, leaders must come together, in networks such as the African Leadership Council, to respond to the challenges head-on for the sake of mother Africa. We must adjust to the unfolding new normal, by staying top-of-mind and continually engaging our leadership and influence for the greater good. Hence if you are a person of impact and a leader who is making a difference in the community, then you qualify to join this network of great leaders, To become a member of the council, visit www. africanleadershipcouncil.com today.

We look forward to welcoming committed African leaders - both at home and in the diaspora, partners of Africa, or players on the continent, from across all spheres of influence, who believe that their contributions to African development do make a difference, to join the council today, as the ALC journey begins!









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"The ALC is an exclusive platform for political and business leaders, policy titans, opinion leaders, enterpreneurs, and executives who are committed to deepen unrivaled African access, developing lifetime relationships and partnerships across the continent while taking action to grow their global citizenship status"



AFRICAN LEADERSHIP MAGAZINE Unveils Top 25 African Finance Leaders 2023



Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, esident, African Development Bank





Minister of Economic and Finance, Madiatescer





HE Ahmed Shide, Minister of Finance, Ethiopia



Minister of Finance, Nigeria



Dr. Patrick Ngugi Njoroge, Governor of the Bank of Kenys



Abdulmajid Mussa Nsekeli CEO, CROB Bank Pic



Dr. Ken Giami, Founder African Leadership Organization

The African Leadership Magazine (ALM) is pleased to announce the inaugural editorial listing of the Top 25 African Finance Leaders 2023, following a rigorous merit-based selection process by the magazine's Editorial board.

The listing is a special recognition of the outstanding contributions of Africa's topmost finance leaders for providing the leadership and innovative policies, programs, and actions that have helped in stabilising many challenged national economies in Africa, while driving recovery and stimulating growth, even when slow, amidst global economic shocks. The list which draws from finance ministers, central bank governors, as well as Chief Executives of leading banking, finance, and development institutions from across Africa, is a showcase of finance leaders helping in the drive to finance Africa's development and those who through

strong fiscal and macroeconomic policies have enhanced the national economic outlook and especially supported the growth of small businesses in spite of current global economic climate.

The listees emerged through a 2-step pointsbased selection process that include nominations by our global pool of writers, as well as experts in the African banking and finance industry; leading to our editorial board's final review of the nominations and submissions – using supporting evidence and voting considerations in their final decisions to decide those who emerge on the listing of the ALM Top 25 African Finance Leaders 2023.

The full listees were unveiled during the African Finance Leaders' Networking Cocktail, in Washington DC on April 13th, 2023 at the National Press Club, Washington DC, USA on the margins of the annual World Bank Group / IMF 2023 Spring meetings.

The ALM Top 25 African Finance Leaders 2023 are as follows:

1. HE Ahmed Shide, Minister of Finance, Ethiopia

2. HE Mrs Rindra Rabarinirinarison, Minister of Economic and Finance, Madagascar

3. Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, President, African Development Bank

4. Dr. Patrick Ngugi Njoroge, Governor of the Bank of Kenya

5. Mamadou Moustapha Bâ, Minister of Finance and Budget, Senegal

6. Hon. Johnny Ohisa Damian, Governor of the Central Bank of South Sudan

7. Zainab Ahmed, Minister of Finance, Nigeria

8. Abdulmajid Mussa Nsekela, CEO, CRDB Bank Plc

9. Dr. Adesola Kazeem Adeduntan, CEO, First Bank of Nigeria Plc

10. Dr. Ernest Addison, Governor, Bank of Ghana

11. Caroline Abel, Governor, Central Bank of Seychelles

12. José de Lima Massano, Governor, National Bank of Angola

13. Dr. John Mangudya, Governor, Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe

14. Dr. The Honourable Renganaden Padayachy, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning, and Development, Mauritius

Tony O. Elumelu, Chairman Heirs Holding
 Prof. Benedict Oramah, President, African

Export–Import Bank (Afreximbank)

17. Dr. Walton Gilpin, Managing Director, Rokel Commercial Bank, Sierra Leone

18. Simphiwe Tshabalala, CEO, Standard Bank Group

19. Lesetja Kganyago, Governor, South African Reserve Bank (SARB)

20. Othman Benjelloun, Chief Executive Officer, BMCE Bank Morocco

21. Hon. Samuel D. Tweah, Honourable Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Liberia

22. Mukwandi Chibesakunda, CEO, Zambia National Commercial Bank (ZANACO) PLC

23. Hon. Matia Kasaija, Minister for Finance,

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Planning & Economic Development, Uganda

24. HE Adama Coulibaly, Minister of Finance, Ivory Coast

25. John Rwangombwa, Governor, National Bank of Rwanda







RECIPIENTS OF THE ALM'S TOP 25 AFRICAN FINANCIAL LEADERS AT NATIONAL PRESS CLUB, WASHINGTON DC USA. ON THE MARGIN OF THE ANNUAL WORLD BANK GROUP / IMF 2023 SPRING MEETINGS



INVESTMENT FORUM ABIDAN 2¹⁰ TO 4¹⁰ MONTHER PARTY

UNLOCKING AFRICA'S FUTURE THROUGH TRADE

HE Wamkele Mene

Secretary-General, African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Building the world's largest single trade market is undoubtedly an uphill task, but managing the interest of about 54 countries while at it is even more arduous. However, His Excellency Wamkele Mene, the Secretary-General African Continental Free Trade Area, manages both tasks with zest and mastery. The veteran trade diplomat is not new to the job of trade negotiation, having served as South Africa's Head of Mission to the World Trade Organization in Geneva, Chief Director for Africa Economic Relations in South Africa's Department of Trade and Industry and South Africa's lead negotiator in the African Continental Free Trade Agreement. In this exclusive interview with the African Leadership Magazine, he tells us more about the organization's efforts towards unlocking the continent's fortunes through trade. Excerpts:

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"..we have achieved significant progress in less than five years, even though we have countries with a GDP per capita of \$110 per annum on the opposite extreme, \$25,000 per capita".

You are veteran Trade a Diplomat, having served and represented South Africa at the World Trade Organization, other rital roles. among <u>key</u> Can you share some milestones in your journey in the trade and economic space?

Thank you for coming to Ghana for this conversation. I never thought and sought to be Secretary General. So when I joined the Ministry of Trade of South Africa, probably 17 or 18 years ago, it was an opportunity to serve and contribute. At that time, South Africa was coming out of apartheid, even though it was probably ten years later, but still, the legacy of apartheid was there from an economic perspective. And so, economic policy reform was central to getting the country to have shared opportunities and growth. So that is how I ended up there because I wanted to contribute. I left the private sector and joined the government. Then, of course, I was a senior trade official and chief negotiator when I returned from the WTO in Geneva. I learned a lot at the WTO when I was negotiating at the WTO. And with the WTO and through the WTO, I learned much about consensus building, particularly concerning complex economic policy questions. And I also learned a lot about what should be done to get countries to progress. So, the WTO was a learning experience. It was also a learning experience about what not to do in multilateral negotiation. What you should avoid, as you know, is now 23 years since we started negotiating the Doha development round. There has not been any conclusion, and I want to be clear, this is not because of the lack of capacity of the leaders of the WTO, but because of the difference and the differentials in levels of economic development amongst the members of the WTO. But we have achieved significant progress in less than five years, even though we have countries

with a GDP per capita of \$110 per annum on the opposite extreme, \$25,000 per capita. We have middle-income countries in Africa, and we have many countries that are these developed countries. And yet, even with all of these differences, these differentials, we have been able to achieve consensus. So, these are some of the lessons that I learned at the WTO. How to avoid being stuck in a negotiation forever. The second lesson that I learned from the WTO is that if you don't engage the heads of state, the success that you will achieve will be minimal. And so we have the highest level of engagement. Our heads of state meet twice a year. They talk about trade and development in Africa. They are the political drivers of the AfCFTA. So it is critical to have the highest decision makers on the continent to be engaged to drive this. Otherwise, it will not succeed. So these are the two lessons I've learned in the last two and a half years. I came to Ghana on the 15th of August 2020. In the first year, half of the countries, about 42, were in either full or partial lockdown. We could not do anything. The first six months after I was elected, I was in a hotel, and we could not travel or talk to stakeholders. And yet, in a concise space, we have achieved what others thought was impossible. A total of 45 countries have ratified the agreement establishing the AfCFTA; we have all of the legal instruments required to make commercially meaningful trade happen. We have a single set of rules of origin. For example, before the AfCFTA, West Africa, East Africa, and Central Africa have different rules of origin. So if you are an automobile manufacturer and you are in Kenya. If you want to expand your investments to West Africa or Southern Africa, Local content rules are different for the vehicle, which imposes regulatory costs on you as an investor. Now, we have a simple set of rules for over 88% of products traded in Africa. Before the AfCFTA, you may as well have been trading; if you were in Uganda, you might have been trading with somebody in China. Because each

region each country had a different set of rules for trade and investment. So we have harmonized that, and also, for the first time in the continent's history, we have agreed on rules for resolving trade and investment disputes. legally binding outcomes from the adjudication of disputes by a dispute settlement mechanism. All of these things happened in the last two and a half years. The most important example of ensuring that trade is not just for the negotiators in the room, we have introduced, along with African Banks, the Pan African payments and settlement system, which will enable cheaper, faster and more affordable trade in 42 currencies in Africa. The cost of currency convertibility is \$5 billion annually. If you are in Kenya and want to trade with somebody in Nigeria, you must convert the Kenyan shilling into the dollar or any other third currency. Then your counterparty receives the dollar. They must convert it into this Nigerian layer that costs about \$5 billion annually. That is the cost we know; we don't know the cost to SMEs or youth entrepreneurship competitiveness, and we cannot quantify those. But we know that because of the cost of currency convertibility, this cost is a barrier to trade. So we've introduced the Pan African payments and settlement system, which will enable that smallmedium enterprise in Nairobi to trade in local currency, with a small-medium

Through the WTO, I learned much about consensus building, particularly concerning complex economic policy questions. And I also learned a lot about what should be done to get countries to progress".

COVER STORY

enterprise in Nigeria to receive local payment when transacting. This is an example of the practical steps to make the AfCFTA a reality. From ambition to action, this is our theme for this year. I was recently in Nairobi when President Ruto and I saw off a shipment of value-added production - Tea produced in Kenya- being exported to West Africa. Under the rules of the AfCFTA, the preferences and preferential treatment are for value-added products. The Tea was produced, and the value was added by smallholder farmers, whom the Government of Kenya organized into cooperatives. They don't even know that they are contributing to the intra-Africa trade. They may not be aware. But it points out that when you make a concerted effort to have a trade arrangement that addresses inclu

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"From ambition to action, this is our theme for this year. I was recently in Nairobi when President Ruto and I saw off a shipment of valueadded production - Tea produced in Kenya- being exported to West Africa."



sivity, you can improve people's lives through trade. So here you have tons and tons of Tea produced in Kenya, exported by smallholder farmers, and exported to other parts of the continent. This is what the AFC FTA has enabled. Crossregional trade. Trade in the East African Community is happening. But trade between West Africa and East Africa has not been happening. And trade between Southern Africa and Northern Africa has not been happening. So these are some of the successes we have recorded since we were established in a concise time. Because with COVID, we could not do anything. Last year in October, we started

the guided trade initiative to demonstrate that the AfCFTA is functional. Close to 100 products were traded amongst about seven countries. I mentioned the Tea from Kenya. Ghana exported ceramic tiles from Ghana to Cameroon. The importer in Cameroon received a duty reduction of 20%. That means the company is more competitive



than before the AfCFTA. So, the ceramic tiles in Cameroon can now compete with others made in other parts of the world that I will not mention, which we all know are cheaper and more competitive. So these are some successes; of course, there are challenges. And the challenges will always be there. But I believe the continent is far better off today than five years ago before the AfCFTA.

In your speech on the 1st of **202I**, January signalling the official commencement of the trade under preferences of the African Trade Area, Continental Free you said, "Today is a day we take Africa a step closer to a vision of an integrated continent, a vision of an integrated market on the African continent." Two years on, what is your take on the journey thus far?

It is now time to move beyond words into action. We recently discussed the formation of the Organization of African Unity in May 1963 and how the founding mothers and fathers of the OAU had this grand vision of an integrated Africa. Of course, the starting point was to push back colonialists. And with South Africa defeating apartheid, that objective was achieved. But when you look at the founding documents of the OAU, what has evaded us as a continent is the integration of our economy. We have only 18% of Intra African trade, which we can point to because, in the past 60-70 years, we have been far more focused on trade between Africa and Europe. So we must transition to action to dismantle this colonial economic model that we inherited and sustained. We can only do that by breaking and dismantling that model of the colonial economic model, and we can only dismantle it by focusing on building trade patterns amongst African countries. If you go to most countries on the continent, the most accessible connectivity is between Johannesburg and London, Luanda and Lisbon, West African countries and Paris. The connectivity among African countries could be better, and that is because of this trade pattern. Similarly, in most African countries, you have the rail infrastructure that takes minerals from the mines to the ports to take the minerals out. And that is a result of this colonial economic model. So we have to be courageous to break that model. Without, of course, disengaging and disconnecting from the global economy because we cannot, it's not possible. But we have to be



courageous to break that model of colonial Africa. And to break it completely. And to establish trade patterns that will enhance productivity in Africa, create jobs that will spur innovation, and ensure that young people stay here instead of going to other parts of the world to look for jobs. So we have a long way ahead of us. But we've got to start somewhere. We've got to start somewhere. So it's a monumental task that we've set ourselves. But as I say, we've taken the first steps,

A world bank report projects that if well implemented, the AfCTA

by 2035 will lift one hundred million Africans out of poverty. Is the implementation of the Act on track to achieve this laudable feat?

It is a very encouraging projection by the World Bank. They also say in that study that we have an opportunity to contribute by the year 2035 \$450 billion to Africa's GDP by boosting intra-African trade and improving intra-Africa business by over 80%. So we need help to do it as a secretariat. We will require the state parties to the AfCFTA agreement and the state parties to implement the deal. It's achievable. It's possible. In the last two and a half years, we've demonstrated that it's possible. But we will have to intensify the implementation over the next 15 years. That means that the largest economies in Africa must be willing to open up their markets proportional to their size. So, Morocco, South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya, are countries that will have to do more, and thankfully, there is a realization that the bigger the economy, the more you have to do. President Ramahosa told me his ambition is to ensure other Africans understand that the South African market is open for trade and investment through the AfCFTA. Similarly, other heads of state say President Ruto is very supportive and says that Kenya will do what it can to ensure the agreement is implemented. But you know, smaller economies are willing to pull their weight. So it's achievable. The projection is particularly encouraging because they conclude by saying the most immediate beneficiaries of what you cited. The data I quoted from that study will be small and medium enterprises that women and young people lead. We must double our efforts to realize this because over 450 million Africans are employed in small and medium enterprises. This is a significant part of Africa's economy. So we have to double our efforts to ensure we reach these targets. We will have challenges, and we will have a man who will wake up in a military barracks and decide that he wants to be President without being elected by African people, disrupting trade, closing borders and

visiting havoc on economic activity along the borders. But thankfully, the African Union and the ECOWAS have been very clear in condemning coup d'etat that disrupts growth in different African countries. We will have such disruptions and balance of payments

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It is now time to move beyond words into action....President Ramahosa told me his ambition is to ensure other Africans understand that the South African market is open for trade and investment through the AfCFTA.

challenges for certain countries; we will have disruptions caused by climate change, and all of these will happen. But we must stay the course and remain determined because we have lost almost 70 years. So, we cannot afford to lose more time to ensure we see the reality of an integrated continent. So I am confident we will reach that target if we remain on track.

One of the significant hallmarks of your role as the Secretary-General is that you have to report to "54 Boss" " who are also heads of state in their countries. How do you manage this process to ensure a smooth flow of activities and timely delivery of tasks?

I have the support of all of the heads of state. That makes a big difference. Then, there is President Mahamadou Issoufou, the former President of Niger, who is the champion of the AfCFTA. We have here President Nana Akufo Addo, who is highly supportive, the outgoing chairperson of the assembly of heads of state and government. President Macky Sall is also very supportive. So, the level of support amongst heads of state is extremely high. And that makes the job easier. Of course, I have to travel extensively to meet with them and report progress to them. That's part of the job. But really and honestly, the political will is unprecedented. And the commitment also to ensuring we reach the targets we were discussing. The commitment is unparalleled. Of course, they sometimes have differing opinions about what should be done. But I'm happy that the heads of state have resolved all of the policy disagreements that we have had, even at the level of ministers. So it isn't easy, of course, but the task is made easier by the strong political will that exists.

In your acceptance speech in March 2020, during your inauguration as the first Secretary-General of the AfCTA, you promised to take concrete steps towards ensuring that women and young Africans are at the heart of implementing the AfCFTA. Can you share some of the measures put in place to achieve this stated objective?

When I was at the WTO, many, many times, I was the youngest person in the room. And the negotiations were very, very abstract and did not relate to youth intrapreneurs and their desires for export markets to develop their businesses. Similarly, I was concerned when I was at the WTO for small and medium enterprises that women lead. I consistently heard concerns about large corporations benefiting from free trade. Now, our continent, as I mentioned earlier, has the most significant number of youths in the world. By the turn of the century, one in four people will be in Africa, and the youngest population of adults will be on our continent. As I said, the drivers of Africa's economy are small and medium enterprises contributing close to 60% of Africa's GDP. That should tell us something, it should say to us that this opening of markets must not benefit only the large corporations, which it must, but they must not be the only beneficiaries if it is to have credibility. So the first step we took, I went to various heads of state, and I said, I think that we need to have we need to transition beyond just aspirations about women economic empowerment, youth economic empowerment, that these aspirations, we must codify them into legally binding commitments. And they agreed; I did not have to convince or persuade them. So we are now negotiating a protocol for women and youth in trade. You can look at any international trade agreement for the first time. There is not a single trade agreement that has a protocol on women and you in trade to address the specific challenges and the specific barriers that women confront that young people encounter when they want to export their goods to other countries within the region or the continent. So, we will conclude negotiations of this protocol by June and then start implementing it. Last year in September, under the patronage of Her Excellency Mama Samia Suluhu Hassan, we hosted the first of its kind Women and Youth in Trade Conference in Dar er Salaam. It was the first time there was a focused discussion on young people. We discussed how young people, small and medium enterprises, can benefit from trade across the African continent. It is, of course, far from what we should do. But again, it is a step we must take to confront some of the imbalances we see in trade. If you remember, a few years ago, five or six years ago, a prominent gentleman argued that trade agreements benefit

only the elite, that trade agreements benefit large corporations, and that they export jobs from the US to Mexico. Now, that analysis has electron appeal because he ended up in the White House as the President of the United States. So, you can see that if globalization and trade agreements as a subset of globalization, if, if trade agreements don't deliver for small and medium enterprises for young people, the credibility, the intellectual credibility of free trade, will be forever lost, at least in the case of Africa. So if you believe in free work, as I do, you have to take concrete steps to ensure that free trade delivers for development, not just for large corporations, but for growth. So that's what we are doing in this protocol on women and youth in trade; we will need the private sector in Africa to come on board, we will need the governments to come on board, the youth formations to come on board to work with us in the implementation of this protocol.

> We have harmonized and for the first time in the continent's history, we have agreed on rules for resolving trade and investment disputes

AfDB President, Dr. Akinwumi A. Adesina outlines The Task Before Nigeria's New President

by King Richard

The President of the African Development Bank, Dr. Akinwumi A. Adesina, offered a strategic economic approach in a speech delivered at the Inauguration Lecture held by former President Mohammadu Buhari for the new President, Bola Tinubu, headlined 'It's Nigeria's Turn,' He emphasised some essential actions that can be followed to completely restructure the Nigerian economy, allowing it to take its proper place among the world's economically powerful nations.

Parts of the speech include the necessity for macroeconomic and fiscal stability, the elimination of inefficient fuel subsidies, and the encouragement of private sector refineries and modular refineries. He stated that the expense of governance in Nigeria is excessive and must be severely cut in order to free up more resources for development. To increase tax revenue, he said the government must enhance tax collection and administration, ensure effective social contracts, and rebalance the economy.

Additionally, to alleviate revenue concentration, Nigeria must remove obstacles, abandon import substitution, invest heavily in renewable energy, and revitalise rural areas. The African Development Bank is collaborating with central banks and countries to build and promote youth entrepreneurial investment banks in order to generate youth-based wealth. President Bola Tinubu has an opportunity to make history by building a resurgent Nigeria, he stated.

Here is the complete speech:

Speech Delivered by Dr. Akinwumi A. Adesina at the Inauguration Lecture for the New President

Your Excellencies,

I wish to thank President Muhammadu Buhari for his personal invitation to me to attend the ceremonies for the swearing-in of the incoming President-elect, H.E. Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

Congratulations Mr. President on Nigeria's 7th consecutive democratic transition.

Congratulations to the incoming President and Vice President.

I wish to thank the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Boss Mustapha, Chairman, and members of the Presidential Transition Council, for inviting me to speak at this inauguration lecture for the incoming President of Nigeria.

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To create youthbased wealth, the African Development Bank is working with Central Banks and countries to design and support Youth Entrepreneurship Investment Banks.

It is such a great honor, to share my views and perspectives, as the nation gets ready to have a passing of the baton between H.E. President Muhammadu Buhari, and the incomingPresident, H.E Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

It is your turn!

I wish to congratulate you Mr. President for your stewardship of Nigeria for the past eight years. Thank you very much for all your strong support for me, as President of the African Development Bank Group.

Without your strong support for me in 2015, and then in 2020, I would not have been President of the African Development Bank. There is a saying that "anyone that is sent on an errand must come back and report to the one who sent him or her." Mr. President, you sent me on an errand, and I am here to give you a report.

I am pleased to let you know that the African Development Bank was ranked this year by Publish What You Fund as the "Most Transparent Institution in the World."

The African Development Bank was ranked last year by the Washington D.C.-based Center for Global Development as the "Best Multilateral Development Bank in the World.".

Dear Mr. President, as you leave, you can take pride that the mission for Africa is being well executed.

I wish to congratulate the in-coming President, H.E. Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, who will take over the mantle of stewardship of Nigeria tomorrow.

I am delighted that my very dear friend and brother, President Uhuru Kenyatta, former President of Kenya was invited to deliver the inauguration lecture. He was a great leader for Kenya.

I am sure he must be wondering why there are two Kenyans on the same panel.

Well...I lived in Kenya for close to ten years.

I remember, one day when then President Goodluck Jonathan visited Kenya and I accompanied him as a Minister, as the two Presidents were introducing members of their delegations, President Jonathan said "meet Dr. Adesina, Minister of Agriculture, to which President Kenyatta responded "Yes, Adesina is the Kenyan on loan to Nigeria as Minister." We all laughed!

Thank you, President Kenyatta, for your incredibly insightful and excellent speech.

Your Excellencies,

The election of a new President always elicits hope.

Nigeria will be looking to you, as President

Tinubu, on your first day in office, with hope.

Hope that you will assure security, peace, and stability.

Hope that you will heal and unite a fractious nation.

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"To raise tax revenue, the government must improve tax collection and administration, assure effective social contracts, and rebalance the economy. To address revenue concentration, Nigeria must unlock bottlenecks, shift away from import substitution, invest massively in renewable energy, and revive rural areas."

Hope that you will rise above party lines and forge a compelling force to move the nation forward, with inclusiveness, fairness, equity, and justice.

Hope that you will drastically improve the economy.

Hope that you will spark a new wave of prosperity.

And hope must be brought to the present, as hope deferred makes the heart grow weary. Your Excellencies, The starting point must be macroeconomic and



fiscal stability. Unless the economy is revived and fiscal challenges addressed boldly, resources to develop will not be there.

No bird can fly if its wings are tied.

Nigeria currently faces huge fiscal deficits, estimated at 6 % of GDP. This has been due to huge federal and state government expenditures, lower receipts due to dwindling revenues from export of crude oil, vandalism of pipelines and illegal bunkering of crude oil.

According to Nigeria's Debt Management Office, Nigeria now spends 96% of its revenue servicing debt, with the debt-to-revenue ratio rising from 83.2 percent in 2021 to 96.3 percent by 2022.

Some will argue that the debt to GDP ratio at 34% is still low compared to other countries in Africa, which is correct; but no one pays their debt using GDP.

Debt is paid using revenue, and Nigeria's revenues have been declining.

Nigeria earns revenue now to service debt --- not to grow.

The place to start is to remove the inefficient fuel

subsidies.

Nigeria's fuel subsidies benefit the rich, not the poor, fueling their and government's endless fleets of cars at the expense of the poor. Estimates show that the poorest 40% of the population consume just 3% of petrol.

Fuel subsidies are killing the Nigerian economy, costing Nigeria \$10 billion alone in 2022. That means Nigeria is borrowing what it does not have to if it simply eliminates the subsidies and uses the resources well for its national development.

Rather, support should be given to private sector refineries and modular refineries to allow for efficiency and competitiveness to drive down fuel pump prices. The newly commissioned Dangote Refinery by President Buhari – the largest single train petroleum refinery in the world, as well as its Petrochemical Complex -will revolutionize Nigeria's economy.

Congratulations to Aliko Dangote for his amazing \$19 billion investment!

Your Excellencies,

There is an urgent need to look at the cost of

governance.

The cost of governance in Nigeria is way too high and should be drastically reduced to free up more resources for development. Nigeria is spending very little on development.

Today, Nigeria is ranked among countries with the lowest human development index in the world, with a rank of 167 among 174 countries globally, according to the World Bank 2022 Public Expenditure Review report.

To meet Nigeria's massive infrastructure needs, according to the report, will require \$ 3 trillion by 2050. According to the report, at the current rate, it would take Nigeria 300 years to provide its minimum level of infrastructure needed for

and that leakages in tax collection are closed. However, simply raising taxes is not enough, as many question the value of paying taxes, hence the high level of tax avoidance. Many citizens provide their own electricity, sink boreholes to get access to water, and repair roads in their towns and neighborhoods.

These are essentially high implicit taxes.

Nigerians therefore pay the highest 'implicit tax rates' in the world.

Governments need to assure effective social contracts by delivering quality public services. It is not the amount collected, it is how it is spent, and what is delivered. Nations that grow better run effective governments that assure social contracts with their citizens.



development.

All living Nigerians today, and many generations to come, will be long gone by then!

We must change this. Nigeria must rely more on the private sector for infrastructure development, to reduce fiscal burdens on the government.

Your Excellencies,

Much can be done to raise tax revenue, as the tax-to-GDP ratio is still low.

This must include improving tax collection, tax administration, moving from tax exemption to tax redemption, ensuring that multinational companies pay appropriate royalties and taxes,

Your Excellencies,

We must re-balance the structure and performance of the economy.

A very common refrain in Nigeria, with every successive government, is "we need to diversify the economy."

But is it so?

The economy of Nigeria is one of the most diversified in Africa, with the oil sector accounting for only 15% of the GDP, and 85% is in the other sectors.

Nigeria's challenge is not diversification. Nigeria's challenge is revenue concentration. This is because the oil sector accounts for 75.4 % of export revenue and 50 % of all government revenue.

The solution, therefore, is to unlock the bottlenecks that are hampering 85% of the economy. These include low productivity, very poor infrastructure and logistics, epileptic power supply, and inadequate access to finance for small and medium size enterprises.

Nigeria must also shift away from import

"the "the cost of governance in Nigeria is too high and must be drastically reduced to free up more resources for development"

substitution approach to export-focused industrialization. Nations do not thrive through import substitution; they thrive from exportbound industrialization.

Your Excellencies,

For faster growth, Nigeria must decisively fix the issue of power, once and for all.

There is no justification for Nigeria not having enough power.

The abnormal has become normal.

Nigeria's private sector is hampered by the high cost of power. Providing electricity will make Nigerian industries more competitive.

And it is not brain surgery.

Take two examples: Kenya and Egypt.

With the support of the African Development Bank, Kenya, under President Kenyatta, was able to expand electricity access from 32% in 2013 to 75% in 2022. What an incredible achievement within 10 years!

Today, 86% of Kenya's economy is powered by renewable energy. And in one project – the Last Mile Connectivity Project—the Bank's support allowed Kenya to connect over 2.3 million poor households to electricity – that is over 12 million people provided with affordable connection to grid power.

In 2014, Egypt had electricity deficit of 6,000 megawatts, but by 2022 it had 20,000 megawatts of surplus power generation capacity. Amazing!

I commend the Government of Nigeria on the recent commissioning of the several power projects. But there is still much to do.

Nigeria should invest massively in renewable energy, especially solar. The African Development Bank is implementing a \$25 billion Desert-to-Power program to provide electricity for 250 million people across the Sahel, including the northern parts of Nigeria.

Your Excellencies,

For inclusive development, Nigeria must completely revive its rural areas.

Nigeria's rural areas are forgotten and have become zones of economic misery.

To revive and transform these rural economies, we must make agriculture their main source of income, a business and a wealth creating sector. To be clear, agriculture is not a development

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

sector. Agriculture is a business.

The development of Special Agro-industrial Processing Zones will transform agriculture, add value for agricultural value chains and attract private sector food and agribusinesses into rural areas.

Special agro-industrial processing zones will help turn rural areas into new zones of economic prosperity and create millions of jobs.

The African Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank and the International Fund for Agricultural Development are currently supporting the implementation a \$518 million Special agro-industrial processing zones' program in 7 states and the Federal Capital Territory. Nigeria's best asset is its human capital. We must invest heavily in human capital to build up the skills Nigeria needs to be globally competitive, in a rapidly digitized global economy.

We must build world class educational institutions, and accelerate skills development in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, as well as in ICT and computer coding, which will shape the jobs of the future.

Your Excellencies,

There is an urgent need to unleash the potential of the youth. Today, over 75% of the population in Nigeria is under the age of 35. This presents a demographic advantage. But it must be turned into an economic advantage.

Nigeria must create youth-based wealth.



We are ready to help expand this to every state in the country. We are equally ready to help revamp agricultural lending institutions to help modernize the food and agriculture sector.

Your Excellencies,

The best asset of Nigeria is not its natural resources;

We must move away from the so-called "youth empowerment programs". Youths do not need handouts. They need investments. The current banking systems do not and will not lend to the youth. Special funds, while palliative in approach, are not systemic and are also not sustainable. What's needed to unleash the entrepreneurship of the youth in Nigeria are brand new financial ecosystems that understand, value, promote and provide financial instruments and platforms for nurturing business ventures of the youth at scale.

The African Development Bank and partners including Agence Francaise de

Developpement and the Islamic Development Bank launched the \$618 million I-DICE program to develop digital and creative enterprises. They will create 6 million jobs and add \$6.3 billion to Nigeria's economy.

Your Excellencies,

The African Development Bank is currently working with Central Banks and countries to design and support the establishment of Youth Entrepreneurship Investment Banks. These will be new financial institutions, run by young, professional, and highly competent experts and bankers, to develop and deploy new financial products and services for businesses and ventures of young people.

Several African counties plan to establish Youth Entrepreneurship Investment Banks.

Nigeria should establish the Youth Entrepreneurship Investment Bank.

Your Excellency, Mr. President-elect,

Nigeria's economy needs to soar!

You have an opportunity to make history.

History by building a resurgent Nigeria.

A united and prosperous Nigeria.

It is Nigeria's turn!

I wish you all the best for success.

May God bless --- and help you.

And may God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

"agro-industrial processing zones will help turn rural areas into new zones of economic prosperity and create millions of jobs. President **Bola Tinubu has** an opportunity to make history by building a resurgent Nigeria".

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POLITICS

Charting a Path to Success for Bola Tinubu

Bola Ahmed Tinubu

By Kingsley Okeke

As the political whirlwind shifts from the streets to the courtrooms in Nigeria, the victors and vanquished are betting on the judges to dispense justice in the recently concluded elections, especially the Presidential elections that produced the new leader, Bola Ahmed Tinubu. The elections have been described as one of the most contentious in the history of Nigeria's 4th republic, with multiple parties claiming victory while insisting that the process was utterly flawed. However, the opposition parties may have to wait longer, given that the provisions of Nigeria's electoral act, section 285 (6), provide that "An election tribunal shall

deliver judgment in writing within 180 days from the date of filing of the petition." Simply put, the new President is backed by the law to assume office while the courts decide the veracity or otherwise of the claims by the opposition that the elections were flawed.

President Tinubu's inauguration may have come and gone, but the task before him appears challenging. He has inherited an ailing economy with mounting debts and needs a clear plan. As a seasoned politician and former Governor of Lagos State, Tinubu is not new to the political landscape of Nigeria. He is, however, faced with the daunting task of steering Nigeria towards a better future. The task before him is enormous, as he must address Nigeria's numerous challenges and implement policies that will drive growth and development. For context, here is what lies ahead: **The State of the Nigerian Economy** Though the largest economy in Africa with over 200 million people, the economy has remained resilient with moderate GDP growth post-pandemic period, albeit below expectation with a spiralling inflationary rate. Despite its enormous potential, the Nigerian economy must overcome several challenges. The country heavily depends on oil exports, which account for over 90% of its foreign exchange earnings. The recent decline in oil prices has had a negative impact on the Nigerian economy, leading to a recession in 2016. This, coupled with

high inflation rates, has led to a decline in living standards for many Nigerians.

> E c o n o m i c Development

> > N i g e r i a's e c o n o m y has been hit hard by various factors, including t h e

COVID-19 pandemic, f a l l i n g oil prices, and rampant corruption. As a result, the country has been in recession since 2016, and the unemployment

rate has skyrocketed. Tinubu must focus on boosting economic growth and creating jobs to turn things around. One potential solution is to increase investment in infrastructure projects. This could include building new roads, bridges, and airports and expanding access to electricity and clean water. By doing so, Tinubu could not only create jobs but also stimulate economic growth in the long term. Another critical area that Tinubu could focus on is agriculture. Nigeria has vast arable land and a young population eager to work. By investing in modern farming techniques and supporting smallholder farmers, Tinubu could help boost agricultural productivity and create jobs in the process.

Diversifying the Nigerian Economy

One of the major tasks before the President is the diversification of the Nigerian economy. The over-dependence on oil has made the Nigerian economy vulnerable to external shocks. Therefore, the new administration must implement policies to drive the growth of other sectors, such as agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism. This will create jobs and reduce the country's reliance on oil exports.

Tackling Corruption

According to a PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) report, if not urgently tackled, corruption in Nigeria could cost the country up to 37% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2030. This cost is equated to around \$1,000 per person in 2014 and nearly \$2,000 per person by 2030. Corruption is one of the significant challenges facing Nigeria. It has harmed the country's development and led to a decline in living standards for many Nigerians. The new administration must tackle corruption head-on by implementing promoting policies transparency and accountability in public institutions. This will not only help to attract foreign investors but also boost the country's economic growth.

Improving Infrastructure

The immediate past President of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari, at the sidelines of the 77th UN General Assembly in New York, stated that Nigeria would require N348 trillion to develop infrastructure over the next ten years, with the private sector expected to provide 85.7 per cent of the amount. He spoke at the Nigeria International Economic Partnership Forum in New York and maintained that the fund was needed to implement the launched National Development Plan (2021-2025). The country needs more basic infrastructure such as roads, electricity, and water supply. This has hurt the country's economic growth and development. The new administration must prioritize infrastructure development by investing in new roads, power plants, and water supply systems. This will improve the standard of living for Nigerians and attract foreign investors.

Security

According the 2022 third-quarter to data published by SBM Intelligence on November 1, 1,718 deaths were reported in 3 months between July and September. Security is a primary concern in Nigeria, facing numerous security challenges such as insurgency, banditry, and kidnapping. The new administration must prioritize security by implementing policies that will tackle the root causes of insecurity in the country. This includes addressing the issue of poverty, promoting social cohesion, and investing in the training and equipping of security personnel. Nigeria faces several security challenges, including a long-running insurgency in the Northeast, rising ethnic tensions, and a surge in violent crime. To address these issues, Tinubu will need to take a multifaceted approach. One potential solution is to increase investment in the military and law enforcement agencies. By providing these organizations with the necessary resources, Tinubu could help improve their effectiveness and reduce the incidence of violent crime and insurgency. Another critical area that Tinubu could focus on is promoting interethnic dialogue and reconciliation. By bringing together representatives from different ethnic groups and encouraging open and honest dialogue, Tinubu could help to reduce tensions and promote national unity. Africa and the world await Nigeria's revival for a contagion effect, but that can only happen if the newly elected leader embraces the task before him with gusto. It will require hard work, dedication, and a strong commitment to driving growth and development in the country. We wait with bated breath as the story unfolds.



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Tweah; A silent performer in President Weah's administration

by King Richard

Samuel Tweah, the Minister of Finance and Development Planning of Liberia, has been recognized as one of Africa's top 25 finance leaders for his remarkable efforts in improving Liberia's economic conditions under President George Weah's leadership. His continuous hard work in preventing the loss of government resources to ghost workers and saving over \$3 million USD, generating employment across various ministries and agencies, and adding over two

o earn over \$11 million USD in salary and emoluments earned him this recognition. Mr. Tweah's active participation in fulfilling President Weah's promise to improve the economic lives of people has led to loaning over \$3 million USD to small and medium-scale business owners, enabling them to become active participants in advancing the nation's economy and improving the living standards of their households. The top 25 African finance leaders list includes renowned personalities such as Mrs. Rindra Rabarinirinarison, Minister of Economic and Finance, Madagascar; Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, President, African De

Zainab Ahmed, Minister of Finance, Nigeria; Hon. Renganaden Padayachy, Minister of

Finance, Economic Planning, and Development, Mauritius; Lesetja Kganyago, Governor, South African Reserve Bank (SARB); and others. Before becoming the Minister of Finance in 2016, Mr. Tweah worked as a senior advisor at the African Development Bank and served as the Chief Economist of the National Millennium Compact Development Project of Liberia. He has been known for being banker-friendly, working closely with the President's plan to ensure that bankers have enough funds to loan out to the business public in the interest of the national economy. The listing is a special recognition of Africa's finance leaders' topmost outstanding contributions to stabilizing many challenged national economies in Africa while driving recovery and stimulating growth, even amidst global economic shocks. The list showcases finance leaders who have enhanced the national economic outlook through strong fiscal and macroeconomic policies, and supported small businesses' growth despite the current global economic climate. The Top 25 African Finance Leaders list was compiled following a merit-based selection and rigorous review process of a 2-step points-based selection process that included nominations by a global pool of writers as well as experts in the African banking and finance industry, leading to the ALM Editorial Board's final review of the nominations and submissions. The complete list was unveiled during the African Finance Leaders' Networking Cocktail on April 13th, 2023, at the National Press Club, Washington, DC, USA, on the margins of the annual World Bank Group and IMF 2023 Spring meetings. The recognition of Mr. Samuel Tweah as one of Africa's Top 25 Finance Leaders is a testament to his dedication and commitment to improving Liberia's economic situation. Under President Weah's leadership, he has implemented policies and programs that have led to significant progress in various sectors, including finance, healthcare, and employment. One of Mr. Tweah's notable achievements is the successful implementation of measures to curb the loss of government resources to ghost workers. By saving over \$3 million USD, the Liberian government can now redirect these funds to other crucial areas, such as infrastructure

development and social welfare programs. Moreover, Mr. Tweah has also been instrumental in creating employment opportunities across several ministries and agencies. Through his efforts, over 2,000 health workers have been added to the payroll, earning over \$11 million USD in salary and emoluments. This not only improves the livelihood of the health workers but also enhances the quality of healthcare services in Liberia. In addition to these achievements, Mr. Tweah has also played a crucial role in President Weah's promise to assist in improving the economic life of the people and their households. To this end, over \$3 million USD has been loaned out to small and medium-scale business owners, allowing them to improve their living standards and become active participants in advancing the nation's economy. The recognition of Mr. Tweah as one of Africa's Top 25 Finance Leaders is a significant honor that highlights his contributions to Liberia's economic growth. Other notable leaders on the list include Mrs. Rindra Rabarinirinarison, Minister of Economic and Finance, Madagascar; Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, President, African DevelopmentBank;HajiaZainabAhmed,Minister of Finance, Nigeria; Hon. Renganaden Padayachy, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning, and Development, Mauritius; and Lesetja Kganyago, Governor, South African Reserve Bank (SARB). The Top 25 African Finance Leaders list is a showcase of finance leaders who have contributed significantly to the development of Africa through innovative policies, programs, and actions. They have helped stabilize many challenged national economies in Africa while driving recovery and stimulating growth, even amidst global economic shocks. According to the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, the Minister's inclusion in the Top 25 African Finance Leaders list yet again reaffirms Dr Tweah's as a leading light in the continent's finance sector. The list draws from finance ministers, central bank governors, and chief executives of leading banking, finance, and development institutions from across Africa. The nominations were reviewed and evaluated by a global pool of writers and experts in the African banking and finance industry before the ALM Editorial Board made the final decisions.



25 August 2023

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Dangote Refinery and activating the Nigerian economy

By King Richard

TheDangoteRefinery,locatedinLagos,Nigeria, was inaugurated recently in a ceremony that attracted five African heads of state, including President Mohammadu Buhari of Nigeria, Paul Kigami of Rwanda, Nana Akufo-Addo of Ghana, Faure Gnassingbé of Togo, Mahamat Déby of Chad, Macky Sall of Senegal, and Mohamed Bazoum of Niger. Despite the fact that Nigeria is a significant oil-producing country in the globe, its residents have faced numerous challenges in obtaining petroleum products on which they rely heavily. Many people are hoping that the Dangote Refinery will help make crucial petroleum products available to the people of West Africa and its neighbours. Aliko Dangote's new refinery can meet 100% of Nigeria's refined product needs (Gasoline, 53 million litres per day; Diesel, 34 million litres per day; Kerosene, 10 million litres per day; and Aviation Jet, 2 million litres per day) while also having a surplus of each product for export. Its importance to the Nigerian economy can be comprehended in numerous ways:



 Reducing Dependence on Imported Petroleum Products: Despite its oil production, Nigeria has historically relied largely on imported petroleum products to meet domestic demand. By developing domestic refining capacity, the Dangote Refinery hopes to dramatically reduce this reliance. This can reduce import bills, conserve foreign exchange reserves, and improve the country's energy security. • Energy Self-Sufficiency: The Dangote Refinery's increased refining capacity will help Nigeria become more self-sufficient in meeting its domestic energy needs by reducing the reliance on imported petroleum products. Since the three major refineries in the country are grounded, it is expected that the Dangote refinery will provide much-needed succor to the populace. • Foreign Exchange Savings: With reduced imports of refined petroleum products, Nigeria can save substantial foreign exchange that would have otherwise been spent on imports, improving the country's balance of trade and conserving valuable foreign currency reserves. One of the key points experts are looking out for is how the operations of the new refinery will help boost the foreign exchange

• Job Creation: The construction and

operation of the Dangote Refinery have generated numerous job opportunities, both directly and indirectly, providing employment to a significant number Nigerians and contributing of to unemployment reducing rates. • Skill Development: The project offers opportunities for skills development and knowledge transfer, as workers are trained in various technical and operational aspects of refinery operations, which can enhance Nigeria's human capital and technical expertise.

• Industrial Development: The Dangote Refinery's presence contributes to the development of Nigeria's downstream oil and gas sector and associated industries, creating a conducive environment for the growth of ancillary industries and supporting the country's overall industrialization efforts. • Value Addition: The refinery adds value to Nigeria's crude oil resources by converting them into higher-value refined petroleum products, thereby capturing a larger portion of the value chain within the country and increasing the overall economic benefit derived from oil production. **Export Potential:** The Dangote Refinery has the potential to become an important exporter of refined petroleum contributing products, to **Nigeria's**



export earnings and reducing the country's dependence on crude oil exports alone. This will have a positive ripple effect on the Gross Domestic Product of the nation. **Infrastructure Development:** The construction and operation of the refinery require significant infrastructure development, such as transportation networks, storage facilities, and utilities. This infrastructure development can benefit other sectors and regions, promoting economic growth and integration. The development regional will increase the living standard of several household thereby taking them out of poverty. • Revenue Generation: The Dangote contribute to Refinery's operations can government revenue through taxes, royalties, and other levies, providing additional funds for public investment in infrastructure, social services, and other developmental projects. • Economic Diversification: The refinery supports Nigeria's efforts to diversify its economy beyond oil dependence. By developing downstream industries and expanding valueadded activities, the Dangote Refinery helps to create a more resilient and diversified economy. These are some of the key relevance of the Dangote Refinery to the Nigerian economy. It is important to note that the actual impact will depend on successful operations, effective management, and favorable market conditions. It's important to note that the actual impact of the Dangote Refinery on the Nigerian economy will depend on various factors, including its successful completion, efficient operations, and the broader policy and regulatory environment. Nonetheless, it is anticipated that the refinery will play a significant role in transforming Nigeria's oil and gas sector and contributing to the country's economic development.

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"Aliko Dangote's new refinery can meet 100% of Nigeria's over 200 million citizens' refined product needs while also having a surplus of each product for export.".



RBIDZ; Driver of Socio-Economic development and Revitalization

The Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone (RBIDZ) whose strategy is to cluster smaller, downstream manufacturing businesses around existing major industries in the city, as well as attract small-medium industrial operations that will create employment and economic growth whilst broadening South Africa's export products has positioned itself to be the driver of the socio-economic development and revitalization of the South African economy. These views were expounded by Mr. Thabane Zulu, the chief executive officer of the organisation in a recent interview with a team from African Leadership Magazine. He said the government of South Africa has its reasons for choosing the RBIDZ for revenue collection and explained the purpose for the huge interest in the Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone. (Excerpt)

As an astute administrator with versed knowledge in the area of FDI facilitation, having served as the Director for International Trade and Development for Africa and the Middle East at the Department of Trade and Industry, can you share some of your efforts towards facilitating foreign direct investment into the country? " During my tenure in the Department of Trade, Industry, and Competition (the DTIC), I understood that the strength of any nation is measured in both its economic strides and political terms, as well as its mandate. It is for this reason that I worked with leaders of all spheres of government to prioritise and elevate the issue of economic development and stimulation to the top of the agenda.

We directed all potential investors from different parts of the globe to all corners of the country with the understanding that our country possesses diverse uniqueness and an array of potential for investors.

At the DTIC, we also took advantage of the euphoria associated with the first President of a democratic South Africa, Tata Nelson Mandela, affectionately known by his clan's name, Madiba.

Madiba believed that political freedom had to be accompanied by economic freedom for all. He lobbied the world to be part of the rebuilding of South Africa—a land of prosperity with all South Africans benefiting.

We can safely state that at the Department of Trade, Industry, and Competition (DTIC), we built on the foundation that he laid; hence, SA's economy became integrated with the economies of the world during the first 15 years of our democracy.



.Mr. Thabane Zulu, CEO, RBIDZ

As we were integrating with other economies, the South African government strengthened the country's international marketing campaign aimed at positioning the Republic of South Africa as a destination for foreign direct investment. We worked closely with the International Marketing Council, and we continuously advocated the government's message that we were using FDI as a source for economic development, income growth, employment creation, and skill exchange for millions of indigenous people.

We utilised many of our ambassadors' and high commissioners' offices in various parts of the world in order to present our FDI packages while also harnessing relations with their counterparts around the world. We also utilised the platforms of international conferences and trade activities as part of marketing the country. Positioning SA as a destination for sports, tourism, and conferencing helped a lot in terms of positioning SA on the map for the world to see.

Those who visited SA for the World Cup held in 2021 and other international sporting activities, including business conferences, ended up making business decisions that resulted in foreign direct investments and strengthened relations through bilateral relations and agreements".

The overarching vision of the **RBIDZ** is to become a driver of socio-economic development *revitalization* and of the economy, especially as the world from emerges the economic shocks occasioned by the global COVID-19. Can you share some of your leadership strides in moving the RBIDZ towards its vision?

" I assumed my new responsibilities as the Chief Executive Officer of the Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone (RBIDZ) on July 1, 2020, at the height of the devastation of the province's economy due to the outbreak of COVID-19. In my address to all categories of staff, I emphasised the need to restart and aggressively work towards rebuilding and revitalising the economy. At this juncture, it was significant to re-visit our strategies aimed at re-positioning ourselves as an ideal destination for investments, but critically rebuild relations and boost strategies brought to their attention that we had to reposition RBIDZ as a driver of socio-economic development in response to challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to job creation, our government singled out RBIDZ as critical in broadening the municipal revenue collection base to improve the quality of life significantly in our area of operation, which is located in Umhlathuze Local and King Cetshwayo District Municipalities, in the northern part of KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa.

Importantly, I do believe that efforts to ensure the acquisition of more land (Phase 1F) to expand our investment estates from the local municipality were the most important development during my first few months

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"As we rebuild these metropolitan areas and others, as engines of national and provincial economic development, we want to ensure inclusive economic growth. the redistribution of wealth, and the creation of an equal society" " As we rebuild these metropolitan areas and others, as engines of national and provincial economic development, we want to ensure inclusive economic growth, the redistribution of wealth. and the creation of an equal society"

in the organisation. I was able to galvanise the staff to normalise relations with various stakeholders, such as municipalities, as they are key to the existence and operation of the RBIDZ. Special Economic Zones in general are located in either a local, district, or metropolitan municipality. Therefore, it was vital for me to strengthen relations quickly to ensure integrated working relations.

I further ensured that there was integration with key stakeholders, especially where there were common interests and objectives, with the aim to collaborate and collectively integrate into the planning, designing, and implementation of activities aimed at fasttracking foreign direct investments. The local government sector is therefore an important stakeholder in the drive to build a sustainable and successful RBIDZ, and we are paying stringent attention to that area, taking into consideration the value added of investments towards social upliftment".

Part of the reasons for the government's establishment of Special Economic Zones, or SEZs, is to, among other things, develop export-oriented industries, attract foreign direct investments, ensure technology transfer, and create opportunities. employment How would you say these SEZs have lived up to the reasons for their formation?

"Well, as of today, there is also a huge interest in the Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone, particularly because Richards Bay is the centre of operations for South Africa's aluminium industry and a destination for diverse multi-national industries.

Since we launched RBIDZ a few years ago, this special economic zone has been able to secure multi-million rand operational investors whilst also boasting a healthy investment pipeline with investments valued close to R100 billion representing different key sectors of the economy, but critically, 80% of those being energy-related projects.

People living in far-flung areas that were previously marginalised by the historic environment are already benefiting from investments in this Special Economic Zone. There is no shadow of a doubt that the addition of one-stop shops in the Special Economic Zone as well as concerted efforts to support investors are fast-tracking more investments for the benefit of our people.

Moreover, this is also boosting our



manufacturing sector, which is geared towards export. The third of South Africa's manufactured exports are produced in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, where the RBIDZ (Special Economic Zone) is located. 'We continue to promote the RBIDZ through various international and national platforms, including bilateral agreements with strategic countries, inbound and outbound missions, media platforms, conferences, and exhibitions, wherein we interact with potential investors and ordinary members of society at large. We discover a lot about the impact of our strategies on the world of innovation.

In addition, we have just conducted a stakeholder perception, satisfaction, and brand visibility survey on how we are perceived as the RBIDZ. The responses we have received are encouraging and earnestly recommend areas of improvement where needed, but at the same time, they have highlighted the positive impact that is yielded by the majority of our stakeholders in various categories. 'We are already putting things in place to improve on the positive responses. And we are also discussing other areas of our operations to remove bottlenecks that may make it difficult for foreign direct investors to inject that much-needed investment'

We are further focusing on improving and adding customised incentives, environmental impact assessment processes, and other general compliance issues to fast-track the implementation of projects.

We further undertake to continue to seek mutual trade and investment cooperation with our sister provinces from other countries using the 27 Consulate General Offices that are located in our province.

As guided by bilateral relations between South Africa and specific countries, the KwaZulu-Natal government has signed memoranda of understanding with a number of provinces and cities. We see our two SEZs in the province as playing a complementary role instead of competing with one another in other provinces and countries.

Over the years, the diplomatic corps has been encouraging entrepreneurs and multinationals in their respective countries to participate in sector-specific joint business programmes, including regular business seminars and forums hosted in KZN.

In addition, the KZN government has ongoing interactions with European ambassadors. All of them have affirmed their commitment to promote people-to-people contacts and create business-to-business relations involving KZN- based entrepreneurs and those in their respective countries.

A few years ago, KZN was afforded the opportunity to host, on behalf of the South African government, the Ocean Rim Association, a forum of countries that are strategically located along the Indian Ocean.

As RBIDZ, we were particularly inspired by the



In my address to all categories of staff, I emphasised the need to restart and aggressively work towards rebuilding and revitalising the economy. theme: "IORA uniting the peoples of Africa, Asia, Australasia, and the Middle East through enhanced cooperation for peace, stability, and sustainable development."

Accordingly, the KZN government committed to working with member countries to facilitate twinning of cities, provinces, academic institutions, partnerships and amongst the business fraternity.

Given the fact that IORA is sharply focusing on the the ocean economy, government took the pursue decision to interests in the oil industry, and gas with RBIDZ playing a central role".

During your time as the Director General for the Department of Energy, can you share some of your policies towards bolstering South Africa's energy mix paradigm in order to achieve a radical economic transformation?

" I remain encouraged by the fact that I have worked with RBIDZ for a long time, since my tenure at the national level (the DTIC). I recall that we supported RBIDZ's focus on the implementation of the Special Economic Zone programme, funding support for investors, and the Black Industrialists Programme to drive radical economic transformation within the energy sector as well as other economic sectors. Now that I am the CEO, we remain determined to ensure that our people benefit from natural resources.

This province is blessed with too many natural resources to mention. We must work together to beneficiate and convert such resources into wealth that builds rural economies for the benefit of all the people of this province and the country as a whole.

We have reiterated on many platforms that economic hubs such as Richards Bay, inherited from colonialism, were geared to serve the interests of the imperial metropolis and a select few individuals at the expense of ordinary surrounding communities.

As we rebuild these areas as engines of national and provincial economic development, we want to ensure inclusive economic growth, the redistribution of wealth, and the creation of an equal society.

When I worked for the Department of Energy, we prioritised energy security for the country and pursued an energy mix including coal, nuclear, shale gas, and renewable energy.

We have contributed towards guiding the former leaders of government to ensure the establishment of the Cabinet Energy Security Sub-Committee that oversaw the development of the energy mix. The committee replaced the National Nuclear Energy Executive Coordinating Committee (NNEECC). This committee was initially chaired by former Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe. The composition and leadership of the committee were changed in April 2013 following a recommendation by the committee".

"The Cabinet Energy Security Sub-Committee is comprised of the following ministries:

- 1. Energy
- 2. International Relations and

Cooperation

- 3. Public Enterprises
- 4. State Security
- 5. Trade and Industry
- 6. Economic Development
- 7. Defence and Military Veterans
- 8. Mineral resources and
- 9. Environmental Affairs"

The young people are the future that Africa depends on; how do they stand to benefit from your initiatives?

" As RBIDZ, we envision a future in which the scope of possible professions, skills, trades, qualifications, and knowledge areas for young people in Richards Bay and KwaZulu-Natal as a whole will be extensively expanded and advanced, in line with global trends.

Gone are the times when young people were only told that they must look for jobs as their only option for starting a working life. We see a future where, as a result of being skilled in a wide variety of fields, young people will become entrepreneurs of note, competing with the best in the world and following global trends.

As we facilitate foreign direct investments, we want young people to benefit from the transfer of skills and to also be shareholders in local consortiums that form partnerships with investors".

You have been conferred with the honour to speak and receive

the African Energy Leadership Commendation Award during the African Energy Leadership Forum and Awards, Houston, Texas, 2023. How does this affect your personality?

" In the face of crippling load-shedding, which has resulted in the collapse of both big and small businesses, this award handed over to me and RBIDZ as a whole has injected hope about energy security in the future.

We have been recognised for consistently displaying a deep understanding of the role of RBIDZ in terms of meeting the future energy needs of Richards Bay and the province.

Following the African Energy Leadership Commendation Award, there is a groundswell of positive messages not only in Richards Bay but in various parts of KwaZulu-Natal and the country at large.

The award has put RBIDZ firmly on the global map. Clearly, a message was effectively communicated to the world that KZN's government entity was fast becoming a critical player in the global energy space.

This is a humbling experience and a vote of confidence in our ability to ensure energy security in the province. As we deal with energy, an important sector of our economy, we are guided by the provincial government's energy plans as well as national governments' directives and policies.





We are planning to host, in the near future, the Provincial Energy Summit in Durban, to be hosted by the Member of Executive Committee (MEC) for Economic Development, Tourism, and Environmental Affairs, Mr. Siboniso Duma.

We understand that, as an entity, we cannot operate in isolation. The MEC is determined to see our plans on energy linked to the programmes of action of all spheres of government. Therefore, we will ensure that we host an all-inclusive energy summit for the province. The date and venue will be announced in consultation with the MEC. We extend an invitation to the international roleplayers to be part of this summit.

We commit to ensuring the provision of reliable and efficient energy services at competitive rates.

Our government emphasises the importance of having an energy sector that is socially equitable through expanded access to energy and affordable tariffs. Another critical aspect is the creation of an energy sector that is environmentally sustainable to reduce emissions and pollution".

On behalf of Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone, would you like to make a further comment?

" As earlier stated, we extend an invitation to the international role-players to be part of the KZN Energy Summit to be hosted by RBIDZ on behalf of the KZN government. We want potential investors to come and explore RBIDZ as a site for energy infrastructure. The date and venue will be announced in due course in consultation with the MEC, Mr. Siboniso Duma, and other key stakeholders.

Ordinary members of society and stakeholders in the private sector are positive that this gathering will not only find solutions to the energy crisis, but they also expect delegates to emerge from this summit with a clear and coherent strategy on how to ensure energy security for future generations.

It should be emphasised that a coherent energy strategy is dependent on effective planning, collaboration, and coordination by all stakeholders. The question of integration in planning across different spheres of government will therefore dominate discussions.

Furthermore, we are pleased with the recognition of the role played by the Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone (Special Economic Zone), while we also continue to urge you to be the voice of the African continent, which is poised with an abundance of potential, prosperity, and diversification".



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Sierra Leone's President Julius Maada Bio Bets on his 5 Years Strides for Victory in the coming Polls

By Kingsley Okeke

President Julius Maada Bio's visit to the House of Lords in the United Kingdom on the invitation of a high-ranking member of the House of Lords and British Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Uganda and Rwanda, Lord Dolar Popat, was greeted with a lot of enthusiasm. With a vibrant array of political, business and diplomatic leaders, including the British Minister of State for Development & Africa, The Rt Hon Andrew Commonwealth Mitchell MP, Secretary-General, Hon Patricia Scotland KC, Edris Elba, OBE, British Born Hollywood superstar, amongst others, the event provided a platform to x-ray the President's developmental strides, as leaders took turns to highlight the first-hand experience of his leadership footprints. In the words of Edris Elba, "There is something remarkable happening in Sierra Leone. In the last few years, we have seen the number of girls going to school increase from 17% to 78%; and the country's parliament unanimously passed the Gender Bill to promote mandatory gender inclusion across political offices and businesses." submission Mr Elba's accentuates astronomical the strides made by the Bio-led government amidst very challenging economic conditions. As the upcoming presidential polls draw nearer, President Bio is banking on the progress made by his administration in the last five years to secure a victory at the polls.

President Bio emerged in 2018, pledging to transform the West African nation's economy and social systems. The country had been struggling with poverty, corruption, weak institutions and poor infrastructure. President Bio's government has implemented several policies aimed at reviving the country's economy, strengthening its democratic institutions, and improving the lives of its citizens.

Economic Development

Under President Bio's leadership, Sierra Leone's economy has seen significant growth. The country's GDP grew by 5.1% in 2019, up from 3.5% in 2018. The government's flagship Free Quality Education program has seen more than two million children enrolled in school, with plans to expand the program further. This initiative has increased education access, particularly for disadvantaged children.

President Bio's government has also made significant investments in infrastructure development. government The has completed several road projects, including the construction of a four-lane highway linking Freetown to the provinces. He also recently unveiled a brand-new airport in Lungi, fully equipped with modern stateof-the-arts equipment. These projects have created employment opportunities and opened up new areas for business investment.

The Bio-led administration has prioritized the reform of the mining sector, insisting that more revenue should accrue to the resourcebearing communities. These reforms have also led to the hiring of over 6000 more citizens.

With the government's new Mines and Minerals Development Act 2022, many communities in mining areas are also experiencing more direct benefits from the extractive sector today than ever before. Surface rent, taxes, and community development agreement (CDA)payments have increased tenfold (from 0.01% to 1%). 20% of royalties now go back into mining communities. The CDA funds are used towards the sustainable development of the mining communities.

Today, transparency and accountability in and governance of the mining sector are also at an all-time high, with Sierra Leone achieving a remarkably high implementation score of 87.5% from the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).

Improvement in Healthcare

President Bio's government has made significant investments in the healthcare sector. The government has increased the budget allocation for healthcare from 6% in 2018 to 11.6% of the national budget in 2021. This increase has enabled the government to undertake several initiatives to improve access to quality healthcare.

The government has constructed several hospitals and health centres across the country, which has increased access to medical care for Sierra Leoneans. The government has also implemented the Free Healthcare Initiative



"Today, transparency and accountability governance are at an all-time high; with Sierra Leone achieving a remarkably high implementation score of 87.5% from the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)."

for pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children under five. The initiative has significantly reduced maternal and child mortality rates in the country.

Strengthening Democracy

President Bio's government has also made significant strides in strengthening democratic institutions in the country. The government has undertaken several initiatives to promote transparency, accountability, and good governance. Unlike the previous government,

President Bio announced the dates of the June 24th elections way ahead of time, allowing parties to prepare for the elections. implemented government has The National Anti-Corruption Strategy to fight corruption and improve accountability. The government has also undertaken several reforms to strengthen the judiciary and other democratic institutions. The government has increased the budget allocation for the judiciary and has appointed several new judges. These measures have improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the justice system in the country.

While the Bio-led administration has scored high in various development indices, more needs to be done. In his whistle-stop thank-you and project assessment tours to different chiefdoms and regions in the country in the last couple of weeks, President Bio maintained that he is not unaware of the present challenges; he remains committed to redoubling his efforts towards solving most of the country's critical challenges as he prepares for another term of 5 years. He stated that while the last five years have been built on the New Direction Agenda, the next 5-year term will be anchored on the "Right Direction Agenda: Consolidating Gains, Increasing Investments, and Accelerating Transformation." The government has implemented several programs to create employment opportunities for young people, such as the Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Program. Still, more needs to be done to address this issue.

As the elections draw closer, 28-year-old Abdulai Kamara believes the election is a twohorse race between President Julius Maada Bio and All Progressive Congress, APC candidate Dr Samura Kamara. However, he maintained that "its victory for President Bio as the opposition seems to be in utter confusion."









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AFRICAN TOURISM; GAME DRIVE TO TRANSFORM THE CONTINENT

By Peter Burdin



Even though she grew up next to one of Africa's most prestigious game reserves, nineyear-old Neliswa had never seen an elephant. Now thanks to a conservation education programme aimed at empowering some of Africa's rural communities she's becoming an expert on the continent's rich natural history. Under the expert eye of former game ranger Kulu Benson Neliswa and her classmates are given free game drives into local reserves around South Africa's famous Kruger Park to observe and learn about African wildlife. Thanks to the Africa Foundation's Environmental Education Programme known as ECHO more than a thousand school children have taken part in the game drive conservation lessons, and have benefitted from the knowledge of experienced Rangers like Kulu Benson who've spent their lives in the African bush studying animal behaviour. Some 64 Primary schools and 36 secondary schools are taking part in the programme in South Africa, while 9 primary and 5 secondary schools in East Africa also participate. The

Foundation's aim is to educate a new generation of African school children to the beauty that surrounds them and the importance of conservation. Thanks to support from the leading conservation and tourism company &Beyond and the South African bank Nedbank's Yes4Youth initiative a network of 287 young stewards or teaching assistants have been deployed into classrooms to deliver environmental lessons. Almost three-quarters of the stewards are young women. Their work demonstrates that in a country with high unemployment there is a vast untapped talent pool in South Africa ready and able to support the school-children. According to high school teacher Kutshemba Ingrid Khoza the programmes makes a real difference: "The stewards that are placed in our

school are working very hard to make the learners love their environment. "It means that despite the fact that we are from a rural area, we deliver quality education. Our learners are learning a lot about nature conservation. They are given time for game drives, they plant trees and flowers in the school and make sure they look after them." Likewise ten-year old learner Charity Mathebula to enjoying the stewards' lessons: young "I'm excited to be taught by someone who is younger, who explains lessons in a fun manner that is not easy to forget." Charity liked the fact that audiovisual displays included are as part of the learning experience: "Thank you to someone who made it possible for us to be given a projector so we can learn about animals that we can see". The projectors enable the children to see



Africa's vast range of wildlife which many have not been able to see at first-hand. The children are also provided with workbooks which teach them a range of subjects about the habitats of plants and animals. They learn about the importance of forests for the growth of continent's indigenous trees and plants, and they learn about grasslands and great Africa's plains where the big cats like lions, leopards and cheetahs live, and where all kinds of antelopes, zebras, and wildebeests roam. Clearly though the highlight of the teaching has to be the game drives of Kulu Benson and his team of Rangers. These give the children hands-on experience to observe the animals at close quarters. They learn to appreciate the beauty of their continent and, crucially, learn how important it is to protect and nurture it. In East Africa the Foundation employs 8 male rangers and a female ranger. And, according to 12-year-old Arafa Makumbi Juma, their impact has been massive: "Before we learned a little concerning environmental conservation but now we know about coral restoration, fish, turtles, dolphins and how to conserve our environment" Her contemporary Ali says the environmental teaching has encouraged him to be a conservationist when he grows up: "I've learned about the environment, how it benefits us and marine environments and corals. I've learned the importance of coral restoration.IwanttosharethelessonsIlearned about protecting corals with my community because it brings tourism. In future I can be a local beach boy and boat captain." In Zanzibar the Africa Foundation is actually restoring the local coral reef which has been largely destroyed by a surfeit of tourist cruise ships and over-enthusiastic divers and snorkelling. The work to grow new coral demonstrates how damaged ecosystems can be restored to their former glory. There's also a massive tree planting programme in Kenya's Nyakweri Forest which aims to plant 20,000 seedings a year. This provides a learning opportunity for the local school-children. Through

nurturing these young saplings in a tree nursery they learn about the conservation importance of the Forest and the extended Masai Mara conservation area nearby. In the words of the Africa Foundation's mission statement it is "Empowering communities and enabling conversation". The Foundation hopes that its Environmental Education Programme will provide the continent's young people with a greater knowledge and understanding of the

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"I've learned about the environment, how it benefits us, and marine environments and corals. I've learned the importance of coral restoration. I want to share the lessons I learned about protecting corals with my community because it brings tourism. In the future, I can be a local beach boy and boat captain."



importance of nature to the life and wellbeing of the continent. It's important work especially in the age of climate change that is bringing drought, floods and devastation

to so many of Africa's ecosystems. This climate emergency strikes at the heart of Africa's fragile ecosystems and is a theme at the core of the African Development Bank's mission to seek to mitigate the impact of climate change across the continent. More than half of the Bank's expenditure is now devoted to climate adaptation. . It estimates that it will cost Africa more than \$ 7 billion a year to combat this climate emergency and that Africa's poorest and most vulnerable countries will require at least \$500 billion to tackle climate change. This existential battle will be high on the agenda of the Bank's Annual meetings later this month in Egypt. The UN Secretary-General has already warned that the world is already on "Code Red" in response to the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report. In Africa we might already be beyond "Code Red." The Bank has already committed \$13

billion in climate finance to transform its impact. The theme of the Bank's Annual Meetings last year was "Achieving Climate Resilience and a Just Energy Transition for Africa". It sought urgent solutions to these two massive challenges. AstheBank'sPresidentDrAdesinaargued:

"We owe it to our people living in the most vulnerable parts of the continent, those who are already experiencing extreme heat, droughts, floods and food insecurity, and those millions still without electricity. That's why we will mobilise 25 billion dollars by 2025 to make our Desert To Power a reality in the Sahel".

He also singled out the Great Green Wall project to plant millions of trees across Africa from west to east as a key element in plans to create a greener and more sustainable future for millions of Africans.

Building climate resilience isn't only about conservation, it's also about better use of the land food security in a continent about to double the size of its population in the next generation. That's why the Bank has rolled out a 1.5 billion dollar plan to boost wheat production by 11 million metric runs. It also boosted the production of staples like maize, rice and soybeans. Likewise to meet the threat of farmers losing access to vital fertilizers it deployed its Africa Fertilizer Finance Facility to boost crop production. help countries The Bank has also supported millions of African farmers, the majority of them women, by funding the development of climate resistant seeds which can thrive at higher temperatures while increasing yields. This is designed to make Africans across the continent more resilient to the ravages of climate change while paving the way to Africa's resurgence. That's why teaching the rising generation of African children the importance of the environment is so crucial. They are already entering a world where through no fault of their own they will have to live with rising temperatures and all the devastation that will bring to their lives and livelihoods. The more they can be taught about the world that surrounds them the better. They need to know the importance of forests and grasslands to protecting their environment because without well husbanded and well protected forests and grasslands temperatures will rise even higher. They also need to learn the importance of Africa's so-called blue economy and the fact that healthy rivers and oceans need to be preserved and not polluted or over fished. The work of the Foundation aims to give as many African children as possible a deeper awareness of what's at stake and why it is so important for them to learn to protect and conserve the continent's natural habitats. That's why at secondary school level the ECHO programme includes courses on the importance of energy and photosynthsies; the symbiotic relationship between elephants and marula trees; the cost of damaged and inbalanced ecosystems as demonstrated by the impact of El Nino, man-made fires and

poaching; and the importance of recycling for the conservation of Africa's limited water supplies. As one steward put it: "We need to learn more about the importance of conserving and preserving our environment as well as our resources for future generations". At its most basic level the programme enables young children like Neliswa who'd never seen an elephant before to develop a desire to understand the beauty of the environment around her. However it also has a much broader mission - to give her and her generation the tools to save Africa from the worst revages of the climate emergency. As one of the children's teaching assistants Leean Ayanda Mathebula explained the programme has also given her a new appreciation of the environment along with a job and a new career: "I have learned a lot. I never thought teaching is a good career until I fell in love with my job as a Steward, and that has given me a chance to go after teaching studies. I've also learned a lot about how to take a good care about our environment and the importance of all the natural resources and things we have. And the importance of the career that we never thought about as environment teachers". Leean and her teaching assistant colleagues are now working in 64 primary schools and 32 secondary schools around the Kruger. In addition to delivering environmental lessons, they support community clean-up activities and supervise the planting of food and indigenous trees. Together they have taught almost 40,000 children. of The vision the Africa Foundation and its &Beyond partners is threefold - care of the people, care of the wildlife and care of the land. In its own words: "To leave our world a better place" It would seem they've made a pretty good start.

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" we will mobilise 25 billion dollars by 2025 to make our Desert To Power a reality in the Sahel".

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Ghana's dilemma: Life or debt?

Stephen Williams



The issue of Africa's sovereign debt, that is debt carried by an African state, has been of growing importance as various countries struggle to meet their domestic and international financial commitments. This struggle has fed into economies, perhaps most notably in Ghana where the country's independent power producers (IPPs) are adamant that debts owed to them by government must be paid in order for them to continue supplying power.

According to the IPPs, shutting down power plants remains the only viable option if the debts are not settled, and the state's power company has resorted to cutting power to those entities that did not meet their debts. This even threatened the power supply to Ghana's parliament until a last minute arrangement was reached. The Ghana government has attempted to restructure this debt with a proposal to the IPPs to honour its debt-servicing obligation to both domestic and external creditors this year. The projected interest payments on loans could cost the state about GH 53bn (\$5bn) putting government in a parlous fiscal position.

A \$3bn bailout package from the IMF was reached at a stafflevel and was contingent on a

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"Today there are over 30 PPAs operating in Ghana and the country's energy sector generates a debt burden of about \$1bn and excess capacity charges of \$500m annually.

mammoth debt operation exercise. The IMF's support is dependent on Ghana meeting a

string of conditions, such as raising revenues through hiking the rate of value added tax, tariff increases on public utilities and an end



to central bank finance for the government. The fund also asked Ghana to make progress on restructuring its domestic debts.

Ghana's Minister of finance, Ken Ofori-Atta claims the fund's conditions had been met. "Those are literally all done, so we are pretty much there," he said. "We have done what is required." Its restructuring talks are being closely watched by other low and middleincome countries who are in, or at risk of, default.

However, the IPPs have stubbornly refused to reschedule the bulk of Ghana's domestic debt. An added difficulty has been that the debt has been denominated in US dollars. The US currency has steadily appreciated against the Ghanaian Cedi.

Additionally, the initial power purchase agreements (PPAs) stipulated a take-or-pay clause, i.e. that an off-take levy was payable whether or not the power was utilised.

In excess generation 2018, capacity contracted under take-or-pay PPAs cost the government \$320m in capacity charges, which was projected to hit \$620m annually with the addition of new plants in 2019, Today there are over 30 PPAs operating in the country and the country's energy sector generates a debt burden of about \$1bn and excess capacity charges of \$500m annually. At the end of 2021, when Ghana's debt GDP ratio reached an unprecedented 80% threshold, IPP payments were a major factor, but sovereign debt was also a significant problem.

There is a strong argument that Ghana's debt woes began with its first issuance of a Eurobond in 2007 when the discovery of



off-shore oil sparked a surge in economic optimism.

The country's debut bond of \$750m was followed up by the issuance of two additional Eurobonds totaling \$2bn in 2013 and 2014.

Other countries in Africa soon followed suit. In 2011, Zambia obtained its first sovereign credit rating from Fitch that enabled the country to issue two Eurobonds in 2012 and 2014. This increased Zambia's external debt by an incredible 300% in three years.

Kenya likewise jumped on the bandwagon, issuing three Eurobonds between 2014 and 2019 that totaled around \$5.5 billion.30

According to the World Bank's International Debt Statistics handbook, the stock of Eurobond debt for sub-Saharan Africa grew from about \$32bn in 2010 to \$135bn in 2020, a 322% rate of increase. Despite their name, Eurobonds are denominated in US dollars.

In mid-April, during the annual IMF-World Bank meetings, the Paris Club met. Ghana's sovereign debt was high on the agenda. The hope was that the Paris Club group, which is essentially a consortium of countries such as the US, EU and UK (but not China) that have lent to developing countries, would coordinate their response to requests for debt rescheduling.

Ghana had reached an agreement with the IMF for a \$3bn support package in December.

But the Fund required bilateral lenders to provide assurances they will restructure its debt as a condition of signing off on the loan. Ghana's finance minister said that official creditor financial assurances were expected by May, and that the country's domestic debt exchange programme would yield 38 billion cedis (\$3.16bn) of debt service savings in 2023. He also confirmed that \$20bn of external debt was eligible for restructuring, 66% of the external debt stock. Of that, \$5.4bn in official creditor debt will be restructured.

An understanding with official creditors and an agreement in principle on Eurobond restructuring is expected in July, with the 2030 Eurobond (partially guaranteed by the World Bank) included in the restructuring, the minister said.

He added that Ghana needs a \$1.5bn financial stability fund to ensure appropriate solvency and liquidity. "The World Bank has fortunately agreed to support this fund with a quarter of a billion and government, looking at the space we have, also committing about \$500m to that," Ofori-Atta said at the virtual press briefing following the Paris Club meeting. Ghana's net foreign exchange reserves fell sharply in 2022 and are currently \$2.6bn, Ghana's central bank governor Ernest Addison said at the briefing. Stephen Williams

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Access to financial services has been a major policy focus since the Bank of Ghana was established. Numerous policy interventions to achieve inclusive access to financial services subsequently led to the establishment of several non-bank financial institutions, including savings and loans companies, microfinance institutions, as well as rural and community banks. The late 2000s marked a notable change in the focus of the Bank's financial inclusion strategy towards Digital Financial Service (DFS), on account of significant penetration of mobile telephony across the country.

In 2018, the Government issued a five-year National Financial Inclusion and Development Strategy (NFIDS) to further drive Ghana's financial inclusion efforts in a coherent and coordinated manner. Being the overarching policy document on financial inclusion, the NFIDS was developed through broad stakeholder collaborative efforts and benefited extensively from rich diverse views. The strategy effectively addresses challenges to access to financial services and provides a roadmap for comprehensive reforms towards the wider development of the financial services sector.

Alongside these policy measures, the Bank continued to improve on the supervisory and regulatory frameworks of the payment ecosystem to create an enabling environment for digital financial products. For instance, passage of the Branchless Banking Guidelines in 2008 paved way for the branchless delivery of financial services by banks in partnership with mobile telephony service providers, thus giving rise to the mobile financial services in Ghana. Since then, the Bank has streamlined the regulatory environment with the passage of the Payments Systems and Services Act, 2019 (Act 987) to reflect the dynamism in the DFS space. The Act is anchored on proportionate regulation and risk-based supervision, thereby creating a conducive environment for inclusive participation of financial technology companies of varying sizes and business models. On the basis of sound regulation and supervision, this approach has unleashed a wide variety of innovative digital products and services into the payments ecosystem.

These initiatives have fostered the rapid adoption of digital financial services, particularly mobile financial services, and contributed in large measure to the increase in financial inclusion from 42 percent in 2014 to 58 percent in 2017, according to the Global Findex Survey. As at May 2022, total active mobile money accounts stood at 18.6 million, compared to 17.2 million in the same period of last year, representing 8.1 percent year-on-year growth in total active mobile money accounts. Also, active mobile money agents as at May 2022 increased to 454,000 compared with 386,000 in May 2021.

In the past year, merchant acceptance of digital payments received a major boost following the publication of the new Merchant Account Categorisation Directive by the Bank of Ghana. By this Directive, the central bank seeks to drive merchant acceptance of digital payments, especially among the Micro, Small and Medium Size Enterprises (MSMEs) through a proportionate on-boarding requirements to provide accessible and feasible use cases for digital payments thereby driving adoption. With the large share of MSMEs in Ghana, incentivising merchant adoption of digital payments holds significant potential for accelerating financial inclusion among individuals and businesses. The incentives provided by the Directive will therefore provide the needed digital footprints to address information asymmetry challenges and enable affordable and customercentric innovative financial services.

Modernising and building on Ghanaian traditional funds pooling system, popularly called "Susu", the

Bank introduced a Crowdfunding Policy in 2021. This policy has provided a regulatory anchor for payment service providers, in partnership with banks and with technological support, to provide individuals, groups, and associations with safe means of raising funds for social and economic purposes. The growing use of a Bank of Ghana approved crowdfunding product in recent times by religious groupings, associations, and corporate bodies for economic, social, health and environmental purposes reflect the timeliness and usefulness of this policy intervention in the financial sector.

In line with the rapid innovation in digital financial services, the Bank adopted the Regulatory and Innovation Sandbox approach to support the process. Currently, the sandbox provides live-tests of innovative digital financial service products, business models and supportive technologies in a controlled environment for possible market rollout. In 2019, the Bank took a major step to explore a central bank digital currency within the framework of the national digitisation programme. Since August 2021, the Bank, in collaboration with G+D of Germany, has commenced the multiphase pilot of the digital version of the Ghanaian cedi called the eCedi in a sandbox environment. The digital currency project presents yet another unique opportunity to design a technological representation of a fiat currency that will drive Ghana's financial sector digitisation further and also facilitate the Government's inclusive digital transformation programme.

Looking ahead, the Bank of Ghana will continue to push the frontiers of innovation and inject dynamism into the financial service industry, supported by sound regulatory frameworks. This will provide a conducive atmosphere for nurturing the growth of the payment ecosystem and support the financial inclusion agenda.

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BANK OF GHANA'S DOMESTIC GOLD PURCHASE PROGRAMME



Bank of Ghana's Domestic Gold purchase programme, launched on 17th June 2021, has paved the way for the Bank to grow its foreign exchange reserves to foster confidence, enhance currency stability, create a more attractive environment for foreign direct investments and economic growth. It enables the Bank to leverage its gold holdings to raise a cheaper source of financing to provide short-term foreign exchange liquidity.



Building a climate-conscious generation in Africa

African youths constitute about 60 percent of the continent's 1.2 billion population, and they represent a vibrant force to reckon with.

Popularly referred to as "Gen Z," as they come up with innovative and constructive ideas to tackle existing challenges on the continent, they are indirectly aware of climate change because, like every other person on the continent, they feel the brunt of the adverse effects of climate change on Africa.

Though they bear the brunt as well, that has not put them directly in a position to contribute meaningfully to finding lasting solutions to the challenges brought upon the continent by climate change.

To change this narrative and ensure the continent has a generation of people who are well-versed in climate issues and have ideas on how to tackle them, relevant authorities across Africa need to bring the youths up to date with climate change happenings around them and how important it is to be intentional about saving the continent from its adverse effects. How, then, will this become a reality? Answers to this question will be provided in this article, which dwells on ways and manners through which climate consciousness can be inculcated in the minds of African youths so that they can get actively involved in their environment for good.

By Omowumi Odesomi

If there is one thing you cannot take away from the present generation, it is their alertness. Given that advantage, it becomes the responsibility of every adult to see to it that the youth get better information about climate impacts and know the paths to take.

Giving out the information entails actively engaging them in conversations and decisionmaking on adaptation, mitigation, and reduction processes of climate change impacts, and these can be achieved through the various means highlighted below.



Educating the youth on climate change and environmental sustainability

One major thing needed to get youths conscious of the happenings around them and get them actively involved is continuous education and awareness. This is important because, with adequate education and enlightenment, the youth will know what to do and can also, in turn, take steps to enlighten others and come up with other initiatives to save their environments.

It is also imperative for climate education and other environmentally related education to be included in school curriculums for both the youth and younger ones in African schools to catch them young and build their consciousness right from a tender age.

Other than through the school curriculum, another way through which climate change education can be passed on to the younger generation is through the use of social media, which Gen Z takes solace in.

Gen Z has a so-called addiction to social media, which could be translated to good use if deployed effectively because, through social media, relevant bodies, governments, and non-governmental organisations can engage the youths to raise their consciousness on environmental issues that affect them while also bringing them to the realisation of what they can do to change things.

For instance, the social media platform TikTok, having seen the level of engagement on the platform, is using it to drive advocacy on climate action and environmental sustainability.

Launched in November 2022 in support of the COP 27 gathering, it provides opportunities for organisations and community members to discuss, debate, and share information on important environmental topics.

Engagements such as this can also be considered for sponsorship by governments and others on other social media platforms that the youth identify with to keep them abreast of climate change situations.

Currently, across the various countries on the continent, there are several awareness initiatives carried out daily sponsored by governments, NGOs, and foreign bodies, like the Innovation for Climate Change Challenge held in Lagos and supported by the British Council for youth participants from across Africa, but there is a need for more of such initiatives to reach as many youths as possible.

Youth Engagements

Under the climate change action pact,



every country has a nationally determined contribution (NDC) target that they strive to achieve.

In attaining this goal, African countries will need the skills and engagement of young people, which will also help build their mindset, making it a win-win for both parties.

Already, records have it that some youths have committed to doing little things to talk about the adverse effects of climate change; more can still be done in that regard where the youths are engaged through volunteering with organisations to spearhead various environmental initiatives.

They can also be actively engaged in participating in various government, school, community, and non-governmental initiatives like tree planting, waste recycling initiatives, community clean-ups, environmental campaigns, and the like.

All these engagements can be done physically or through social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and others.

Investing in youth-led solutions

Just as mentioned earlier, African youths are innovative and focused on finding solutions to some of the problems facing the continent in ways different from those of generations before them.

Environmentally, they are developing products that can aid the green economy

targeted by the Africa Union for the continent.

From Uganda to Nigeria, Kenya, Chad, South Africa, Rwanda, and other African countries, many young entrepreneurs are coming up with innovative ideas for a green economy that can be supported.

Most of these innovative ideas and products by the young ones on sustaining the economy need credible funding support to stay afloat and be able to make meaningful contributions to their society. As such, they need the support of governments and other relevant agencies, businesses, private individuals, and other stakeholders to fund their innovations towards



changing the environment.

This support can come in the form of the provision of necessary equipment, policy frameworks, tax incentives, development training, grants, loans, and the like, which focuses on encouraging the younger generation to create the needed solutions and increase the actions taken on tackling climate change.

Youth Inclusion in Decision-Making

Anywhere in the world, the act of inclusiveness has proven to be important in the attainment of any goal.

To ensure that African youths do not only get anxious about climate change impacts without an adequate idea of what to do to change them, they must also be adequately included in the scheme of events and activities towards that goal.

The young people need to be allowed to be represented in the decision-making and implementation bodies of recognised and strategic committees of government at all levels, from community to national, saddled with the responsibility of taking decisions for the continent.

By doing this, they would be able to contribute their quota in whatever form, no matter how minimal, to help society.

The youth are the leaders of tomorrow, and if we all agree, tomorrow is here, and we must engage them meaningfully so that they can better society.

Imagine an African society where drought, flooding, heat waves, desertification, and other adverse effects of climate change are reduced to the bare minimum through the combined efforts of her citizens, the youth.

Yes, this is possible and would lead the continent towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, but that is only if and only if we all rise to do what is expected of us by the youths to teach them the way to go so that when they grow, they do not depart from it.



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"Most of these innovative ideas and products by the young ones on sustaining the economyand climate change activities need credible funding support to stay afloat and be able to make meaningful contributions to their society."







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TECNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

NIGERIA'S FINTECH FIRMS AND THE NEED FOR EFFICIENCY

FINTECH

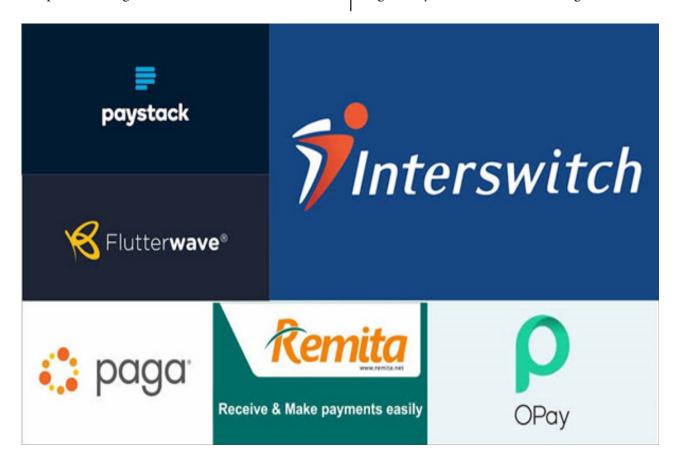
by Ike Igimoh

Following the introduction of a cashless economy by the Central Bank of Nigeria before the February 2023 general elections, there is a dire need for fintech companies to revive their services in the nation. This would alleviate the burden and chaos that arose from the recent cash crunch, especially among Nigerians in business. The piece emphasises those who offer clients webbased banking, payment processing, investment management, and loan services, among others. As it is often said, whatever task is worth doing is worth doing well. Hence, companies offering financial solutions using technology are expected to rise to this challenge.

To enhance the accessibility, efficiency, and convenience of financial services in Nigeria, fintech companies must employ advanced technologies such as machine learning, blockchain, big data analytics, and others. These cutting-edge tools can significantly boost their operations while enhancing user experiences.

Key steps have been outlined in this article that can help fintech firms deliver effective services to the public in Nigeria. 1. Fintech companies have the potential to broaden access to financial services for individuals in Nigeria who lack bank accounts or are not fully served by traditional banking systems. By employing technology to develop inexpensive and available financial services, fintech firms can increase access and inclusion. 2. Collaboration with traditional financial institutions: Fintech firms can work with traditional financial institutions to supply customers with innovative financial products and services. Traditional financial institutions, such as commercial banks, have been in the system for a long time and have a greater number of clients and public trust, necessitating adequate collaboration to ensure smooth operations. For example, if Paystack does not work with any of the country's commercial banks, customers of that bank may find it impossible to use Paystack as a payment method.

3. Regulatory assistance: The Nigerian government can provide regulatory assistance to fintech companies in order to promote innovation and growth in the sector. This can include things like creating a beneficial regulatory environment, offering tax breaks,



and funding research and development. Of course, the importance of a good business environment cannot be overstated if the country's financial service delivery is to improve. The government must aggressively collaborate with companies to understand their issues and determine what can be done to improve the services they provide.

4. Cybersecurity: To secure client data and prevent fraud, fintech organisations must prioritise cybersecurity. This can be accomplished by putting strong security measuresin place and investing in cybersecurity infrastructure. Due to the prevalence of cyber fraud in today's financial sector, businesses

first must understand who they are hiring to work for them. Second, clients' data and funds must be properly managed in such а way that third а party, including the account manager, would find it exceedingly difficult to perform а transaction

"To enhance the accessibility, efficiency, and convenience of financial services in Nigeria, fintech companies must employ advanced technologies to boost their operations while enhancing user experiences".

without the cooperation of the customer and/or other superiors in the organisation.

5. Education and awareness: Fintech companies

can endeavour to educate the public about the benefits of using digital financial services and promote financial literacy. This can help enhance the adoption and use of fintech goods and services in Nigeria. Financial inclusion in Nigeria is extremely low, owing to a lack of proper sensitization on the part of the government and financial institutions as well as a lack of conviction on the part of the general population due to trust difficulties. When the government recently decided to phase out old currency notes in order to introduce new notes, they had to take raw cash to numerous cities and villages around the country for direct exchange for the old notes. These were unavoidable because those people did not have any dealings with banks to deposit their old currencies. The onus is now on fintech companies to engage in large education and sensitization campaigns to get many Nigerians interested in their operations so that the Nigerian government can adopt the use of fintech services in completing more financial transactions in the country.

6. Mobile money interoperability: Fintech firms can attempt to achieve mobile money interoperability so that users can move money between mobile money platforms. Collaboration is essential because fintech firms will become increasingly involved in the nation's financial system when funds can be quickly transferred from one platform to another without sacrificing the necessity for cybersecurity.

7. Payment infrastructure: Fintech businesses can seek to improve Nigeria's payment infrastructure, allowing for faster and more efficient The efficiency of the payment system would have everyone queuing up along the path of the fintech companies because this has been a source of concern for many, whereby one is debited after making a payment but the seller is never credited, resulting in failed transactions and the confusion that frequently ensues in such a scenario.

8. Customer service: To deliver a seamless and enjoyable customer experience, fintech companies can prioritise customer Customers are referred to as kings since they collectively contribute to the health and survival of the firm. As a result, it is critical that fintech companies constantly provide an open opportunity to interact with their clients for the benefit of everybody. It is not too much to expect that fintech companies will make their customer service available to the public in the



same way that mobile phone companies do.

9. Innovation: Fintech companies can continue to innovate and offer new goods and services to meet clients' changing needs. Fintech firms are the result of innovation. They can only remain relevant by developing innovative products that are suited to the financial public's needs. They must understand what people require and develop products to meet those requirements.

10. Collaborations: Fintech firms can develop collaborations with other companies and organisations to broaden their reach and deliver additional value to Collaboration and partnership are required for fintech companies to reach a larger percentage of those who are already utilising their services as well as those who have potential.





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Africa's Smart Cities

Smart cities are metropolitan regions that use technology and data to improve residents' quality of life, increase sustainability, and spur economic growth. Some smart cities around the world Include; Singapore, Barcelona in Spain, Tokyo in Japan, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Copenhagen, Denmark; Songdo, South Korea; Helsinki, Finland, and others.

by Ike Igimoh

Some major smart cities in Africa include Kigali, Konza Technopolis, Eko Atlantic, Vision City, Cape Town and others.

While the concept of smart cities is gaining traction around the world, there are various projects and innovations in Africa targeted at constructing smart cities. Here are some of the cities often recognized for their achievements in the smart city space in Africa.

1. Kigali Innovation City (Rwanda): Kigali Innovation City is a flagship project in Rwanda aimed at transforming Kigali, the capital city, into a knowledge-based economy. It is committed to supporting innovation, technology, and entrepreneurship, featuring zones for research institutions, technology businesses, and startups.

2.KonzaTechnopolis (Kenya): Alsoknown as "Silicon Savannah," Konza Technopolis is an ambitious smart city project in Kenya. It seeks to be a technology, innovation, and business process outsourcing hub, drawing local and international investment in the ICT sector. It is located around 60 kilometres from Nairobi.

3. *Eko Atlantic City (Nigeria):* Eko Atlantic City is a smart city in Lagos, Nigeria. It is envisioned as a sustainable metropolis built on reclaimed ground with advanced infrastructure, renewable energy systems, and smart technologies included to create a modern urban environment.

4. VisionCity (Rwanda): Kigali's Vision City is a smart and sustainable neighbourhood.



1. Kigali Innovation City (Rwanda):



2. Konza Technopolis (Kenya)



3. Eko Atlantic City (Nigeria)



4. Vision City (Rwanda)



6. Cyberjaya (Malaysia- South Africa)



5. Cape Town (South Africa)

To create an environmentally sustainable and connected community, it integrates green building practises, renewable energy, smart grids, and digital technologies.

5. *Cape Town (South Africa):* Cape Town has implemented a number of smart city initiatives focused on transit, energy, water management, and digital government. MyCiti bus systems, smart grid deployments, and the utilisation of technology for effective service delivery are among the projects.

6. Cyberjaya (Malaysia- South Africa):

Cyberjaya, a Malaysian city, is collaborating with South Africa on a smart city initiative. The alliance intends to stimulate economic growth, create jobs, and improve people's quality of life by leveraging smart technology, digital infrastructure, and innovation. **7.** *Smart Village (Egypt):* Smart Village is a technology and business park near Cairo, Egypt, that aims to attract multinational corporations and establish an atmosphere suitable for entrepreneurship, research, and development. Its primary mission is to provide modern infrastructure, connectivity, and amenities for knowledge-based enterprises.

These are only a few of Africa's smart city initiatives. Each project has its own distinct goals and features, but they all share a vision of using technology and data-driven solutions to address urban challenges, improve sustainability, and promote citizen well-being.



7. Smart Village (Egypt)



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Nurturing Enterpreneurship, and Sustainable Growth in Africa



by King Richard

With its immense resources, young population, and untapped potential, Africa presents a unique chance for economic growth and development. To realise this potential, the continent requires creative corporate leaders capable of driving innovation, creating jobs, and fostering longterm entrepreneurship. However, the African continent's search for competent corporate executives has been both a difficulty and an opportunity. This article examines the significance of business leadership in Africa, the characteristics and abilities required for success, the challenges encountered, and initiatives aimed at cultivating and supporting rising leaders.

The Essence of African business leadership Effective corporate leadership is critical to the economic development of Africa. It is critical to stimulating investment, attracting foreign capital, and creating job possibilities. A strong company leader can handle complicated challenges, motivate change, and foster an entrepreneurial and innovative culture. Leaders can act as role models and catalysts for economic progress by leading successful firms, bringing communities out of poverty, and encouraging inclusive development.

The successful African business leaders

Successful African business executives have a distinct set of talents and skills that allow them to thrive in dynamic and frequently tough situations. First and foremost, visionary leadership is required. Leaders must be able to motivate and mobilise diverse stakeholders towards a single objective and have a clear strategic direction. Furthermore, due to the continent's different marketplaces, regulatory systems, and socio-political landscapes, adaptability and resilience are critical.

Business leaders must also be skilled at developing strong relationships and networks on a local and global scale. This networking has been enjoyed by several business executives who attend business forums organised by the African Leadership Organisation.

Access to knowledge, markets, and capital is made possible through collaborations and partnerships. Effective communication and negotiation abilities are required for successfully navigating complex corporate situations, establishing trust, and attracting investments.

Ethical leadership is also essential. Leaders must operate with honesty, openness, and a commitment to corporate social responsibility. They may develop trust, recruit talent, and build long-term enterprises that benefit society by exhibiting ethical behaviour.

The challenges

While Africa has enormous potential, there are numerous hurdles and obstacles that impede the development of business leaders. These include a lack of access to money, insufficient infrastructure, political instability, corruption, and a lack of quality education and skill training. The high perceived risk associated with investing in Africa deters potential leaders and investors.

Furthermore, gender inequality remains a key barrier to inclusive leadership. Women entrepreneurs frequently confront systemic inequalities as well as limited access to money, networks, and mentorship. To address these difficulties, governments, corporations, and civil society must work together to create an enabling environment that supports aspiring leaders, promotes gender equality, and nurtures entrepreneurship.

Initiatives required to develop emerging business leaders

Various programmes are being done across Africa to develop and support emerging business leaders. Governments, private sector organisations, and international institutions are investing in programmes that focus on leadership development, entrepreneurial education, and financial access.

In order to ensure key developmental programmes for emerging and substantial leaders in Africa, the African Leadership Organisation, publishers of the African Leadership Magazine, developed a template for the continued training and retraining of leaders on the continent for better productivity that takes them to the global stage. There was a major leadership training in Mauritius earlier in the year, and another is to be done in Dorchester, England, in July 2023. Those who want to become the top global business leaders from Africa should consider attending the trainings being offered by the African Leadership Organisation

Leadership development programmes seek to discover and grow high-potential individuals by offering mentorship, training, and exposure to experienced company leaders. These efforts aim to improve abilities such as strategic thinking, decision-making, financial management, and networking.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Entrepreneurship education is critical for providing prospective leaders with the knowledge and skills required to start and manage successful firms. Educational institutions are introducing entrepreneurship into their courses, teaching students about business basics, creativity, and problemsolving. Incubators and accelerators also provide aspiring entrepreneurs with coaching, tools, and a supportive ecosystem in which to cultivate their ideas.

Access to capital is a critical enabler of entrepreneurial success. To close the funding gap for startups and small enterprises, governments and financial institutions are introducing new financing structures such as venture capital funds, angel networks, and microfinance projects. Additionally, efforts are being made to streamline rules, improve the ease of doing business, and minimise bureaucratic barriers.

Africa's search for business leaders is critical to the continent's economic growth because it is critical to unlocking the continent's economic potential. The continent's leaders must focus on generating capable and ethical individuals capable of navigating difficult challenges, fostering innovation, empowering women, and driving sustainable development.

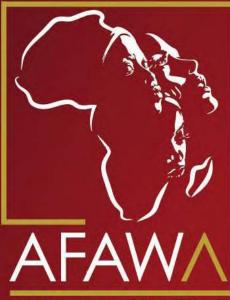
Governments must prioritise investments in education, entrepreneurial development, infrastructure, and supportive regulatory frameworks in conjunction with the private sector and foreign partners. Africa can exploit its immense resources, empower its youth, and achieve sustained economic growth with good corporate leadership, ultimately changing the continent's future for the better.







AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP GROUPE DE LA BANQUE AFRICAINE DE DÉVELOPPEMENT



AFFIRMATIVE FINANCE ACTION FOR WOMEN IN AFRICA

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