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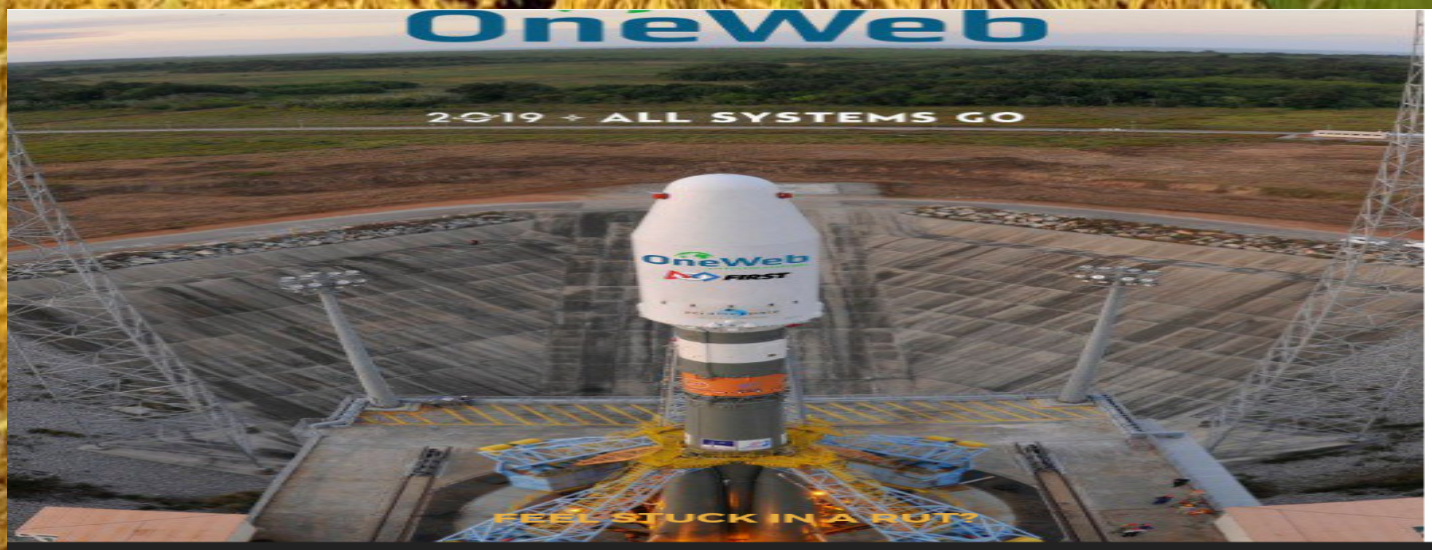
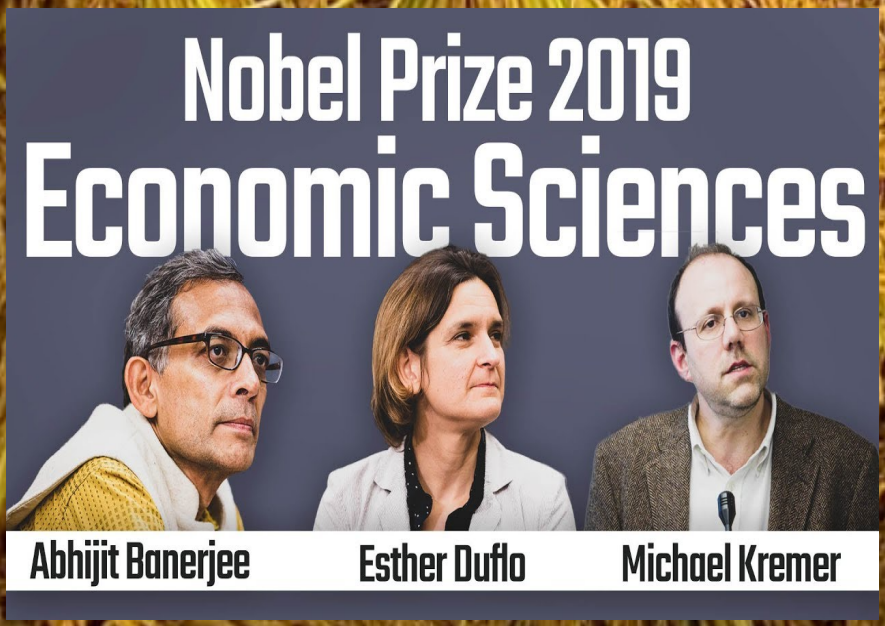


RWANDA LUNCHES SATTELTET TO BOOT INTERNET CONNECTIVITY



SOFPT POWER AND HARD POWER BY AMARA KONNEH

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

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AGRIBUSINESS AND THE AFRICAN GROWTH

The potential economic growth of the African continent heavily lies and depends on different and variety of resources and industries. However, agriculture is one of the viable sectors that could play a very important and crucial role in the much-anticipated economic recovery on the Continent. It is geologically established that the Continent possesses more than **60%** of the World's arroba land. It is also economically evidenced that more than **25%** of Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) comes from agriculture. Hence, it is pertinent to point out that farming and agribusiness together are projected to be a **US$ 1 trillion industry** in the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) by 2030 as compared to US$ 313 billion ten years back (2010). Thus, it is highly recommended to the policy-makers to list this vibrant sector atop of the economic, transformative and development agenda as the theme of almost all SSA nations seems to be agriculture. According to the Malabo Declaration, agriculture contributes at least 50% to the overall poverty reduction target. The Declaration also encourages the members to sustain annual agriculture GDP growth at least 6% which is unfortunately still unachievable by many African nations.

Besides, agroeconomic activities constitute more than **70%** of job-creation and employment in the region. Hence, these statistics and empirical figures are clear indications and determinants that if the sector is being looked at as a business rather than short-term or just a periodical sustenance for households, its socioeconomic dividends will be exponentially rewarding and development imperative, it will assist the continent to be on the right trajectory of its growth and curtail and trim the alarming unemployment and underemployment rates. In other worlds, agriculture should go beyond a household feeding.

Farming has never been seen as a wealth creating ventures and economic activity at both individual and national levels in a number of African economies. This has been causing the low performance of the sector on poverty reduction, sustained national growth and food-security. However, the practicality of agribusiness and mechanized agriculture are severely needed and paramount to the economic vitalization and industrialization of the agricultural activities. Nevertheless, agribusiness has never been a priority of many African States notwithstanding the acknowledgement of its economic imperative.

According to the World Bank's report on potential of agribusiness in Africa 'agriculture and agribusiness could lead the kind of economic transformation seen in many emerging economies in other regions, especially those with abundant land and water such as Thailand, Indonesia, Brazil, Colombia, and Ukraine. Africa represents the "last frontier" in global food and agricultural markets. It has more than half of the world's uncultivated but agriculturally suitable land and has scarcely utilized its extensive water resources'. Considering these indications, it is economically relevant for the African nations to give both technical and financial supports to agribusiness for sustainability of their economic growth, foot-security and shared prosperity through job-creation and self-reliance.

Thank You and Welcome to the First Edition of the READERS' Magazine

THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA AGREEMENT: WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW AND WHAT IS IN IT FOR LIBERIA.

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Liberia joined other African countries in singing the long awaited African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA). But what exactly is this agreement and what does it mean for president Weah's audacious "Economic diplomacy" agenda?

Weah announced plans of focusing his administration's international policies on "Economic Diplomacy", and has taken his boldest step by joining other

African countries in signing a landmark agreement that seeks to promote intra-African trade.

The AfCFTA deal is the biggest multilateral free trade agreement since the establishment of the World trade organization (WTO) in 1995, and it aims at "closer African Economic Integration" through continental free trade commitments.

The deal is a commitment towards reducing trade barriers such as the removal of import duties and other non-

tariff barriers as a means of boosting increased trade among African nations, the kind of trade this continent has long been in need of.As of 2016, the statistics made for a dismal reading of only 10% intra-African trade and this deal could drastically improve the

numbers and correct this "historical anomaly", as David Luke, coordinator of

the African Trade Policy Centre at UNECA, succinctly puts it.

The UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) has estimated the implementation of the agreement could increase intra-African trade by up to 52 percent in the next five years.

This agreement could possibly rival the WTO, an organization that has mostly benefitted developed economies and thwarted the growth of developing economies. This free trade agreement will have a significant impact in facilitating the cross-border flow of goods and services.

A thorough implementation of AfCFTA will bring together a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of more than $2 trillion and help grow African economies and trade within the region.

In the case of Liberia, this agreement comes at the right time. Trump's recent tariff increase on iron ore will hit our Economy very hard as USA remains Liberia's major iron ore export partner, but this African free trade agreement could help us redirect and make use of the African market.

We remain the second highest exporter of Iron ore in Africa behind only South Africa, so this deal could give us access to an African market that has a combined iron ore imports figure of 334.7 million dollars.

This is already a significant figure which could further increase as a result of possible investment in Africa's cross-border infrastructure to give fulcrum to the agreement. With robust plans Liberia will be poised to become a major supplier in the African iron ore markets.

Our Rubber industry could also significantly benefit from this intra-African free trade agreement.

Just like the Iron ore industry, we are also the second major rubber exporter in Africa.

We can become a major supplier of rubber in the African market, which has an estimated combined rubber import figure of 112.2 million dollars.

This means that our two major exports will have access to a market that is worth approximately half a billion dollars. It is a significant market, which could translate into additional jobs for our people and stimulate growth.

This 'larger-market-agreement 'and its possible supporting infrastructure and technological development could also spur industrialization. This will also create further jobs and help diversify our economy, an economy that has largely been dependent on raw materials.

On the other hand, Liberia, as a non-oil producing nation, petroleum products account for the largest share of our imports. Africa has a good number of oil producing countries including Nigeria, Angola and so on. This African free trade deal which calls for a reduction in tariff will mean lower spending on

Liberia's importation of petroleum products as a result of reduction in the prices. This will help in reducing our negative balance of trade.

However, it is worth mentioning that multilateral trade liberalization agreements come with some challenges, and the AfCFTA is not an exception.

President Weah will need to look into policies that will assist local workers and businesses when competition increases from other African entities.

Africa's more advanced countries could hold some advantages with their "developed manufacturing capabilities", and the CDC led government will have to think about building productive domestic manufacturing capacities.

Another thing president Weah will need to look into is the development of a more skilled Liberian workforce that will be adaptable to the demands of this new 'Africanization', as competition tends to have a very detrimental impact on a low-skilled workforce.

There will also be a need for the possible creation of social policies for those who may lose jobs due to increased competition. But this is an incredible deal that in fact exempts "sensitive items"-albeit temporarily-from the tariff reduction plan. Butthe CDC led government will need to be careful and conduct expert consultations on those "sensitive items" for exemption.

Overall, this African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement is exactly what our crumbling economy needs and with Liberia joining this deal just two months into the CDC administration, it is safe to say that King Weah knows exactly what he is doing!

THE PARADOX: WHY IS AFRICA SO RICH BUT SO POOR?

BY NDZEMBANTEH ABOUBAKARY NULAMBEH

Ph.D. Researcher in Economics at Uludag University Bursa in Turkey

Africa is so poor because African governments are negotiating deals with international investors that are replicas of colonial arrangements which arrangements are a large part as to why Africa is so poor as a continent. The wealth of a nation can be tracked by the complexity of the products it exports. This theory of Economic Complexity is set out in stunning detail and accuracy and was

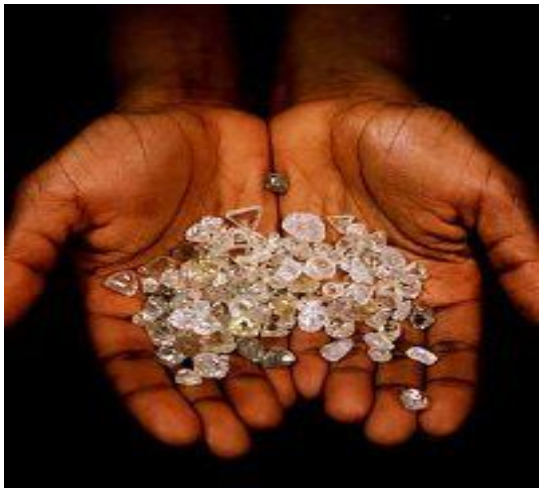
led by Ricardo Hausmann, Professor of the Practice of Economic Development at the Harvard Kennedy School and CID Director, and Cesar A. Hidalgo, Asahi Broadcast Corporation Career Development Professor at MIT. You can read the research and access the atlas online but a brief summary is as follows

The more complex a product the more human and other resources are used in the country in which the product is being made complex i.e creates more jobs and gives work to many companies in the value chain of that country. Makes sense and this is where the desire to beneficiate or add value to products comes from. The more value (complexity) the better for the adders of complexity.

These complex products must be exported so that the currency of the country adding the complexity to products is able to benefit from foreign currency inflows relative to outflows and in so doing maintain a strong currency and have favorable purchasing power.

What Africans are doing is that they are exporting the least complex products to places like China. China makes the products highly complex and then exports them back to Africa. This is why China is growing so much faster than Africa from a much higher base and the gap will continue to widen as long as African countries continue to export raw goods, unprocessed ore and unbeneficiated minerals like this:

The root cause for this is of course as others have mentioned colonialism its devastating effect on the African identity and psyche and our inability as Africans to overcome these effects as of yet.



Precious stone from the African Continent

For example, if Africa could find a meaningful way to unite like the EU for example, we can all decide to not sell non-complex minerals that we are the dominant suppliers of. The problem is that if one country says no, we will not sell copper ore or we won't sell palladium then the purchasing country goes next door and gets it in its most unprocessed unvalued added form. Somehow we don't believe in unity and often the voting public and their elected officials are out of sync too.

We also don't believe that we can be rich and deserve to be rich and therefore those entrusted with power are often corrupt because they do not believe they have the ability to become rich on merit on their own. If we can sort out how we view ourselves as Africans, how we view ourselves as fellow Africans we can be rich in a single generation.

HARD POWER VS. SOFT POWER IN LEADERSHIP

BY Mr. AMARA KONNEH.

Liberia's former Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Former Manager of the World Bank Group's Global Fragility, Conflict and Violence (FCV). Currently working at WB in DC.

The use of soft power to build coalitions, create joint ownership and the address national challenges is far more effective than we think, especially in fragile, poor, volatile and unequal countries. Soft power doesn't mean weakness. The use of hard power in these countries to get people to conform or change deep seeded behaviors only agitates pre-existing tensions and drivers of conflict. Hard power is mostly effective in addressing technical challenges countries face by getting government officials to deliver for their people and in some cases to enforce the rule of law.

In order words, it's better for everyone to be under the tent and urinate outside, then to keep the disenfranchised outside, giving them an opportunity to urinate inside the tent, where you are.

That is why I voluntarily became the shock absorbers and a bridge between our government and the disenfranchised when I served as a minister in my home country of Liberia. I took risks by meeting with former warlords, former fighters, worked with opposition politicians, and disgruntled citizens, some in very dangerous places and under the cover of darkness to keep the peace. I even had a tradition of meeting ordinary citizens on Broad Street and in my office on Wednesdays and Fridays just to listen to them. MFDP employees can attest to that. The result: we helped keep the country stable while we tackled both its adaptive and technical challenges created by nearly two generations of lousy governance. The cost of peace is very high and a 24/7 job. That was one reason my political enemies sarcastically referred to me as "Prime Minister" when there is no such office or title in our governance arrangements.

APATHY AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE STANDS IN THE WAY OF AFRICA'S DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND.

By **RorisangLEKALAKE**: A research fellow at the Centre for Social Science Research at the University of Cape Town. https://goo.gl/feAZu7

Two in three Africans are younger than 35. Youth - people between the ages of 15 and 35 - make up more than 35% of Africa's total population. They have been identified as central to efforts to drive the vast continent's economic development.

The African Youth Charter identifies young people as "partners, assets and a prerequisite for sustainable development and for the peace and prosperity of Africa". It also outlines their rights and responsibilities, including active citizenship.

Accordingly, the African Union (AU) has themed 2017 the "year of investment in youth to harness the African demographic dividend". Regional and national youth empowerment policies have also been introduced.

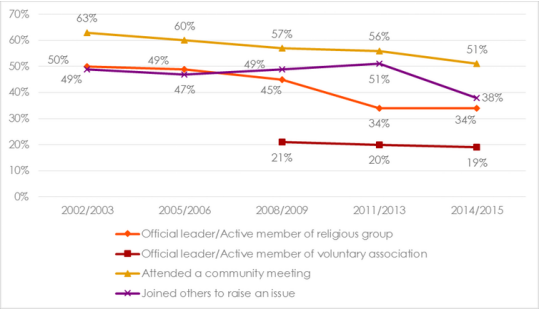
Yet a new survey by Afrobarometer, a non-partisan research network, shows a wide gap between these aspirations and the reality of youth political engagement.

The levels of political engagement and participation in public life are on the decline among young Africans. This trend is worrying. Engagement in the political process is an important avenue for citizen empowerment in democracies worldwide.

Having a voice in economic policies is particularly important for African youth because of the "unemployment crisis" affecting this age group. At 30.5%, North Africa has the highest youth unemployment rate in the world, while 11.6% of young people in sub-Saharan Africa are unemployed.

Interest in public affairs has declined substantially, from 81% in 2002/2003 to 58% in 2014/2015, in the 16 African countries tracked during this period. Participation rates also decreased on measures of civic engagement, which provide important avenues for representation between electoral cycles.

Figure 1: Trends in civic engagement | 18- to 35-year-olds | 16 countries |2002-2015



Afrobarometer

Respondents were asked: 1. Now I am going to read out a list of groups that people join or attend. For each one, could you tell me whether you are an official leader, an active member, an inactive member, or not a member? 2. Here is a list of actions that people sometimes take as citizens. For each of these, please tell me whether you, personally, have done any of these things during the past year. (% "yes")

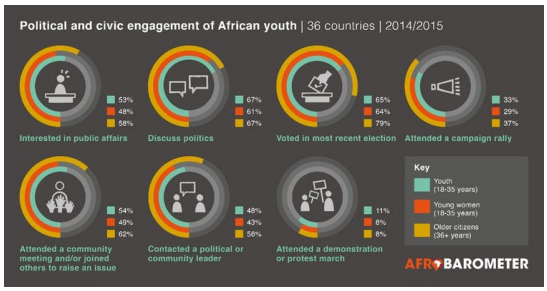
The report, which was released on International Youth Day, is based on almost 54,000 interviews in 36 countries in 2014 and 2015. Included in the surveys were Algeria, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Trends in youth political and civic engagement

Only slightly more than half (53%) of African youth polled say they are "somewhat" interested in public affairs. Two-thirds (67%) say they discuss these issues "occasionally" or "frequently" with family and friends.

But young citizens report lower rates of political engagement than their elders across a variety of indicators, including voting. These findings are consistent with research on age differences in political participation in advanced democracies.

As shown in the following infographic, two-thirds (65%) of 18- to 35-year-old respondents who were old enough to vote in their respective countries' last national election say they did so. That's compared to 79% of citizens older than 35.



Afrobarometer

Less than 10% of young people polled said they participated in pre-electoral activities like campaign rallies. The same goes for civic activities such as attending community meetings, joining others to raise an issue, and contacting political or community leaders. A slightly higher number (11%) of those surveyed said they had participated in a demonstration or protest in the preceding year.

Africa is experiencing unprecedented population growth in terms of both scale and speed. The continent's population is expected to double to 2.4 billion by 2050. This is partly because of significant declines in child mortality rates. About 10 million young people enter the labour market each year.

East Asian countries were able to capitalise on a large youth cohort – the so-called "demographic dividend" – to fuel an "economic miracle" during the 1990s.

The AU aims to replicate this success by 2063 via supportive policies, including the promotion of youth development and empowerment. In May 2016 the organisation held a series of events to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the African Youth Charter and to draft activities for its 2017 theme.

Gender differences

The youth charter requires its signatories to eliminate laws and practices that are discriminatory toward girls and women. The objective here is to ensure equal access to all spheres of society. But, young women consistently report lower levels of political engagement than their male peers. This is particularly so in West African and East African countries.

This finding indicates that there are persisting social barriers to their participation in the political sphere. On average, disparities between young men and women's engagement levels are largest for measures of "cognitive engagement" (interest and discussion levels) and smallest for voting (Table 1).

Six in 10 male youth say they are "somewhat" or "very" interested in public affairs, compared to less than half (48%) of young women. Similarly, young men are significantly more likely to discuss politics at least "occasionally" than young women (74% vs. 61%). In contrast, the difference between male and female voting rates (66% vs. 64%) is not statistically significant. These results suggest that many citizens, including many young women, continue to see politics as primarily a space for men.

Young African women are less likely than young African men to...	Percentage-point difference					
	West Africa	East Africa	North Africa	Southern Africa	Central Africa	Average
Discuss politics "frequently" or "occasionally"	15	17	10	11	8	**13**
Be "very" or "somewhat" interested in politics	13	13	9	11	8	**12**
Contact at least one political or community leader	16	10	12	6	7	**10**
Join others to raise an issue	16	12	12	4	4	**10**
Attend campaign rallies	13	14	10	7	7	**10**
Attend community meetings	11	8	13	5	4	**8**
Attend demonstrations or protest marches	7	2	7	2	6	**5**
Vote in national elections	2	5	3	3	4	**2**

Afrobarometer

Given these trends, greater civic education for all youth – and particularly for young women – may be one strategy for moving toward the AU aspiration of an empowered young citizenry that acts as an agent for prosperity, peace, and development on the continent.

Women's empowerment is particularly crucial to economic development because Africa's youth bulge will lead to accelerated economic growth only in countries in which fertility rates are low enough to reduce the proportion of young dependent citizens (children).

Better-educated, healthier and empowered women are more likely to have fewer children and to enter the labour market. Greater female political representation is also likely to lead to more supportive policies for gender equality.

Although there are some notable female political leaders, among them Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and AU Commission chairperson NkosazanaDlamini-Zuma, women only make up a minority of parliamentary representatives in sub-Saharan Africa (23%) and in Arab states (18%).

PROFILING ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT TRANSFORMATION OF ROWANDA

ROLE OF THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK IN ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION ON THE CONTINENT: A CASE STUDY OF EAST AFRICA REGIONAL INTEGRATION STRATEGY[1]*

The African Development Bank (AfDB) was established in 1964 as the Continent's premier development finance institution. It aims at helping to reduce poverty and improve the living conditions on the African Continent. The Bank comprises three different financial institutions namely; the African Development Bank (AfDB), the African Development Fund (ADF) and the Nigeria Trust Fund (NTF). The Bank places emphasis on expanding economic prosperity across age, gender and geography, while protecting livelihood, improving water, energy and food security, easing the pressure on natural assets and better managing environmental, social and economic risks.

The Bank has taken several development initiatives across the continent; in human capital development, infrastructural improvement, economic revitalization and financial stability through both monetary and fiscal policies in effective collaboration with the member states. However, the recent transformative initiatives instituted by the Bank is its approval of the East African Regional Integration Strategy, which is a roadmap for accelerated regional integration with the strongest emphasis on the infrastructural development. The Strategy is aimed at guiding the Bank's regional operations in 13 countries: namely Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

The Regional Integration Strategy Paper 2018-2022, which had been approved by the Bank maps out the direction of the its collaboration with the Eastern Africa over the next five years. The primary objectives are fast-tracking structural transformation, increasing trade and promoting financial sector integration and inclusion. The Strategy however, is concentrated on two mutually reinforcing pillars which are: regional infrastructural development for competitiveness and transformation and strengthening of policy and institutional framework and value chains development.

It is however, imperative to note that the Eastern Africa is the fastest growing on

*This article is originally written by the African Development Bank (AfBD). However, it has been amended by the READERS Magazine with further analysis.

the Continent, with real GDP growth rat of 5.9% in 2017 compared to the continental average of 3.6%.

Nevertheless, countries in the region grapple with poor infrastructure including power shortage, low electricity connection rates and high cost of electricity for manufacturing enterprises about four time higher than the global average. They are also characterized by low-level industrialization, with manufacturing added value below 15% in all the region's member states.

According to Nnenna Nwabufo, Deputy Director General of the Bank in the Eastern Africa " Most Eastern African countries depend on agricultural mineral products for their export. These products are of low-level sophistication and low value added. This is why this Strategy Paper is key to boosting industrialization and intra-regional trade." She further opined that the Bank's approval of the Strategy Paper sets the framework for the AfDB to support key economic sectors like regional energy and transport, which will underpin Eastern Africa's socioeconomic transformation.

The Strategy Paper was developed in consultation with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in East Africa and is aligned with key REC strategies for Eastern African Community, Common Market for Eastern And Southern Afrian and intergovernmental Agenda on Development. The Strategy also responds to priorities of the United Nations

The Strategy Paper also dovetails into the Bank's Ten Year Strategy (2013-2022) and the High-5s operational priorities -- Light Up and Power Africa, Feed Africa, Industrialize Africa, Integrate Africa, and Improve the Q uality of Life for the People of Africa.

In this regard, Moono Mupotola, Director for Regional Integration and Coordination at the Bank's HQ, welcomed the approval of the Strategy Paper, which sets out a clear roadmap for the delivery of Bank's Integrate Africa High-5 in Eastern Africa.

The Bank's indicative operational program to roll out the Strategy is estimated at US$3.3 billion and is subject to review at the mid-term. The Bank will work closely with regional member countries and RECs in the region in following up on implementation progress including convening member states to ensure accelerated delivery.

Kigali, Capital City of Rwanda

HOW NIGERIA CAN ATTRACT AND KEEP THE RIGHT KIND OF FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT[2]

By Tolu Olarewaju (PhD). A Lecturer in Business Economics, Staffordshire University.

Two of the largest banking and financial services institutions in the world, HSBC and UBS, have recently closed their local representative offices in Nigeria.

There's also trouble brewing elsewhere in Nigeria's business world that's prompted fears about the climate for foreign direct investment in the country. Foreign direct investment is an investment made by a firm or individual in one country into business interests located in another country.

For instance, Nigeria's government in September accused HSBC of money laundering after an analyst working for the lender said a second term for President Muhammadu Buhari may stall economic recovery in Africa's biggest oil producer.

Figure 1Abuja , Niegrian Capital City

There are also tensions between Nigeria's central bank and the South African telecom company MTN. In 2015, MTN was fined about $5bn for failing to cut off unregistered SIM cards. This was later reduced to $1.7 billion after a long legal dispute and the intervention of South Africa's then President Jacob Zuma.

Recently, the central bank has ordered MTN to repatriate $8 billion it said has been taken out of the country illegally.

Analysts are concerned that the Nigerian government's attitude towards MTN and the two banks may erode the confidence of foreign direct investors. Their fears seem to be well founded: foreign direct investment in Nigeria fell to $1 billion in the first half of 2018, from $1.48 billion in the first half of 2017.

Foreign direct investment is crucial for any economy. So how can Nigeria attract and keep the right kind of investment from global companies? Compromise will be

[2] https://goo.gl/sdkmid published by Forbes Africa on December 11/2018

key, both for the government and foreign firms.

Why foreign direct investment?

Foreign direct investment is often preferred to exporting. That's because while exports merely involve moving goods from one country to another, foreign direct investment actually involves an investor establishing foreign business operations or acquiring foreign business assets.

This often includes establishing ownership or controlling interest in a foreign country (for instance an American business establishing a physical business presence in Nigeria). Many emerging economies like China, Brazil, Vietnam and India have built their growth on FDI flows.

The trick is to attract "quality foreign direct investment" that links foreign investors into the local host country economy. The International Growth Centre, a British-funded research centre that aims to promote sustainable growth in developing countries, characterizes "quality" here as contributing to: decent and value-adding jobs and enhancing the skill base of host economies;

transfer of technology, knowledge and know-how;

boosting competitiveness of domestic firms and enabling their access to markets.

What Nigeria can do?

There are a few things Nigeria can do to boost foreign direct investment. For starters, it must play fair. Foreign and domestic businesses should be treated equally. They should be open, transparent and dependable conditions for all kinds of firms.

Another area that needs attention is infrastructure. Businesses need easy access to ports, an adequate and reliable supply of energy and relative certainty that the country will be good to invest in.

Good institutions also promote FDI.

The government should encourage partnerships between foreign and local businesses. Foreign firms might be familiar with global good business practices, but local firms will be more familiar with the indigenous context. This synergy could be very beneficial.

It's also critical that Nigeria gets its regional governments involved: there are many regions in Nigeria, and these regions all have unique opportunities and challenges.

Our latest research shows that when the central government of Nigeria ran out of ideas and foreigners wanted to exit the agricultural sector, the regional government of Kwara state stepped in to create a positive business climate based on the cooperation of local banks, community members, and the foreigners themselves culminating in the Shonga farms public-private venture.

This has kept the firm in Nigeria. It's also brought private investors to the table, bolstering the firm and the local economy.

Nigeria should also tap into its huge diaspora. There are many Nigerians living outside the country who understand its challenges. They should be encouraged to help or asked to work with their networks to invest in the country.

What foreign firms can do?

Foreign firms also have a role to play. They can enhance their success in Nigeria

(and elsewhere on the African continent) in several ways.

First, they need a long-term strategic plan. This means thinking carefully about what sectors or activities to target. Many foreign firms come to developing countries when things are rosy but leave when conditions change. They don't properly consider that solving such problems will gain them a competitive advantage in the long run.

If they stay and follow a learning curve, foreign firms will better understand the local business context. They'll also gain credibility among ordinary people and possibly get more customers and support that way.

In the same vein, foreign businesses should create local solutions that meet ordinary people's needs. The banks leaving Nigeria have been accused of only catering to the needs of wealthy Nigerians, who are perceived as corrupt. A more diverse portfolio that catered to the needs of ordinary Nigerians would have nullified this claim.

Foreign firms must also work closely with credible and strategic local firms and be willing to enter into dialogue with the Nigerian government where necessary. This is crucial especially as administrations may change or government policy may evolve. Dialogue could ensure that all parties are on the same page.

Act local, think global

It's unfortunate that these banking institutions have decided to leave Nigeria. Hopefully both the Nigerian government and other foreign investors can learn from this.

The main takeaway for both foreign investors and governments involved in foreign direct investment is that it would be prudent for all parties to act locally but think globally

IS AFRICA STILL RISING?[3]

By Brahima Sangafowa Coulibaly

Senior Fellow - Global Economy and Development Director - Africa Growth Initiative

Between 2000 and 2014, Africa grew at a strong clip, fueling belief in the narrative of an "Africa rising." But, since 2015, growth across Sub-Saharan Africa has weakened, and the poor outlook for commodity prices has cast doubt on Africa's economic promise, leading many to question the "Africa rising" narrative—and some to pronounce it dead.

Such skepticism is, to some extent, understandable. The 2014 oil-price shock hit several African economies especially hard and played a role in pushing aggregate growth down from

[3] This article is originally published by Brookings on October 6, 2017. https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/is-africa-still-rising/

5-6% in 2004-2014 to just 2.5% in 2015-2017 – a rate that barely keeps up with population Moreover, the continent's three largest economies—Angola, Nigeria, and South Africa—have experienced major declines in performance. Last year, Angola and South Africa's economies stagnated, while the Nigerian economy actually contracted for the first time since 1991. The latest projections suggest that these economies will experience tepid recoveries in the coming years.

But Africa's skeptics have overlooked a number of important factors. For starters, when one sets the three largest economies aside, Sub-Saharan Africa's aggregate-growth rate for this year rises from 2.5% to almost 4%. That is faster than the 3.5% rate at which the global economy is currently growing. In fact, five of the ten fastest-growing economies in the world are in Africa. And over the next five years, around half of all Sub-Saharan economies will expand at an average rate similar to or higher than that which prevailed during the "Africa rising" heyday.

Furthermore, high commodity prices were just one factor in the region's strong economic performance between 2000 and 2014. Many African countries have made vast improvements to macroeconomic management, governance, and the business environment, and entrepreneurship is on the rise. Even with lower commodity prices, these developments will continue to bolster many African economies.

Today's skepticism may reflect lasting memories from a darker period, and fears that Africa's progress has not been sufficiently consolidated. From the 1970s to the mid-1990s, dictators ruled in many African countries, and the institutions necessary for sustaining strong economic growth were fragile at best. With civil wars constantly shredding the social fabric in many countries, the continent experienced decades of tepid economic growth. By 2000, it had been reduced to what The Economist called "Hopeless Africa."

But those days are gone. Policymakers across the continent have sustained the 1990s-era reforms that set the stage for the subsequent period of high growth. Although there is still much work to be done, the economic and business environment in many African countries has continued to improve, and institutions and governance have grown stronger.

Owing to new information and communication technologies, Africans, particularly young Africans, are better informed, more engaged in civil and political discourse, and increasingly capable of holding their leaders accountable. ICTs have also unleashed a wave of innovation and entrepreneurship across the continent.

These positive trends are not likely to be reversed and will continue to improve the economic conditions in Africa, even if commodity prices do not rebound. After all, the region's economic growth averaged 5.6% between 2000 and 2004, before commodity prices had begun their rapid ascent

But that is not to say Africa will be spared from daunting challenges in the years ahead. Globally, the economic environment will become less favorable

for African economies. In the major advanced economies, interest rates will soon rise, and the political backlash against globalization may force governments to abandon their past commitments to development assistance.

In light of all this uncertainty, African policymakers should look inward, by focusing on policies to mobilize national resources and finance their economic agendas. Those agendas should include a number of key priorities. African countries need to diversify their economies to withstand future shocks better, while also accelerating the pace of industrialization across the continent. Governments will have to find a way to create decent jobs for the 11 million people now entering the region's labor force every year. And they will need to enact policies to reduce poverty and ensure that prosperity is shared across all cohorts of society.

These are particularly important goals for Angola, Nigeria, and South Africa. Angola and Nigeria need to become far less reliant on oil; and South Africa still needs to implement far-reaching reforms to address structural problems that have plagued it since the apartheid era. Seeing these projects through will require competent political leaders who are committed to the principles of good governance. Failure could result in an extended period of low growth.

But even if Africa's three largest economies do end up in the doldrums, it will not necessarily seal the fate of the "Africa rising" story. After all, "Africa rising" need not mean "all" of Africa. From the 1960s to the 1990s, the "Asian Tigers" narrative referred only to Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan, excluding other developing countries in Asia, such as China. Similarly, African economies are increasingly differentiating themselves, and should thus be evaluated individually, on the merits of their respective economic policies and growth.

PRESIDENT WEAH'S 8.9 BILLION MIDTERM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM[4]

PRESIDENT WEAD'S ADMINISTRATION LUNCHES US$8.9 BILLION MIDTERM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (PAPD) 2018-2023

The Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development 2018 to 2023 (PAPD) is the second in the series of 5-year National Development Plans (NDP) anticipated

[4] The Article is taken from the official document of PAPD on MFDP's website.

under the Liberia Vision 2030 framework. It follows the Agenda for Transformation 2012-2017 (AfT). It is informed as well by lessons learned from the implementation of the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy 2007 (iPRS) and the Poverty Reduction Strategy (2008-2011).

The fundamentals underpinning the PAPD are: i) Liberia is rich in human and natural resources; but ii) is deprived of development largely because its human capital lacks the knowledge to transform the natural resources into wealth—whether through farming, mining, fishing, or other productive ventures that require technology or financial investments. Consequently, Liberia is relatively rich in natural capital but relatively poor in relations to its peers in both human and produced capital. Moreover, because of a legacy of entrenched inequality in access to development opportunities, widespread infrastructure deficits and pervasive poverty have become the binding constraints to future growth and prosperity.

Economic Growth and Development

The government acknowledges significant progress made over the past decade through the investments made and assistance received. On the economic growth rates and life expectancy at birth, Liberia exceeded the Sub-Saharan Africa average for the same period. The Gross National Income (GNI) per capita rose by 8.4 percent from 1990 to 2015. The Human Development Index (HDI) increased

by 10.6 percent between 2000 and 2015. Life expectancy at birth increased by 14 years and mean years of schooling by 1.8 years, over the same period. Nevertheless, Liberia remains in the low human development category and absolute poverty is on the rise in 5 of the 6 national statistical regions. The gains produced by economic growth have not been universally felt nor are they sustainable. Liberia ranks as the 11th lowest of the 188 countries on the 2016 HDI. On the inequality adjusted and the gender HDI, Liberia is

among the 10 lowest countries in the world.

The costing model of the PAPD is built around two principles: i) reflect all of government costs, current and capital, in the expenditure framework; ii) reflect the continuity of government through the capture of costs and funding commitments to ongoing sets of activities in existing sector and strategic plans--while forecasting the incremental cost of PAPD priority programs and investments. Current expenditure of the government--which includes compensation, consumables, domestic and foreign debt service payments, subventions to SOE's, as well as other earmarked expenditures, is expected to be slightly more than US$2.7 billion over the five-year PAPD period. The total incremental cost for priority programs and capital investments is estimated at US$4.5 billion. Approximately 88 percent will go to Pillars One (20.4%) and Two (67.3%) investments. Pillars Three and Four will account for 6.3 percent and 6.1 percent, respectively. Total program and investment spending will average 25 percent of GDP over the PAPD period. Estimates of the resource mobilization target is US$1.7 billion--based on the anticipated financing gap under current economic growth and

domestic resource mobilization scenarios.

The Pro-Poor Agenda

The Pro-Poor Agenda is therefore about the people, how to strengthen their capacity to thrive; and how to draw all Liberians living at home and abroad into the national development process. Over the next five years, addressing the basic needs of Liberians for income security, better access to basic services, and greater opportunities for self-improvement in an enabling environment that is inclusive and stable will be at the core of the pro-poor agenda. While one of the aims over the long term remains raising per capita income levels and economic status to a middle-income country as outlined under the Vision 2030 framework, the focus over the next five years will be on removing the binding constraints to reaching that goal.

National Visioning

The Pro-Poor Agenda is also about crafting a national identity aligned to the Africa Agenda 2063 and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Vision 2020. What clearly emerged from the national consultations on the future of Liberia held in 2012 is that the tendency to bifurcate the Liberian identity into an Americo-Liberian vs. Indigenes cleavage leaves the "erroneous impression of two discreet communities" that need to be reconciled for political, social, and economic, development to take hold. But it is evident that the Liberian identity is a fusion of values of multiple "largely patriarchal traditional societies", different tenets of faith, and the "influence of black settler culture". Moreover, new cleavages emerged out of the civil war—between the Diaspora and those Liberians who remained at home, and between those who were victimized and those who were the perpetrators of violence. All these cleavages must be addressed for Liberia to go forward successfully as a united people and a progressive nation.

Significance of the Recent Transition in National Leadership

The inauguration of H.E. George Manneh Weah as the 24th President of the Republic of Liberia and H.E. Jewel Howard Taylor as first female Vice President, presents a unique opportunity to begin a transformation. It marked the first peaceful and democratic transition of power in 73 years. It was the first generational change in national leadership through popular vote since the introduction of universal suffrage in 1951 and the launch of the National Unification and Integration Policy in 1960.

This opens a window of opportunity to build a new nation based on the principles of inclusion, on equity in the distribution of revenues generated from Liberia's natural resources, and on a rights-based approach to national development. It also opens the opportunity to unite Liberia's diverse faiths and 'nations' around a national identity that reflects Liberia's geographic position and relations with the rest of the Africa region.

Goals of the PAPD

In view of the foregoing, the objectives of the PAPD are:

1. To build more capable and trusted state institutions that will lead to a stable, resilient, and inclusive nation embracing its triple heritage and anchored on its African identity

2. To provide greater income security to an additional one million Liberians and reduce absolute poverty by 23 percent across 5 out of 6 regions--through sustained and inclusive economic growth driven by scaled-up investments in agriculture, in infrastructure, in human resource development, and in social protection.

Pillars of the PAPD

To make progress towards the PAPD and eventually the Vision 2030 goals, the strategies and interventions are built around four pillars

which will form the pathways for the next five years:

1. Power to the People— To empower Liberians with the tools to gain control of their lives through more equitable provision of opportunities in education, health, youth development, and social protection

2. The Economy and Jobs— Economic stability and job creation through effective resource mobilization and prudent management of economic inclusion

3. Sustaining the Peace—Promoting a cohesive society for sustainable development

4. Governance and Transparency—An inclusive and accountable public sector for shared prosperity and sustainable development

The interventions under Pillars One and Two will contribute directly to the income security and empowerment goals; while those under Pillars Three and Four will contribute to building of a peaceful and united country pursuing a new vision of full integration into the African continent both in culture and vision.

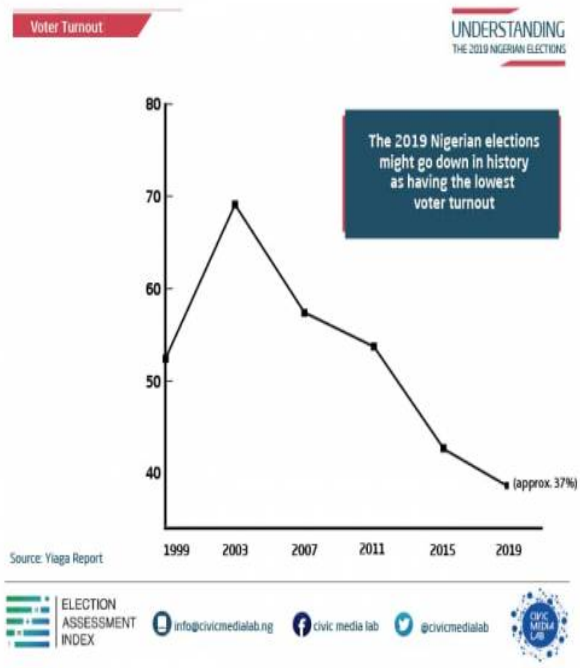
National Targets are presented in the form of results frameworks for each of the four pillars. These are tools to assist government Ministries, Agencies, and Commissions (MACs), and partners, to logically link interventions to the high-level goals over the next five years. The insertion of specific targets commits MACs to attaining those development outcomes falling within their remit.

BUHARI SECURED ANOTHER 4-YEAR TERM

PRESIDENT BUHARA OF NIGERIA SECURED ANOTHER TERM IN THE OFFICE WITH LOT TO BE DONE

The recent Nigeria's election declared President Muhammadu Buhari as the winner. The victory, which claimed

56% of the vote. With ballots from 36 States, President Buhari's All Progressives Congress (APC) got 15.2 million votes as compared with 11.3 million for his main rival of People's Democratic Party (PDP), Al-haji Atiku Abubakar, the former vice president to President Obasanjo from 1999-2007. The election was recorded as the largest on the Continent as over 80 people registered for the polls. However, according to some report, the just ended 2019 presidential election has recorded the lowest turnout of voters in the history of Nigeria. States such as Abia, Enugu and Ebonyi witnessed the lowest turnout, with less than 30 per cent of their registered voters marking the ballot. This is in stark contrast to 1999 when 70 per cent of all registered voters turned out to usher in Nigeria's new democracy. In 2015, the lowest turnout recorded was about 42 per cent, owing to issues such as voter apathy and the heavy activity of Boko Haram in the North East. The average, so far, has remained consistent at 34.7%.[5]



SaharaReport

Nigeria is Africa's biggest democracy and economy, which political stability cannot be overemphasized. Therefore, the Buhari-led administration's main challenge now is to keep uprooting Boko Haram insurgency and addressing unemployment and improving on the nation's infrastructures.

[5] http://saharareporters.com/2019/02/26/data

TRACING VULNERABILITIES, VIOLENCE AND HEALTH RISKS INDUCED BY CLIMATE CHANGE

By ***John S. M. Yormie, Jr.*** *Coordinator/ Officer in Charge Gabriel L. Dennis Foreign Service Institute.*

Introduction/Background

This literature has been developed over time and the debates have essentially shifted from the crux of whether or not climate change exists to how effects of climate change can be addressed. It has become more convincing as the earth gets hotter, increasingly causing melting of glaciers which have resulted to high sea rise, soil intrusion, land degradation, etc.

On the other hand, it has been identified that essential interplay of these naturally related occurrences induce conflict of varying natures. Some of these concerns are premised on the general consensus that variability and change exacerbate the scarcity of natural resources on the African continent, where majority of the people depend on land, water and the ocean for their livelihoods, according to the African Center for Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCRD).

In this paper, existential natures of climate change are discussed and viewed as nexus of conflict from a broader perspective, to narrowed scenarios at community levels. References are particularly placed on coastal communities in Liberia. The coastal environs along the nation's capital are mainly spotlighted.

Serious health hazards, interpersonal violence and vulnerabilities as results of loss of lands and forced migration due to sea erosion are reviewed and analyzed with plausible assumptions and recommendations as policy options to ensure remedies.

Among the many concerns of the international system, placing climate change effects as one of top priority has become far-reaching.

Robin Mearns and Andrew Norton of the World Bank have variously argued that the most profound challenge facing the international community in the 21st century is climate change. They described it as much as a challenge for poverty reduction, growth and development as it is a global environmental issue (Mearns, R. and Norton, A.; 2008).

As far back in 2007, it has already been estimated by the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that the world will warm between 1.8-4.2 degree Celsius within 100 years (IPCC; 2007). It was also assumed that conditions of droughts, extremes precipitation, heat waves and cyclone intensity, rising sea levels, increased land degradation and changing disease prevalence would have resulted (ibid).

Elementally, these can be argued as factors of conflict at different levels. It may affect regions, communities and neighborhoods differently, depending on the potential of the climate change inducing factor(s). For example, scarcity as a result of forced migration or resistance to share limited facilities can result to conflict in crowded coastal communities.

(Analysis) Issues, Plausible causes and remedial actions Vulnerabilities

Many factors position Liberia among many countries, especially Least Developing Countries (LCDs) vulnerable to impacts of climate change.

It has been realized that while Liberia has low carbon footprint, the impact and effects of climate change may have severe consequences in myriad spheres. Essentially, these spheres include sectors of agriculture, fisheries, forests, energy production related to availability of water resources, coastal areas and health.

It becomes more alarming considering the estimation that floods and sea erosion are among climate related hazards which are likely to worsen in Liberia with assumptions of significant impact on local communities' livelihoods.

The coastal line of Liberia is susceptible to sea level rise. It has been revealed that by the year 2090, Liberia will experience a sea rise of 0.13m and 0.43 as predicted by the SRESB1 (INC, 3013).

The country coastal line itself lies on the Gulf of Guinea coastline, making it significantly exposed to Southern Atlantic annual sea storms surges that lead average tidal rises of over 2m during a brief period in spring. It has been observed as a major driver of severe coastal erosion along the Montserrado Coastlines (West point Communities, New Kru Town, Buchanan and Cestos Cities), according to the (NAPA;2008).

The erosion lead to force migration or shorelines retreat. These scenarios have been noticed with varying distances with about 10 meters year in higher lifted zones and about 20 meters a year in the low land along the coastal communities like Bushrod Island in Monrovia.

These stretches cover over a host of densely populated communities in Monrovia, mostly occupied by poor people without adequate finances to individually employ coastal defense initiatives nor to acquire new decent lands for habitation and the conduct of livelihoods. Thus, they are compelled to live along these shores with high risks.

The effects have been far reaching and in the past forty years a number of climate change effects have occurred, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Liberia.

It has been realized that factors responsible include shifting cultivation, unsustainable logging practices, unregulated coastal mining, decreasing river flows due to high evaporation, etc.

However, the National Adaption Plan that began in 2015 is the country road map that engenders evaluation of existing climate adaption and mitigation initiatives. It also includes an assessment of knowledge, capacity and implementation gaps including capacity and implementation needs. It provides a guideline for implementation of the (NAP) process in Liberia and the areas to work in short medium and long terms.

Initially, The Government of Liberia (GoL) has implemented a number of climate change related initiatives including NAP in 2008, International Communication in 2012, National Climate Change Policy and REDD+ in 2012.

The realization has been the existing lack of institutional and technical capacity on climate change adaption in Liberia that prevents the government and stakeholders to integrate fully the ACC into planning and budgeting processes and to implement adaptation strategies.

A key objective of the NAP is coastal management.

Violence

History is replete with accounts of violence in many forms. Across Africa and other parts of the world, enormous accounts point to conflict induced by climate change. Whether in the natures of communal civil violent conflicts in the north eastern area of Nigeria (Emeka E. Obioha, 2017) or the trace of the genocide in Darfur (sometime referred to as the world first conflict caused by climate change, after the conflict was sparked, at least impart, by decline in rainfall) (David Biello, 2017).

American columnist Jeffrey Sachs at an event at Columbia University in 2007 mentioned that "Don't doubt for a moment that places like Darfur are ecological disasters first and political disasters second."

Henrik Urdal in similar fashion argues that, the direst predictions about the impact of global warming warn about greatly increased risks of violent conflict over increasingly scarce resources such as freshwater and arable land (Urdal, U.;2007).

Increasingly being described as a security problem, climate change has also been viewed as a factor responsible for violent conflict. A particular aspect of vulnerability of local places and social grounds (Jon Barnett and W. NeilAdger, 2007).

A strand of this is interpersonal violence among community dwellers which have become common in clustered communities along coastal areas in Liberia.

Health Risks

Climate change may lead to increased vulnerability to malaria, cholera and diarrhea diseases as well as increased incidences of these diseases.

It has been realized that humans have significant interactions with their environments and extensive relations therefore exist. One core area is health. The world health organization defines environment as it relates to health as "all the physical, chemical and biological factors external to a person and all related behaviors (WHO; 2006).

It has been studied that long termed good health of populations depends on the continued stability and functioning of the biosphere's ecological and physical systems, often referred to as life- support system as mentioned by A.J. McMichae in "Global Climate Change and Health: an Old Story Writ Large."

Mirroring from the above, human activities along coastal areas where toilet facilities are extensively linked to water

sources used for important daily uses signal serious health risks.

On another strand, malaria is very common in such areas considering the channel that both temperature and surface water have important influences on the insect vectors of vector-borne infectious disease. Of particular importance are, vector mosquito species which spread malaria and viral diseases such as dengue and yellow fever. (WHO, 2003).

Under these conditions it can be agreed that, substantial health hazards/risks permeate these coastal communities.

Major assumptions

The will be more effects of climate change in coastal communities unless measures are taken to ensure coastal defense while failure to promote awareness will cause endured exposure to causing climate change effects through activities like beach sand mining, dumping of harmful chemicals in sea and ocean bodies .

Interpersonal violence may increase if the trend of continuous land loss is not medicated. On the same basis, the likelihood of disease spreading among locals will remain prevalent in these clustered communities

Conclusion and recommendations

Climate change has been identified as a major challenge facing the planet. Along with intractable conflict across Africa, the viewpoints mentioned it as being a trigger for conflict especially with causality factors of scarcity of limited resources as in arable lands, fresh waters bodies, etc.

Some pieces of evidence were traced to the conflict prone Darfur region and parts of northern Nigeria. In coastal regions feasible for economic activities like fishing and agriculture, these triggers are more apparent.

These susceptible to climate change include coastal communities in the Nation's Capital Monrovia, (New Kru Town, Westpoint etc.) as well as other cities like Buchanan in Grand Bassa and Cestos in River Cess Counties. With prevalence of Malaria, constant fight on occupation of new lands, mishits building closed to high sea waves, vulnerabilities, health risks interpersonal violence appear common.

It has been observed that most awareness measures have not been at institutional levels including High Schools and Universities there by demanding the need to address such. The newly adopted National Adaption Plan must not be a mere shelve material but a tool that guides into full implementation to address climate change issues where as local actions are taken seriously in addressing this global menace being faced by Liberia and the entire comity of nations

RWANDA LUNCHED ITS FIRST SATELLITE TO BOOST INTERNET CONNECTIVITY [6]

As part of continued reform in education sector and access to the internet for research, business, entrepreneurship and innovation, Rwanda has lunched its first ever satellite. The government took this bold initiative in partnership with a UK based company, OneWeb. The dream and aspiration came to reality on Wednesday, February 27th 2019, At exactly 23:38, the much-anticipated satellite was sent into orbit from a spaceport on the Atlantic coast.

According to the Rwandan government, the global satellite shows its commitment to building the local space industry and local capacity, as well as, preparing the country into a hyper-connected future.

Ahead of the launch, the Rwandan ICT Minister, Paula Ingabire said this is just one of the many moves by the government to connect more underserved communities.

"Rwanda's choice to invest in space technologies is part of our broader mission to bridge the digital divide by providing equal digital opportunities to rural and remote communities. "We are delighted to partner with OneWeb in this transformative initiative which presents us a huge opportunity to leverage satellite connectivity, using OneWeb's constellation, providing low-latency and high-speed internet to schools in remote communities of Rwanda," she said. On his part, Greg Wyler, OneWeb's Founder and Chairman said "We are delighted to partner with the Rwandan Government and particularly the students of Nkombo. The connectivity

we can provide them will allow them to realise their dreams and allow Rwanda to become a hub for technological innovation." The satellite would not only provide internet access but could also allow communities to access government online services and provide access to global educational content to students and educators, *The New Times* said. Affordable access to the internet is highly-needed for any country to thrive and excel nowadays. The fourth industrial revolution is not but data and informational revolution and technology that touches all aspects of our lives.

[6] This article is partially taken from Face2FaceAfrica web, https://goo.gl/QEZDqM

THE PRIZE IN ECONOMIC SCIENCES 2019[7]

'The research conducted by this year's Laureates has considerably improved our ability to fight global poverty.

Despite recent dramatic improvements, one of humanity's most urgent issues is the reduction of global poverty, in all its forms. More than 700 million people still subsist on extremely low incomes. Every year, around five million children under the age of five still die of diseases that could often have been prevented or cured with inexpensive treatments. Half of the world's children still leave school without basic literacy and numeracy skills. This year's Laureates have introduced a new approach to obtaining reliable answers about the best ways to fight global poverty. In brief, it involves dividing this issue into smaller, more manageable, questions – for example, the most effective interventions for improving educational outcomes or child health. They have shown that these smaller, more precise, questions are often best answered via carefully designed experiments among the people who are most affected. In the mid-1990s, Michael Kremer and his colleagues demonstrated how powerful this approach can be, using field experiments to test a range of interventions that could improve school results in western Kenya. Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo, often with Michael Kremer, soon performed similar studies of other issues and in other countries. Their experimental research methods now entirely dominate development economics. The Laureates' research findings – and those of the researchers following in their footsteps – have dramatically

https://urlzs.com/NHrPU

improved our ability to fight poverty in practice. As a direct result of one of their studies, more than five million Indian children have benefitted from effective programmes of remedial tutoring in schools. Another example is the heavy subsidies for preventive healthcare that have been introduced in many countries. These are just two examples of how this new research has already helped to alleviate global poverty. It also has great potential to further improve the lives of the worst-off people around the world.

[7] the Noble Prize https://urlzs.com/HNXC6

The Ethiopian Prime Minister won the 2019 Noble Peace Prize

The Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded 100 times to 134 Nobel Laureates between 1901 and 2019, 107 individuals and 27 organizations. Since the International Committee of the Red Cross has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize three times (in 1917, 1944 and 1963), and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize two times (in 1954 and 1981), there are 24 individual organizations which have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

ABIY AHMED ALI (Ph.D) won the 2019 Noble Peace Prize "for his efforts to achieve peace and international cooperation, and in particular for his decisive initiative to resolve the border conflict with neighbouring Eritrea" see https://urlzs.com/PPCi4

AGRICULTURE IS THE THEME OF MANY AFRICAN ECONOMIES