

New Africa Analysis

Fortnightly news & analysis on progressive Africa

Is the IMF fit for purpose?

The recent G20 meeting in London elevated the international monetary fund (IMF) to a new level. Its lending capacity was tripled to US\$750 billion.

In the aftermath of World War II, the IMF was established to deal with declining commodity prices and deteriorating international trade. During the oil price shocks of the 1970s the IMF became lender of last resort, mainly to countries with balance of payments problems. The debt crisis of the early 1980s in Latin America gave the fund further impetus.

By the mid 1980s the IMF and the World Bank had become

policy architects in low-income countries. The 1998 Asian financial crisis brought the IMF to the forefront of crisis management. In '09, we are again at another milestone—the fund is back with even greater influence.

The IMF's past lending practices, however, do not make good reading. The fund has shoved the Washington Consensus down the throats of low- and middle-income countries, often with heavy conditionalities.

According to J. Williamson in his piece on the World Bank Research Observer titled

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Zuma's South Africa: 'it shall not be business as usual'

Newly elected President Jacob Zuma of South Africa has promised to 'lead the country on a path of friendship, cooperation, harmony, unity and faster change'.

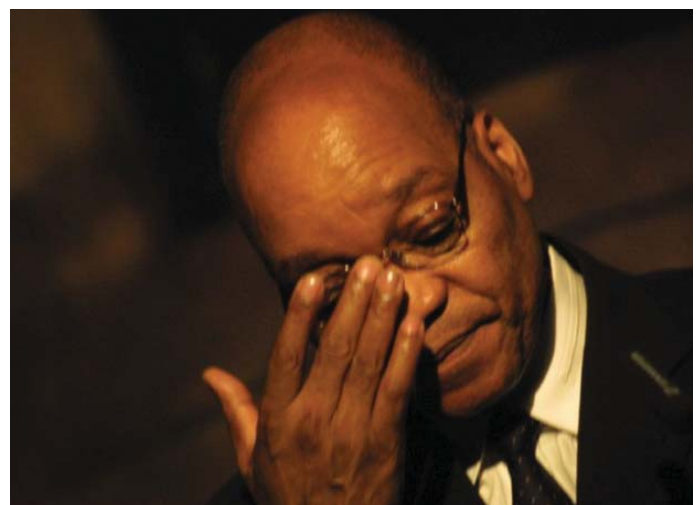
His inauguration speech 9th of May and his subsequent media briefing the following day was sober and presidential; a transformation from the populist Zuma to the presidential Zuma. It lacked the rabble rousing, high rhetoric and socialist war cries that were part of the Zuma stage ambience in the past.

It is sober as he dwells on the need to maintain a 'non-racist,

non-sexist and racially diverse' South Africa that is rich when 'united in its diversity'.

Zuma's speech is grounded in his peoples' reality, which are the need to bolster the provision of education and health, and to embark on land reform and rural development, the fight against crime as well as creating decent work. The new president said his government is 'determined to leave an indelible mark in these five areas'.

President Zuma seems to be acutely aware of the expectations of the people and the urgency



President Zuma ponders future

with which these issues must be tackled, therefore, he promised to 'move quickly to implement the framework agreed by government, business and labour to protect jobs and boost

the economy'. He said, 'it is my fervent hope that our public servants heard our campaign

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in Brief

Nigerian:

Soldiers have confronted opposition supporters demonstrating about an election result in south-western Ekiti state.

They fired shots and tear gas to disperse demonstrators outside the action congress (AC) headquarters in the state capital, Ado Ekiti.

Kenya:

A local fan of English football club Arsenal hanged himself after his team's defeat by Manchester United.

The north London club was beaten 3-1 in the European champions' league semi-final second leg early last week.

Libya:

The authorities here have requested that the man convicted of the Lockerbie bombing be transferred from Scotland.

The application for the transfer of Abdelbaset Ali al-Megrahi was received by the Scottish Government.

London:

The Ethiopian government has been asked by rights group amnesty international to disclose the identity of 35 people arrested more than 10 days ago. They were accused of plotting to overthrow the government.

The group says more people have been detained since, including an 80-year-old man in need of medical attention.

Tanzanian:

An opposition party is calling for the resignation of the president and defence minister, over a recent deadly blast at an ammunition depot.

The national convention for construction and reform (NCCR) says the government was negligent to allow the weapons so near a residential area. Twenty-six people died and hundreds were injured by the blasts on the outskirts of the capital Dar es Salaam.

Guinea:

Captain Moussa Dadis Camara has said he will not run in forthcoming elections. Capt Camara said none of the other leaders who helped bring him to power in December's coup would run either. He came to power in a bloodless coup after the death of President Lansana Conte, who had ruled the country for 24 years.

'The Washington Consensus'...Continues from page 1

'what should the World Bank think about the Washington consensus?' he 'invented the term 'Washington consensus' to refer to the lowest common denominator of policy advice being addressed by the Washington based institutions to Latin American countries'.

The advice included fiscal discipline; cutting tax rates; interest rate liberalisation; competitive exchange rates; trade liberalisation; liberalisation of capital flows; privatisation; and deregulation of prices and markets.

The IMF argued that its conditionalities were designed to prevent moral hazard and adverse selection; to provide credibility to reforms; and to show commitment to policy change. It applied the principal-agent problem to development finance.

In private financial markets there is an asymmetry of information. Adverse selection blurs the distinction between a viable borrower and a potential defaulter. Moral hazard provides the wrong incentive for the borrower to engage in risky actions.

Similarly, the IMF argues, concessionary lending may be an incentive for borrowers to deliberately seek balance of payments crises in order to

acquire funding, and hence the need for conditionalities.

Will the IMF provide the new resources under a post-Washington consensus arrangement? Will the financing be free of conditionalities? The answer is no. Washington Consensus polices and the associated conditionalities are alive and well.

As of today, the policy prescriptions are the same as those listed by Williamson.

If history is a guide to the future, they are unlikely to change soon. In 2008 alone there were 224 types of conditionalities imposed on 15 countries. The highest conditionality is in the area of fiscal reforms, followed by financial liberalisation, privatisation, trade reforms, exchange rate adjustments and price liberalisation.

Conditionalities are also highest in the least developed countries. The simple truth is that conditionalities are paternalistic. They are meant to alter behaviour and induce changes in economic, political and social structures. They also serve as a sort of collateral; in some cases they are a form of coercion to ensure adoption of otherwise unpalatable reforms.

Conditionalities trigger conflicts between the recipient country's objectives and those of the lender. The lender

enjoys bargaining power over financially dependent recipients through control of credit tranches. The outcome is usually in favour of the lender, whose catalytic function and seal of approval give it powerful leverage. For this reason alone, conditional lending erodes ownership of reforms.

Developing countries are in critical need of capital flows. Besides the impact of the current global recession, they still need external finance to supplement domestic savings. Aid and multilateral credit have been disappointing. As Dambisa Moyo argues in his piece 'Dead aid: why aid is not working and how there is another way for Africa', what low-income countries require are portfolio finance.

These types of capital flows require high credit ratings. The IMF could create mechanisms for the development of bond markets. It would act as the underwriter, providing sovereign guarantee schemes to protect the bondholders against possible default. This would lay the foundations for the much needed aid exit strategy, instead of perpetuating a failed consensus along with gratuitous and punitive conditional lending practices. •

Degol Hailu, international policy centre for inclusive growth and NAA editorial team.

'Zuma's South Africa...' Continues from page 1

message and understand that it shall not be business as usual. We expect hard work and utmost dedication'.

On the country's parliament on which he will depend for the necessary legislative reforms President Zuma said, 'I have a special relationship with parliament'. That is the display of a virtuoso politician whose common touch at the top end of the South African political elite should not be underestimated. It is also in sharp contrast with the rather aloof conservative, and technocratically inclined former president Thabo Mbeki.

This is a politician with the potential genius of driving South African politics at both ends of the political spectrum: top down and bottom up. It is a touching vignette of Zuma as a skilful political operator. Little wonder that the murk directed at his person was not nasty enough to convict him let alone keep him out of the presidential race.

The subtle defenestration of his communist/socialist background in the speech was clearly marked by his promise to

build on the democratic legacy of the great Madiba, Nelson Mandela. Zuma said he 'intend to start a new chapter in relations between government and the opposition. We reiterate that it should be possible to work with opposition parties on issues that are in the national interest'.

The speech sought to confront the genuine fears of his opponents that he will be an out and out backer of his friends in the unions and the communist party. In short, his democratic reassurance was a fillip for big business i.e. that his government will continue to support South Africa's growing commercial sector that is now under strain from the world economic downturn.

However, this speech was also remarkable for failing to refer to former President Thabo Mbeki. The failure to mention Mbeki in the speech was deafening; a sign of the raging chasm within the African National Congress (ANC)? Perhaps! Or, it is the result of the rather undignified public hostility between Zuma and Mbeki which cut short the latter's stint as president in his second term.

Perhaps, it also shows that the hostility between the two men still rankles.

In the same vein, the speech did not mention Mbeki's band of merry men - or rather disgruntled supporters - that have now formed part of the growing opposition against the ANC.

In sum, President Zuma's speech was a good one politically. It succinctly captures the various issues that are of a national importance to South Africa rather than the narrow political interests of the ANC. It was also strategically directed at the concerns of the international community who are not so comfortable with the rather colourful resume of Zuma.

How the new president handles the growing expectation within the country on the issues affecting the average South African; and the sense of division and drift within the ANC will be his abiding legacy. His promise to lead the country on a path of friendship, cooperation, harmony, unity and faster change will be judged then. •

Protection from homophobic attack

Senegal:

Amnesty International (AI) last week called on the government to ensure the safety of nine men at risk of homophobic attack. The nine men were released from jail a couple of weeks ago, having been held on the basis of alleged sexual conduct.

Veronique Aubert, deputy director of AI's Africa programme said that the 'nine men were prisoners of conscience, sentenced solely on the basis of alleged sexual conduct, and should never have been jailed in the first place'.

She added that 'the decision by court of appeal in Dakar to release them after they initially received an eight-year sentence is welcome. But it needs to be followed by concrete action from the authorities to ensure the men are safe from possible homophobic attacks.'

Since their release on April 20th, AI says the media and an Islamic organization have disseminated

homophobic statements describing the nine men as 'vicious' or 'perverts' spreading AIDS.

Radio programs have broadcast messages calling on the population to attack and throw stones at anyone suspected of 'being a homosexual'. These statements amount to advocacy of hatred constituting incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence AI said in a statement.

The nine men were arrested in the capital Dakar on Dec 19th '08 following anonymous accusations with regards to their sexual behaviour. Police officers also raided the house of the secretary general of AIDES Senegal, an organization providing HIV prevention services to men who have sex with men.

According to the association de Malfaiteurs, they were sentenced to eight years in prison after been found guilty of 'indecent conduct and unnatural acts and

conspiracy'. They were subsequently released after the Dakar appeal court overturned the convictions.

The men told AI delegates who met them at the Camp Penal prison in Dakar in April that following their arrest, 'a crowd of bystanders was waiting for us, they asked the police to remit us to the crowd as they threw stones at us and screamed: 'These are fags, they should not be put in jail, they should be lynched, let them out, we'll kill them ourselves'.'

AI says over the last two years, there have been an increase in homophobic attacks, arbitrary arrests and increased hostility towards lesbian, gay, bisexual, same-sex practicing and transgender people in the country.

This is exacerbated by the fact that consensual sexual conduct between people of the same sex is criminalised in Senegal. The Penal Code provides that:

"Whoever will have committed an improper

or unnatural act with a person of the same sex will be punished by imprisonment of between one and five years and by a fine of 100,000 to 1,500,000 francs. If the act was committed with a person below the age of 21, the maximum penalty will always be applied'.

This criminalisation has the effect of sanctioning human rights violations against those suspected of being lesbian, gay, bisexual, same-sex practicing or transgender, and ensures that there is little or no access to justice for the victims of those attacks.

The AI's Aubert called for the Senegalese authorities to 'repeal the law criminalising consensual sexual conduct between people of the same sex, and provide immediate protection for those who may be subject to discrimination or attack on the basis of actual or perceived sexual conduct'.

Guarding against swine flu

Mauritius:

The authorities here have allocated more money to the ministry of health (MoH) to combat swine flu in case it reaches the region and also bolstered preventive measures at the airport and sea port.

The MoH has set up a 'preparedness plan' with the collaboration of all stakeholders to be fully prepared in case some people become contaminated. The government has released an additional sum of US\$ 4 million to the MoH to increase its stock of the medical drug Tamiflu which will cover 25% of the population.

The money will also cover

the purchase of antibiotics, analgesics and the necessary laboratory equipments for analysis. All hospitals have now been equipped with more masks and equipment in case there is an outbreak of the disease in the island.

The MoH has also announced that in case they are needed, government buildings will be requisitioned to set up quarantine wards for those suspected of having been contaminated by the disease and that all necessary infrastructures will be set up in those wards according to the specifications of the world health organisation (WHO).

The measures will also

be applied to protect the population of the Mauritian dependency of Rodrigues, the MoH said.

The medical team at the international airport in Plaisance, 50 km from Port Louis has been reinforced from 14 to 31 persons while members of the flying squad have been instructed to be particularly vigilant as regards passengers coming from Mexico, the United States, New Zealand and Australia.

Official sources at the MoH indicate that the health declaration form which incoming passengers to the country are compelled to fill at the airport has been redesigned

in order to contain more information.

The personnel working for airline companies as well as those posted at the airport will receive further training in order to enable them to deal with suspected cases more efficiently.

The MoH has also convened an urgent meeting with senior officials of the ministries of agro-industry and tourism, airport and port officials, as well as with representatives of travel agencies and the police to have their opinion on what further measures should be taken.

An airport official indicated that a 'thermal scanner' will soon be in operation at the international airport to detect those passengers who are having fever.

Violence continues to drive out families

Central African Republic (CAR): Aid agencies are racing to position food and other relief supplies for some 18,000 men, women and children from the country that fled to southern Chad, most of whom have taken refuge next to the border. Rains due in the coming weeks will cut access to the refugees, aid workers say.

Up to 100 nationals a day continue to pour into Chad, fleeing armed attacks on civilians and fighting between rebels and government forces in northern part of the country.

Annette Rehr, spokesperson for the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) said 'the rainy season has almost started and many

of these roads - leading to the refugee sites - will become impassable,' 'this basically means the refugees will be cut off.'

The UN office for the coordination of humanitarian affairs (OCHA) said in a recent bulletin that 'the situation is currently under control but access problems during the rainy season remain a worry for everyone.'

UNHCR officials say the refugees will not be moved, despite the agency's policy that a refugee camp should be at least 50km from a border. The village of Daha, where about 11,000 of the 18,000 refugees are living, is just metres from the Awok River, which

forms the border between Chad and CAR.

The UNHCR say the refugees will not be relocated because the government has not agreed to designate a site for them and most of the refugees have said they want to stay close to the border.

Mahamat Nour Abdoulaye, coordinator of the government national commission for the reception and reinsertion of refugees (CNAR), said during CNAR missions to the area, refugees have said that they do not want to move.

'For now there is no plan to move the refugees. Were we to move them it would have to be to another department, some

200 kilometres away; they have said they prefer to stay where they are.'

He noted that currently the refugees are secure even with their proximity to the border. Many of the refugees have said they do not want to move farther inside Chad and leave behind relatives who are hiding in the bush in the CAR.

Refugees are also living in the border village of Massambagne, some 100km northeast of Daha. The UN children's fund (UNICEF) interim head of office in Daha, Ahmat Issa Outman, said 'we are most worried about Massambagne, where there is only one well for 1,000 locals and more than 1,000 refugees.'•

Villagers to test out UN carbon benefits

Kenya: Villagers in the western part of the country have been drafted in a project to calculate how much carbon can be stored in trees and soils when the land is managed in sustainable, climate-friendly ways. The project is carried out by the United Nations environment programme (UNEP) and its partners.

The carbon benefits project was launched Mon 11th May in communities in and around Lake Victoria by UNEP and the world agroforestry centre, along with a range of other key partners.

Funded by the global environment facility (GEF), the project is already being carried out in communities in Niger,

Nigeria and China, where scientists are developing a system for measuring, monitoring and managing carbon in a diverse range of landscapes.

Under the UN climate change convention and its Kyoto protocol, developed countries can offset some of their greenhouse gas emissions by paying developing economies for implementing clean and renewable energy projects such as wind, solar and geothermal power.

The UN food and agriculture organization (FAO) has noted that by keeping higher levels of carbon in the soil - a process known as 'carbon sequestration' - farmers can help reduce carbon dioxide levels in

the atmosphere, enhance the soil's resilience and boost crop yields.

However, as UNEP noted, more research is needed to evaluate just how much carbon different farming systems actually lock away. 'This key issue must be resolved if farmers, conservationists, communities and land owners are to be paid per tonne of pollution removed from the atmosphere,' the agency said in a news release.'

As part of the initiative, researchers will work with project managers in all four countries to set up carbon and greenhouse gas prediction systems. 'Farming carbon alongside farming crops is just one of the tantalizing prospects

emerging as a result of the world's urgent need to combat climate change,' said UNEP executive director Achim Steiner.

'Some industrialized countries are considering investing tens of billions of dollars in capturing carbon off the smoke stacks of power stations and burying underground. He added that managing the land and its vegetation in more 'intelligent and climate-friendly' ways may generate multiple benefits from stabilizing soils, securing water supplies, conserving biodiversity and generating much needed income for poor and low-income communities.'•

New appeals judge at special court

Sierra Leone:

Justice Shireen Avis Fisher, an experienced international judge and legal scholar, was sworn in Mon 4th May as appeals judge for the special court for Sierra Leone (SCSL).

Justice Fisher, from the United States, was appointed by the secretary-general of the United Nations.

She succeeds Justice A. Raja N. Fernando of Sri Lanka, who passed away Nov '08.

Immediately prior to her appointment to the SCSL Justice Fisher served, from '05 to

'08, as an international judge of the war crimes chamber, court of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The cases adjudicated by Justice Fisher at the Bosnia war crimes chamber included convictions for sexual slavery and other crimes against humanity, war crimes, and notably, the first convictions for the commission of genocide at Srebrenica. She also developed the court rules for victim and witness protections in the courtroom.

She currently serves as a commissioner on the Kosovo independent judicial and prosecutorial commission.

Since '86, she also served as a judge of general jurisdiction trial courts (criminal, civil and family courts) in the US state of Vermont, currently with active-retired status.



Justice Shireen Avis Fisher

Justice Fisher began her legal career as a public defender in Vermont, with a particular focus on juvenile justice cases. She was called to the Bar in '76. She has written and lectured extensively on international law.

Meanwhile, the Judges of trial chamber II in The Hague have dismissed in its entirety a motion for judgment of acquittal brought under rule 98 by defence counsel on behalf of former Liberian President Charles Taylor. This means that

Taylor has a case to answer on all 11 counts of his indictment.

The trial chamber ruled that the prosecution had presented sufficient evidence on all counts which, if believed, would be capable of supporting a conviction. The chamber made its finding based on the joint criminal enterprise mode of liability, and ruled that it need not examine other modes of liability, that is, aiding and abetting, planning, instigating, ordering, and superior responsibility.

'The trial chamber agrees with the prosecution that it is not necessary for the purposes of rule 98 to evaluate the sufficiency of the evidence in relation to each mode of liability and that it is sufficient if there is evidence capable supporting a conviction on the basis of one of those modes,' Justice Richard Lussick said in reading out the chamber's decision.

'In relation to the alleged participation of the accused, the trial chamber finds that there is evidence that the accused participated in the joint criminal enterprise.' Justice Lussick emphasized that the standard for determining sufficiency of evidence under rule 98 'is not evidence on which a trial chamber should convict, but evidence on which it could convict.'

The chamber also ordered that the Taylor defence open their case on June 29th '09. A pre-defence conference will take place on June 8th.

Taylor is expected to take the stand in his own defence. Under the special court's rules, he will be the first witness to testify in the defence case.

The SCSL was set up jointly by the government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations. It is mandated to try those who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law committed in that country since 30th Nov '96. •

On re-arresting political detainees in Zim

London:

British foreign secretary, David Miliband, expressed disappointment on news of the return to custody of 18 high profile political detainees in Zimbabwe.

Miliband said Tues 5th May that 'the new government in Zimbabwe has made some notable progress since its inception in February. This makes news of the return to custody of 18 high profile

political detainees all the more disappointing. I have previously said the release of all political detainees is one of the principle conditions for full international re-engagement with Zimbabwe. This remains the case at this crucial time for Zimbabwe'.

He went on 'the minister for Africa and I were pleased to welcome Zimbabwe's new finance minister, Tendai Biti, to a meeting' here. He

said the UK 'welcomed the credible start to the new government's reform agenda, although highlighted the lack of transparency in the judicial process as one area of concern. The return to custody of political detainees further highlights the reform needed in the judicial sector'.

At least 14 of the opposition activists have been released on bail a day after they were jailed

again. The imprisonment of the activists, including leading human rights campaigner Jestina Mukoko, sparked new tension in the coalition government. They were initially jailed in Dec and then freed on bail in March, and re-arrested Tues 5th.

Meanwhile, Miliband has said the 'UK remains fully committed to helping Zimbabwe with its most pressing humanitarian and essential needs.' •

Eastern Chad is a powder keg with potential to destabilise the entire country as well as neighbouring states and worsen the already dire humanitarian situation. Local conflicts based on resource scarcity have been exacerbated by national and regional political manipulation.

The population has already suffered enormously, from the domestic Chadian disputes, the Darfur crisis and the proxy war between Chad and Sudan alike. The two governments, with support from their international partners, should resume implementation of the Dakar Agreement, but a conference specifically dedicated to the conflict in eastern Chad should also be organised in order to allow local and national actors to find solutions to the domestic causes of the crisis. This conference should be integrated into the existing structures of the peace process in Chad.

Chad's successive regimes have failed to ensure the well-being and security of the population in the East, thereby fuelling mistrust of the central government. In order to counter armed opposition groups, the regimes first of Hissène Habré and now of President Idriss Déby have used a divide-and-conquer strategy, pitting ethnic groups against one another.

Nevertheless, eastern Chad was relatively stable until '03, despite a tense political climate and sporadic bloody clashes. The humanitarian and security problems that have shaken it since then are unprecedented, with spill over from the Darfur crisis aggravating pre-existing inter-ethnic confrontations and strengthening cross-border intercommunal loyalties.

Large-scale internal displacement and a massive influx of Sudanese refugees have upset eastern Chad's demographic balance and intensified the struggle for resources. Both the Chadian government and rebel groups have armed their supporters, leading to bloodier banditry and bloodier inter-ethnic conflicts that often pit

farmers against cattle breeders and making the work of humanitarian workers increasingly difficult.

The central government has systematically co-opted for its own political purposes traditional mediation and conflict management mechanisms, such as *diyah*, the compensation due for shedding blood.

Divide & Conquer

For more than five years, the Déby regime has been instrumental the troubles in eastern Chad in order to perpetuate itself. Déby has been able not only to divide his political opponents at the local level in the East, but also to limit the political space for his adversaries at the national level.

His strategy has had two phases. During the first, in '04-'05, the government tried and failed to consolidate the support of its Zaghawa ethnic base. Following splits among the Zaghawa, Déby stoked the historical mistrust between the Zaghawa and Tama ethnic groups in Dar Tama. He claimed that the *Front uni pour le changement* (FUC), the main coalition of rebel groups at the time, was an alliance between the Tama and the Janjawid of Darfur ill-repute and had been armed by Khartoum to eliminate the Zaghawa on both sides of the border.

To the international community, he depicted the FUC as the 'Chadian-armed right hand of the Sudanese Islamist regime',

Chad: powder keg in the East

a characterisation that was widely accepted, given the many Janjawid attacks against Sudanese refugees in Chad.

During the second phase, from '06 to the present, the government has tried with limited success to win the allegiance of the Dadjo ethnic group in Dar Sila by providing support both for existing Dadjo self-defence groups and for the creation of new, mostly Dadjo militias.

This support is supposed to protect civilians from Janjawid attacks, but its real purpose is to enlist the Dadjo in fighting Chadian rebel groups.

In turn, rebel leaders have used the crisis as a convenient political justification for settling scores with Déby. Sudan has

exacerbated the instability in the East by supporting virtually all the rebel groups, even though they are strongly divided along ethnic lines.

The international community has had a pair of peacekeeping missions on the scene since Feb '08 to alleviate spill over effects of the Sudanese conflict into eastern Chad: a European Union force (EUFOR) and the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT).

Limited mandate

However, neither significantly improved the security situation. On 15th March '09 MINURCAT took over the responsibilities of EUFOR but with a mandate that, like those of its predecessors, is

limited to reducing insecurity in camps for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the surrounding areas and does not include, as it needs to, promoting a political process that treats the Chadian roots of the crisis.

The international community should end its head-in-the-sand attitude and deal with the root causes of the crisis by putting pressure on the Chadian government to organise the conference on the conflict in eastern Chad cited above. That conference should include representatives of the central government, rebel groups, customary leaders and opposition political parties. It should examine the fundamental political causes of the instability in the East and put in place an adequate framework for dealing with them.

MINURCAT should be mandated to organise the conference and act as a neutral body for selecting many of its participants. France, which has reinforced Déby without helping the Chadians to find a durable solution to the crisis, should pressure the government to engage with the communities in the East for the organisation of such a conference.

Recommendations

Recommendations include but are not limited to the following:

To the Government of Chad:

Contribute, with MINURCAT's help, to the organisation of a peace conference on the eastern conflict and send governors and prefects as representatives of the government to participate in tackling issues including: the conflict between farmers and cattle breeders and access to land and water; the issue of *diyah*; the role of traditional chiefs and the spread and circulation of weapons and regional.

Agree, at the conclusion of this conference, to a permanent mediation council composed of

African Banking Corporation rebrands to BancABC

Regional banking group, ABC Holdings Limited, has announced that it is re-branding as BancABC. This re-branding announced Mon 27th April is to reflect the Group's growth and transformation as it prepares to launch its retail business across all territories.

Subject to regulatory approvals and starting from the third quarter of '09 to 2012, BancABC branches will be opening across Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The Group is currently investing heavily in technology, people, processes and channels

aimed at delivering a unique retail experience to its customers. It is in line with - and to enhance - this strategic thrust that BancABC has been established.

Speaking about the brand launch, the group chief executive officer Doug Munatsi said, 'we are excited about BancABC, which takes our image and brand positioning to a whole new level. We are confident that it will enhance our efforts to deliver superior quality service and a unique experience to all our customers - which are our brand promise.'

He added, 'at the same

time that we are launching our new brand, we are also adopting a new pay-off line 'fresh thinking smart banking' which reflects a new energy and commitment to the market.'

The group's brand consultants, Brand Union, led the re-brand process. The brand itself is a reflection of the bank's planned transformation into a modern African, full-service, banking that offers wholesale corporate and investment banking and retail and SME banking.

The enhanced BancABC is an innovative partner that possesses the ingenuity to truly pioneer

banking excellence because it is always trying to understand its customers better. The new logo and brand proposition will be introduced in all of the countries over the next few weeks.

BancABC is a brand name of ABC Holdings Limited, which is a Botswana registered company with a primary listing on the Botswana stock exchange and a secondary listing on the Zimbabwe stock exchange. The Group has operations in Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe and has an office in South Africa. •

Agreement to bolster ability to manage debt

Finance ministers from Commonwealth African and Caribbean countries have committed their governments to improving the legal and financial frameworks in the wake of the current global economic crisis.

During a meeting at the World Bank's headquarters in Washington DC they agreed that a major effort was needed to strengthen their abilities to manage growing debts.

Their commitments include ensuring a legal framework is in place so that staff dealing with debt management have a clear mandate to work towards and also recruiting and training professional staff in

order to reduce dependency on overseas assistance.

For these and other commitments to be met, ministers called on donors and international institutions like the World Bank and international monetary fund (IMF), to provide stronger financial and training support. They stressed that each country should be actively involved in implementing any agreed policies so that they become increasingly self reliant as opposed to having to call on international expertise to bail them out.

The meeting follows the G20 summit early April in London where world leaders met and agreed to bolster



Samura Kamara - Sierra Leone's finance minister

the ailing global economy with US\$1 trillion.

Even though commonwealth finance ministers welcomed this and other commitments made by the G20 leader, they emphasised the importance of donors, such as the IMF, delivering fully on the commitments made in London and also of providing additional finance where required.

Finance ministers or their representatives from Cameroon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guyana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia were present at the meeting. •

Analysis...Continued from page 6

key figures from the East who are accepted by the participants of the conference and who would monitor implementation of the conference's resolutions and mediate between the government and local chiefs.

To Chadian rebel groups:

Agree to a long-lasting ceasefire and resume, under UN oversight, dialogue with the Chadian government on the basis of the Syrte Agreement and support the holding of a peace conference on eastern Chad.

To the Government of Sudan:

End support for incursions and armed attacks by Chadian rebels operating from Sudanese territory and work towards normalisation of bilateral relations with Chad in accordance with the Dakar Agreement.

To the United Nations Security Council:

Mandate MINURCAT to organise the peace conference and act as a neutral body for the selection of its participants. Ensure MINURCAT has all necessary troops, helicopters and equipment to fulfil its mandate. •

Rates supplied by
INTLGlobal Currencies

Rates

7 May 2009

Notes:

Rates for Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland same as for South Africa

The Zimbabwe Dollar is no longer in use - it has been suspended by the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe

Rates supplied by INTLGlobal Currencies
(fx@intlglobalcurrencies.com)

GBP/USD 1.5100
EUR/USD 1.3275

Official/Bank rate

Country	Currency	Pound	Euro	Dollar
Algeria	DZD (Dinar)	106.38	93.52	70.4500
Angola	AOA (Kwanza)	116.72	102.62	77.3000
Botswana	BWP (Pula)	10.78	9.48	0.1401
Burundi	BIF (Franc)	1,830.12	1,608.93	1212.0000
CFA	XOF / XAF (Franc)	742.92	655.90	492.0000
Comores	KMF (Franc)	559.30	491.70	370.3955
Congo-K	CDF (Franc)	1,192.90	1,048.73	790.0000
Djibouti	DJF (Franc)	268.03	235.63	177.5000
Egypt	EGP (Pound)	8.50	7.47	5.6300
Eritrea	ERN (Nakfa)	22.65	19.91	15.0000
Ethiopia	ETB (Birr)	16.99	14.93	11.2500
Gambia	GMD (Dalasi)	39.18	34.45	25.9500
Ghana	GHS (Cedi)	38.88	34.18	25.7500
Guinea	GNF (Franc)	7,550.00	6,637.50	5000.0000
Kenya	KES (Shilling)	115.06	101.16	76.2000
Liberia	LRD (Dollar)	98.15	86.29	65.0000
Libya	LYD (Dinar)	1.94	1.71	1.2855
Madagascar	MGA (Franc)	3,140.80	2,761.20	2080.0000
Malawi	MWK (Kwacha)	215.18	189.17	142.5000
Mauritania	MRO (Ouguiya)	397.13	349.13	263.0000
Mauritius	MUR (Ruppee)	50.59	44.47	33.5000
Morocco	MAD (Dirham)	12.68	11.15	8.4000
Mozambique	MZN (Metical)	41.54	36.52	27.5100
Nigeria	NGN (Naira)	224.24	197.13	148.5000
Rwanda	RWF (Franc)	853.15	750.04	565.0000
Sierra Leone	SLL (Leone)	4,756.50	4,181.63	3150.0000
South Africa	ZAR (Rand)	14.07	12.37	9.3200
Sudan	SDG (Pound)	3.55	3.12	2.3500
Tanzania	TZS (Shilling)	2,000.75	1,758.94	1325.0000
Tunisia	TND (Dinar)	2.11	1.85	1.3945
Uganda	UGX (Shilling)	3,306.90	2,907.23	2190.0000
Zambia	ZMK (Kwacha)	7,882.20	6,929.55	5220.0000
Zimbabwe	ZWD (Dollar)	-	-	-

New Africa Analysis

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The 'three musketeers' under investigation

France

Judges in France have ruled admissible a case of corruption brought by the local transparency international (TI) and Gabonese citizen Gregory Ngbwa Mintsas against three African leaders.

The case filed in Dec '08 called for French authorities



President Teodoro Obiang Mbasogo

to investigate how a large amount of expensive real estate and other assets was acquired in France by presidents, Dennis Sassou

N'Guesso, Omar Bongo and Teodoro Obiang Mbasogo of Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea respectively, their family members and close associates.

AI - the global coalition against corruption - has welcomed the ruling calling it the first step towards the recognition of the rights of victims of corruption. The case is a 'major contribution to advancing the cause of collective legal actions aiming to defend the victims of corruption overall' it said.

For the first time, AI said, a 'civil action taken by an organization specialised in fighting against corruption to denounce facts directly affecting its collective interests has been ruled admissible'.

However, the admissibility in this case is partial because only TI (France) was ruled admissible. Mintsas, the Gabonese citizen who had the courage to lodge the complaint alongside TI (France), was dismissed.

TI thinks excluding Mintsas is severe, and it underlines the point that French law has to

evolve to allow taxpayers, the very first victims of corrupt practices, to lodge complaints. In this respect, AI said, Mintsas hasn't excluded the possibility of appealing against the decision to exclude him from the lawsuit.

By recognising the right of TI in this case to seek redress, the Dean of investigating judges has permitted the opening



President Omar Bongo Ondimba (Left) & President Denis Sassou N'Guesso

of a judicial investigation and the nomination of an investigating judge. This judge will have to determine how the assets owned in France were acquired, and where the funds in the many bank accounts uncovered during a preliminary police investigation came from.

The investigation will also throw light on the various intermediaries involved in the transactions under scrutiny, namely the banks identified by the police investigation whose compliance with anti-money laundering regulations is in question.

Without prejudice to the result of the judicial investigation, TI France and a French association of lawyers, Sherpa, which is working with TI on this lawsuit hope that the truth will be uncovered about the origin of the contested assets, and eventually leads to the concrete implementation of the right to restitution - a fundamental principle of the United Nations convention against corruption, which was ratified by France in '05.

The decision of the Dean of investigating judges also highlights the need for there to be fully independent investigating judges in France, who can freely launch prosecutions and conduct investigations. This is even more necessary when legal actions are politically sensitive, as in this case involving allegedly stolen state assets. •

Businesses support a robust anti-corruption convention

In an unprecedented move, chief executives from some of the world's leading companies have called on governments to more effectively and robustly implement the United Nations convention against corruption.

In a letter to UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon, the CEOs threw their support behind the world's only universal anti-corruption instrument, stating that it 'holds the promise of curbing corruption and creates a level playing field for all participants in the global economy'.

They praised the convention, describing it as 'an essential instrument in the fight against corruption', but they underlined the need for

the establishment of an implementation review mechanism at the next conference of states parties to be held in Doha in Nov '09.

'Especially now, in a period of deep financial and economic turmoil, an effective implementation review mechanism is essential. The economic crisis will inevitably place severe strains on worldwide competition, threatening an erosion of ethical standards that will be hard to reverse', they warned.

They cautioned that any further delay in establishing an effective review mechanism (as called for in the Convention) 'would damage the credibility of the convention and its

ability to build momentum in overcoming corruption'.

'Transparency and accountability are cornerstones to economic success. These CEOs have shown great leadership in supporting a review mechanism that truly works and we look forward to making the promise of this convention an anti-corruption reality', said Huguette Labelle, chair, transparency international.

The CEOs, including Mark Cutifani of the South African AngloGold Ashanti Company, provided ideas on how the mechanism should work. They highlighted three factors: adequate and dependable long-term funding; country visits with peer reviewers from other countries; and a transparent process,

with inputs from the private sector and other stakeholders, and with published reports.

'I deeply appreciate the leadership demonstrated by the corporate community in this critical matter,' said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, in response to the letter by the CEOs. 'The business advocacy for an effective review mechanism and the growing number of states adopting and implementing the Convention are evidence of a shared commitment to tackle corruption.'

The UN convention against corruption adopted in Dec '03, has been signed by 140 countries and ratified by 136 to date. •

Archbishops' Zim appeal keeps rising

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams and The Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, last week saw public donations for their joint Zimbabwe appeal reach £292,330. The appeal highlights the support needed by churches, which are struggling to feed the hungry and provide health care.

In a joint statement, the Archbishops said, 'the support of the general public has been overwhelming, and we have been humbled by the response so far. We know that rebuilding Zimbabwe is a long-term aim, and this short intervention is still only reaching a small number of the many millions in need. Thank you for enabling us to do this.'

'Our brother Bishops in Zimbabwe have highlighted the need for immediate relief activities to address the cholera epidemic and starvation, but also that we support programmes that provide long term solutions to poverty. So at their request we will be providing seed-corn for crops in time for the planting season which normally starts end of October.'

'More of the dioceses of Zimbabwe are expected to send in their specific requirements in the next few weeks, and they have told us that their focus will be on the most vulnerable in their communities; those living with HIV, the elderly as well as children.'

Staff from USPG (Anglicans in World Mission) and Lambeth Palace have just returned from

meeting with the Zimbabwe bishops and their staff to hear their long terms plans for community work in the areas of health, agriculture and peace building.

'Whilst we know that food is the first priority we have also committed to buy medicines, initially for six clinics, and we expect the first of these vital medical supplies to be dispatched in the next weeks.'

Three dioceses, those of central Zimbabwe, Masvingo and Matabeleland, are the first ones to roll out the supplementary feeding programme in schools, and Easter week saw the first food distributed through the Church schools.

The Rt Revd Michael Doe, general secretary of USPG said, 'we've been astounded by the response of the general public, and we thank all those that have supported the Archbishops' appeal over Lent - we know of many more churches and dioceses who have pledged to support the appeal in the Easter season and beyond.' Auxiliary Bishop Pat Lynch of Southwark has urged Catholics not to let migrants be used as scapegoats during the recession.

He made the comment in a homily at the fourth Mass for migrants at Westminster Cathedral attended by the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, and several European ambassadors.

He said: 'My first prayer today is that during a time of recession, when there will

inevitably be job shortages, we as the Church will do all we can not to allow migrant workers from within or outside the European Union to become scapegoats and targets of people's frustration with the economy.'

The Mass coincided for the first time with an Anglican service in support of migrants at St Margaret's, Westminster Abbey, and a gospel event at Methodist central hall.

Afterwards people from all three congregations joined a rally at Trafalgar Square calling for an amnesty for illegal immigrants who had lived and worked in Britain for five years or more. The rally organised by the strangers into citizens campaign, included entertainment from Brazilian drummers, dancers, bands and Chinese dragons.

In his homily Bishop Lynch strongly defended the idea of a one-off amnesty for long-term illegal immigrants.

He said: 'There is a clear moral case that undocumented workers who have lived and worked in this country for five years or more should be given the opportunity to build a future in the United Kingdom and continue to contribute to British society. You have worked here; your children have been born here and attend school here; you are part of our parishes and our society here and a way should be found so that you can remain here.'

Bishop Lynch, the author of a Church document on migration, is one of several

Church leaders, including Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, that have spoken out in support of an amnesty - or at least of finding a way for long-term illegal immigrants to become citizens.

One proposal is that anyone who had lived in Britain for a number of years could be granted a two-year work permit. After that they would be legally allowed to stay provided they passed an English language test, had a job and did not have a criminal record.

Both the Labour and Conservative parties are opposed to the idea of an amnesty but last year Boris Johnson announced a study into it, saying there was clearly 'a case to consider'. •

Mark Greaves

The Archbishops' appeal, which is being administered on their behalf by USPG, will be accepting donations for the rest of 2009.

Online donations can be made at www.uspg.org.uk. Select the donate tab from the main menu for details. If donating online, select 'Archbishops' Zimbabwe Appeal'.

Cheques can be made payable to 'USPG', with the words 'Archbishops' Zimbabwe Appeal' on the back and sent to: USPG: Anglicans in World Mission, 200 Gt Dover Street, London SE1 4YB.

Bank giro credit may be made to USPG, Account no. 50832596; Sort code 20-32-29. Barclays Bank plc, London Corporate Banking. Please quote AZA.

Avoid scapegoating migrants - Bishop

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Both the Labour and Conservative parties are opposed to the idea of an amnesty but last year Boris Johnson announced a study into it, saying there was clearly 'a case to consider'. • *Mark Greaves*

South Africa - Zuma's inauguration

New South African President Jacob Zuma is being sworn in today. He and the African National Congress (ANC) won convincingly in South Africa's fourth post-apartheid elections - with the queues of people waiting to vote reminiscent of those in 1994.

We will continue our high level of engagement with the South African Government; Mark Malloch Brown is representing the UK at President Zuma's inauguration and we are planning early meetings with ministerial counterparts.

This engagement matters. First, South Africa is a key partner for the UK across many priorities and international fora, from the Commonwealth to the G20. South Africa will have a key role in implementing the outcomes of last month's successful London Summit, and we share their concern that the international response to the economic downturn should meet the needs of both developed and developing economies.

Second, South Africa is a major regional player. As a member of both the Southern

African development community (SADC) and the African Union (AU) it is key for the continent's response to its internal challenges.

Third, we face shared challenges in delivering successful, secure global sporting events: World Cup 2010 in South Africa and London 2012.

South Africa has a special place for anyone who became interested in politics in the 1980s. It burst onto my consciousness one morning in the early part of the decade

when a friend of my parents - Ruth First - was assassinated by the South African security forces. The story of the fall of apartheid defied expectations. The struggle to overcome its legacy continues.

The sight of black democratically elected leaders in South Africa is still remarkable. The problems are serious but so is the goodwill around the world to make sure that the struggle was worth it.●

Posted Sat May 9th '09 by David Miliband, British foreign secretary.

Zuma picks cabinet of all talents

Jacob Zuma moved swiftly to assure investors that South Africa would not lurch leftwards under his rule by appointing the widely respected former finance minister, Trevor Manuel, to head a powerful new planning unit within the presidency. Zuma, who was inaugurated as the country's third black president on Sat 9th May, announced an inclusive cabinet designed to appeal to all sectors of society. He rewarded loyalists but also promoted whites, Asians and technocrats and sidelined those with any whiff of incompetence or corruption around them.

In an overture towards white Afrikaner farmers, he named an Afrikaner, Pieter Mulder head of the right-wing Freedom Front Plus

opposition party, as deputy agriculture minister. Mr Zuma wants to reassure the white community that there will be no Zimbabwe-style land grabs.

Manuel's replacement at the finance ministry is Pravin Gordhan, who was previously head of the South African revenue service, considered one of the most efficient government bodies.

Despite much speculation, there was no job for Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, former wife of Nelson Mandela and a close Zuma ally. She is a controversial figure but remains a darling of the township masses and was fifth on the African national congress's list of candidates for parliament. She is now 73 and party insiders said that she was too old for a post in government but will receive due respect as

'Mother of the nation'.

Another casualty was 'Dr Garlic', Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, health minister under Mr Zuma's predecessor, Thabo Mbeki, who advocated a diet of onions and garlic to help to fight HIV/Aids. She had already been sidelined to a job in the presidency and has now lost it altogether.

'I think the markets are going to react very positively to Trevor Manuel's shift from finance to a new Cabinet-level planning department,' Mr Zuma told reporters at a briefing at the Union Buildings, his new office, yesterday. 'Comrade Trevor Manuel is being given a new structure, a very powerful structure that is going to work out a national plan of government.'

One post that raised eyebrows was that of foreign

affairs, now renamed international relations. It went to an ANC women's league and provincial activist, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, best known for once being married to an ambassador accused of sexual misconduct at the country's embassy in Indonesia.

The Cabinet appointments were examined closely for hints that Mr Zuma's economic policy would swing leftwards because of support he had received from the South African communist party and the labour movement in an epic battle with Mr Mbeki for the ANC leadership. In the end, leftwingers were given junior jobs and non-economic portfolios.●

Posted By Doberman at Monday, May 11, '09

Malawi: the economy, stupid?

On May 19, voters in Malawi will go to the polls to elect their next president. The democratic progressive party has been in power for the last four years and is fielding President Bingu wa Mutharika as its candidate once again.

Despite facing a strong alliance of the main opposition leader and a former president, the incumbent is expected to win on the back of an economic boom.

Though critics accuse Mutharika of rigging his way into office, he is credited with helping to improve Malawi's economy. Since he took over, the country has experienced an average economic growth of 7 percent.

'He inherited a very politically and economically mismanaged legacy ... and it was a very tall order to get the country running, to try to get the confidence of very important external players in Malawi,' said Dimpho Motsamai, a political analyst at the institute for global dialogue in South Africa who specializes on Malawi.

'So his vision was one of economic rejuvenation, stricter physical management of economic resources — very prudent management of economic resources — and one that would deal with socio-economic inequalities in Malawi,' she told Reuters Africa journal.

Malawi has also experienced severe drought. 2005 was its

worst year and nearly half of the country faced starvation and a lack of maize, the local staple. Wa Mutharika's government implemented fertilizer and seed distribution programmes. Last year the country produced a surplus of 1.3 million tones of maize — the highest in 10 years — and became an exporter of food rather than an importer.

Though seven other candidates will challenge the president, his stiffest competition is expected from John Tembo of the Malawi congress party, who has been endorsed by the country's former president Bakili Muluzi.

Muluzi stepped down in 2004 after he couldn't change

the constitution to allow him to run for a third term. Malawi's electoral commission has barred Muluzi from running. The former president was arrested and charged with stealing donor money while in office. Despite this, some Malawians still see Muluzi as a liberator because he ousted the country's first leader, Hastings Kamuzu Banda.

Malawi is not a regional leader but what happens during the election may influence what happens in other emerging African democracies. And if the incumbent does win as expected, it may also demonstrate that old Clintonian mantra: 'It's the economy, stupid.'●

Posted by Mujo Masinde, 8th May 09.

Keeping African health issues on US policy agenda

A delegation of health officials from 11 African countries were in Washington recently to advocate for continued US support and funding for African health initiatives.

The visitors including members from the African union commission also promoted public-private health partnerships. They were hosted by the global health progress (GHP) and coordinated by the Whitaker Group.

GHP president Chris Singer, said 'with a new administration in the White House and a global economic crisis forcing a review of every US funding commitment, decision-makers in Washington are looking for new ways and new partners to promote sustainable advances in health.'

'It is imperative that they hear directly from African health leaders about their health priorities as well as the success of innovative health partnership models', he said.

GHP is a partnership initiative, which brings research-based biopharmaceutical companies and global health leaders together to improve health in the developing world.

Its members are participating in a host of successful public-private partnerships across the continent that are transforming public health infrastructure and promoting treatments that return millions of Africans to productive lives.

Congressman Donald Payne (D-NJ), the chairman of the US House of Representatives subcommittee on Africa and global health, and Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ), the ranking Republican on the subcommittee were among the members of Congress who engaged the delegation during the visit.

The delegation also met with officials from the US State Department, the office of the global AIDS coordinator, Admiral Timothy Ziemer of the President's malaria initiative, the national institutes of health's Dr. Anthony Fauci and leaders from the World Bank.

While emphasizing the importance of continued support for African health initiatives, members of the delegation were also eager to personally thank policy-makers for the passage in '08 of the \$48-billion reauthorization of PEPFAR. This landmark legislation commits historic levels of

US funding to combating HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in the developing world. The African health leaders urged Washington to fully fund the commitment.

'While it is true that only the United States has the capacity to sustain such a large program,' said Dr. Grace Kalimugogo, the AU commission's coordinator for HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, 'it is also true that only the United States has the will to show such unprecedented generosity.'

'Not only has the visit given us the opportunity to speak to US policymakers and representatives from the private sector and NGOs, it has also provided invaluable opportunities for an exchange of ideas between our respective health ministries,' she added. 'With greater communication, we are able to share models of successful public-private partnerships that may be replicated elsewhere. A problem shared is a problem solved.'

'These delegates are at the forefront of African-innovated, African-led development,' commented Ms. Rosa Whitaker, president and CEO of the Whitaker Group. 'They bring with them extraordinary experience and knowledge of what works and what doesn't in the field of healthcare, and



Dr Karabo

they come with a strong message of keeping Africa on the agenda and of the excellent return America is getting on its investment of health in Africa.'

In addition to meeting with policy-makers, members of the delegation provided their perspective at roundtable discussions on a range of health-related issues, including HIV/AIDS, neglected tropical diseases, safe medicines and public health education in Africa.

In addition to the African Union, the following Ministries of Health were represented among the delegation: Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Uganda. •

World Bank pledges big on health

The World Bank has pledged to mobilize up to \$3.1 billion this year in health financing to help poor countries battling threats to their social services during the global economic crisis.

This amount triples the bank's support from \$1.0 billion last year and will be used to strengthen health systems in poor countries, boost their performance in preventing and treating communicable diseases, and improving child and

maternal health, hygiene and sanitation.

The Bank also said it was doubling its education financing this year in low- and middle-income countries to \$4.09 billion.

The new health and education numbers follow the bank's announcement a couple of weeks ago that its investments in social protection programs, including social safety nets, are expected to rise dramatically for 2009-2010 to \$12 billion. •

Children at risk from triple threat

Horn of Africa:

The United Nations children's fund (UNICEF) warned last week that lives of millions of children in the region are being threatened by chronic food insecurity, conflict and political instability.

Nearly 20 million people, including four million children under the age of five, are already in need of emergency relief assistance, representing a significant rise over last September's figure of 14 million, the agency said in a news release.

'Over the last few months we have witnessed a steady increase in the numbers of

children suffering from acute malnutrition, which means more children are at risk of death and disease,' said Dorothy Rozga, UNICEF's deputy regional director for East and Southern Africa.

'We are witnessing an all too familiar tragedy unfolding, and unless we act with much greater urgency the situation for children can only get worse,' she warned.

Contributing to the emergency is a combination of erratic weather patterns, the global economic crisis and heightened conflict and insecurity. •

Tractored out by 'land grabs'?

Rich countries and firms are leasing or buying massive tracts of land in developing nations for the production of food or biofuel.

An area equivalent to Germany's farmed land is at stake, and tens of billions of dollars on offer. On the plus side, agro-industrial production could develop underused land, and broaden the world's food production base while providing much needed resources for poor countries.

But is the land really idle and currently unused? Are small-scale farmers going to be 'tractored out' in a murky neo-colonial 'land grab'?

Farmers and experts in several African countries know all too well the need for higher food production, but the scale and structure of the deals gives rise to concerns.

Food-importing countries that lack land and water but are rich in capital, such as the Gulf States, are initiating deals to produce food in developing countries, where land and water are more abundant and production costs much lower.

Vast tracts of land and huge amounts of money are involved: 15 million to 20 million hectares, almost equivalent to the total area under cultivation in Germany, according to analysts at the US-based international food policy research institute (IFPRI). Investment so far adds up to \$20 billion to \$30 billion, dwarfing foreign aid budgets for agriculture.

Joachim von Braun and Ruth Meinzen-Dick of IFPRI point out in a new policy brief that developing countries with large populations, like China, South Korea and India, are seeking similar deals, including growing biofuel crops.

The institute warned that there was a 'lack of transparency' in many deals, with the amounts involved 'often still murky'.

Land is an 'emotional issue', said Theo de Jager, deputy president of Agri SA, the South African farmers' association. Some of the deals have already begun to ruffle feathers in developing countries, most of which are highly food insecure, and

at least one has led to the overthrow of a government.

An April '09 policy paper from the German NGO Welt Hunger Hilfe says: 'States that are dependent on food imports, in particular, are surrendering more and more land to foreign investors while failing to ensure that conditions improve income and food security for their own population. Agricultural investments are rarely made in such a way that they offer the local population a genuine share of the benefits.' The paper also points out the risks of high-level corruption.

IFPRI has called for a code of conduct to be drawn up, modelled on international business laws to prevent corrupt practices in the context of foreign direct investment.

According to von Braun, the arrangements usually involve governments, either directly or through state-owned entities and public-private partnerships, and the land was usually leased or made available through concessions, but was sometimes bought.

'The size and terms of the contract differ widely - some deals do not involve direct land acquisition, but seek to secure food supplies through contract farming and investing in rural and agricultural infrastructure, including irrigation systems and roads - these are the better deals.'

Various Gulf States have struck most of the deals in East Africa, which is facing some of the biggest food shortages globally. IFPRI's von Braun and David Hallam of the UN food and agriculture organisation (FAO) said it was 'too early' to assess the impact of the deals on food security and farmers in the lessor countries.

Farming and pastoralist communities in the delta of Kenya's Tana River have reacted strongly to reports of government's intention to lease a chunk of this rich coastal land to Qatar. Kenya is facing huge food shortages and high prices after a third consecutive year of drought.

Mohammed Mbwana, who farms in the area and is an

official of the Shungwaya welfare association, a local NGO, said the agreement, would displace thousands of locals. At least 150,000 families in farming and pastoralist communities depend on the land in question, said to be part of Kenya's biggest wetland.

Tana River County councillors have threatened to go to court and block government's plans to lease the land.

IFPRI recommends transparency, respect for existing land rights, sharing of benefits, environmental sustainability and adherence to national trade policies as key elements to be incorporated in a proposed code of conduct. This could include foreign investors being denied the right to export during an acute national food crisis.

Farmers and think-tanks talk about turning this 'opportunity' into a 'win-win' situation. While the agriculture sector in most poor countries grapples with the impact of the economic slowdown, deals for arable land continue to prove attractive.

Rwanda recently announced a new programme to identify 'unexploited' arable land for foreign investors. On the other hand, the Republic of Congo announced it would lease 10 million hectares of farmland to individual foreign farmers to boost its food security.

'This is a better option - leasing out land to farmers who will transfer skills to local farmers, boost the country's production, and care about the land,' said Agri SA's de Jager. South African farmers have helped improve production in Zambia, Botswana, Mozambique and Nigeria, among other countries he said.

But IFAP's Vashee pointed out that farmers cannot bring in the huge investment needed to build or rebuild infrastructure.

IFPRI is working with the African Union to develop guidelines on how to negotiate with foreign investors, which will be presented to African leaders for ratification at a summit in July. •

Scheme to boost rural employment

Cameroon:

The rural poor across the country are set to receive a cash injection of close to \$14 million from the United Nations in an effort to reduce poverty, increase income and improve livelihoods.

The international fund for agricultural development (IFAD) will support the rural microfinance development project with a \$13.5 million loan and \$200,000 grant.

The scheme will help the growing numbers of young people leaving cities, which have high rates of unemployment, for rural areas looking for work in agriculture and its related sectors but have difficulty in accessing credit.

Women, who despite their heavy workload and financial constraints start up small businesses involved

in processing, storage, transport and handicraft activities, will particularly benefit from the projects.

IFAD expects the initiatives to increase rural employment, boost the income of the rural poor, improve their food security and nutrition, as well as enhance the status of women, who will take part in managing the microfinance institutions.

The funding will target smallholder farmers experiencing difficulty in buying inputs and technology the rural populations in the Centre, Extreme-North, North-West and Western regions of the country.

To date, IFAD has funded seven rural development projects in this West African country with a total of \$85 million.

Measures against 'swine flu'

ECOWAS:

The Commission has urged member states to take appropriate measures to enable them respond to the prevailing health crisis arising from the Swine Influenza A/ H1N1 viral attack that has been reported in Mexico, the US, Europe and other parts of the world

The Commission has issued an advisory memorandum to citizens of the region and member states to be at alert and undertake various preventive measures to combat the virus. Among them are:

1. That the sub-regional epi-surveillance and laboratory networks are to be put on alert and ensure the implementation of the commission's mechanism of prevention and control of Avian Influenza and other transboundary diseases

- (TADs) to keep swine influenza at bay in the sub-region;

2. That all relevant agencies at the national units are advised to remain vigilant and report any suspected cases of swine influenza, while encouraging farmers to exhibit high levels of animal husbandary practices and proper nutrition on their farms;

3. Member states are advised to activate their pandemic preparedness plan and contact the world food programme (WHO) regional officeS for assistance where necessary;

4. It is prudent for people to delay international travels which are not necessary and those developing symptoms following international travels should seek medical attention in line with guidance from medical authorities;

5. That citizens should

ensure high levels of personal hygiene for themselves and their families. Individuals are also advised to wash hands thoroughly with antiseptics, soap and water on regular basis and should seek medical attention if they develop any symptoms of influenza-like illness such as frequent sneezing, cold, flu, headaches etc;

6. Individuals are advised to have in their possession face-masks especially when going into public places;

7. Member States are advised to avoid restrictions of regular travels or closure of borders; and

8. Non-essential travel to areas with reported cases of infection should be avoided.

Citizens are encouraged to report any suspected cases to the nearest medical centre for prompt action.

The Commission says it wishes to reiterate its commitment to the development of the livestock sub-sector in the sub-region but observes that the influenza event underscores the crucial importance of maintaining quality veterinary services capable of detecting relevant emerging and re-emerging pathogens that have potential public health impact.

Veterinarians are therefore advised to ensure the continued development of good governance in veterinary service delivery in compliance to international standards

The President of the Commission Dr Mohammed Ibn Chambas is urging citizens to remain calm and continue to go about their normal businesses and exercise maximum vigilance during this period. •

Maintaining caution on 'swine flu'

SADC:

The community reports that 'swine influenza', or 'swine flu', is of concern to the region.

In its website, the community quoted the world organisation for animal health (OIE) and food and agriculture organisation (FAO), who had both said there is so far no evidence that this disease circulating in people is capable of infecting animals, such as pigs.

It would not be justifiable therefore, the community said, to impose additional measures on trade in pork products as a result of the outbreak.

The community's livestock technical committee says it recognises that this is an evolving situation and will continue to monitor it closely. If the need arises for action to be recommended, that will be done immediately it says.

Collaboration between ministries of agriculture and ministries of health amongst member states must be strengthened, to

enable clear communication on the disease, as well as to increase epidemiological vigilance in order to quickly detect and respond to any unusual disease events in animals and humans.

Training for peacekeeping

Meanwhile, the community's standby brigade has carried out the 2nd phase of its command post exercise (CPX) in Maputo, Mozambique. The exercise, codenamed 'Exercise Golfinho' was meant to prepare military, police and civilian decision makers with the command, communication, control and the co-ordination aspects in preparation for the final field training exercise (FTX) scheduled for Sept, '09 in South Africa.

The main objective of the exercise was to prepare the brigade to participate in missions as envisaged in Article 13 of the Protocol establishing the peace and security council of the African Union and as may be mandated by the community's heads of

state and government. It is also aimed at testing the brigade's capability to handle conflict situations in line with the evolving international peace keeping framework.

The community's brigade concept is part of the African peace and security architecture, which is guided by the UN peace keeping framework. In terms of the AU peace keeping framework, the regional economic blocks including SADC are required to establish regional standby brigades by '09, as an ultimate goal to establishing the AU standby force by 2010.

The exercise had three phases; the planning phase, which was utilized to complete the tactical plans of the three components and took place in Angola in Feb '09. Phase two is the CPX, which concluded in Maputo, Mozambique to test and integrate the plans made during the first phase and to establish headquarter procedures at the different levels, utilizing a computer-based

simulation system. The third phase will be the field training exercise to be held in South Africa.

The CPX was officially opened by the minister for national defence, of Mozambique Filipe Nyusi and also graced by the head of the community's peace support mission and a representative of the chair of organ on politics, defence and security Dr. Moses M. Dlamini.

Nyusi commended the community's support mission for incorporating the three different components; especially the civilian component, which he said would assist civilians to have a better understanding of peacekeeping concept.

The head of the peace mission, Dr. Moses Dlamini thanked the participating countries for the effective involvement in the exercise saying the exercise, was a big success and a step in the right direction in terms of regional integration efforts. •

By Daniele Archibugi

Which jails for Somali pirates?

The Gulf of Aden is becoming increasingly crowded. Due to the several million paid in ransom over the last twenty four months, and to the persisting chronic poverty in Somalia, the number of individuals who have turned to piracy has increased, and they seem to be more desperate and less experienced than the previous ones. In the first quarter of '09, the number of attacks on ships has in fact doubled, according to the international maritime bureau.

But pirates have today, to deal with an increased presence of military ships; the United States leads a multilateral military force of some twenty states, and the European Union has created for this purpose its first joint military force. Their numbers are augmented by the presence of the military ships from several Eastern states. Moreover, the UN Security Council has authorized military ships in the area to pursue suspect vessels inside the Somali territorial waters and even onto the mainland in order to capture the pirates. If both the number of pirates and of military ships in the area increase, we can be almost certain that the two will clash more frequently. This is precisely what has happened in the last weeks.

But once arrested, what becomes of the pirates? The international law of the sea does not give rise to problems of interpretation: since the seventeenth century pirates are considered *hostis humani generis* and piracy is one of the few crimes, indeed the first crime, for which there exists universal jurisdiction. This means that any state that captures a pirate ship is entitled to try the pirate crew in its tribunals. But the norm is so old and international piracy in the high seas had become so uncommon that states find themselves unprepared. More particularly, several countries do not know how to incorporate this international norm in their domestic

jurisdiction.

Up till now, the United States and France are the only two states to have brought pirates home to try them. The United States have brought to New York Abdulh Wal-i-Musi, the teen-ager involved in the hijacking of Maersk Alabama and its Captain Richard Phillips whose age and even name are still uncertain. This will be the first trial held in the United States for piracy for more than a century. The course of the trial promises to be all but predictable: the strategy of the defence is likely to be centred around the age of the defendant, but also on the fact that his arrest took place while he was onboard the American vessel to negotiate the release of the Captain. The fact that he was arrested during a truce in high sea might invalidate the arrest.

The number of pirates detained in France is greater: following two expeditions of the French special squads there are currently twelve prisoners. The first group of six pirates was captured in April 2008 after the kidnapped, payment of a ransom and release of the 30 members of the crew (22 of which were of French nationality) of the yacht 'Le Ponant'. The second group of six pirates was captured in Sept 2008 (while a seventh pirate was killed), after they hijacked the yacht of the French couple Delanne. In both cases, the blitzes of the commandos were properly filmed and broadcasted by the French navy. These cases have one legal point in common: those who performed the arrest are the same nationality as the hostages. But they have also similarities in terms of political image: Nicolas Sarkozy and Barack Obama have both been directly involved in the process

and are portrayed as the decision-makers of last resort who acted to protect their fellow citizens abroad as well as to ensure the guilty parties were punished.

How do the other navies behave, in particular in those cases when hostages of different nationality are involved? The Indian navy has shown more propensity to sink suspect ships rather than arresting pirates. The Dutch and Danish navies, who have captured ships carrying war weapons, have kept the crews onboard their vessels for a few hours but have then chosen to release them. The Dutch, who were operating under a joint NATO mission, have provoked the wrath of the US secretary of state, Hillary Clinton. But the fact remains, NATO has an agreement to patrol the Gulf of Aden, but it does not have a common policy in relation to making arrests, as frankly acknowledged by NATO lieutenant commander Alexandre Fernandes.

It is certainly surprising that there are so many navy ships patrolling the Gulf of Aden and the outcome is so often that arrested pirates are released. So far, the navies have had a more preventive than a repressive role. There are not more than one hundred pirates waiting for trial, of which 64 in Kenya, 12 in France and 1 in the United States, but at least double the number of suspected pirates that have been captured and then released.

Great Britain has extricated itself from this embarrassing situation by reaching an agreement with Kenya, delegating to the Nairobi tribunals the responsibility to see justice done. The United States and the European Union swiftly followed suit through an 'exchange of letters between the EU and the Government of Kenya'. It is an ingenious solution,

albeit a contradictory one: states with a proven democratic tradition have surrendered jurisdiction to a country whose justice and detention system they have themselves often denounced as corrupt, inefficient, very slow and infamous because of regular violations of human rights. Surrendering the pirates to a state incapable of guaranteeing a just trial risks becoming a new form of 'extraordinary rendition'.

Moreover, even in Kenya there is a mounting dissatisfaction with these legal arrangements, often not ratified by the parliament and that may expose the country to reprisals by armed groups in neighbouring countries. But what alternatives are there? The first is to charge the states which captured the pirates also with the responsibility of carrying out the trial and detention (as the United States are doing). This may prove risky for the countries that arrest pirates. The United States and France, for example, may be asked to justify in front of their own courts the use of force employed. Were better options available to the killing of the three other pirates involved in the kidnap of Captain Phillips? Was France legally authorized to intervene militarily in Somali territory? All these issues are likely to make the trials controversial and to make the offences of the pirates as minor ones.

The second is the institution of an ad hoc international tribunal, but this solution is costly and judicially cumbersome. The third, and possibly best, solution is to give jurisdiction to a state whose judiciary system guarantees that the defendants will not be abused, in other words, not Kenya. We can be certain of one thing: the pirates' adventures have not only disrupted maritime governance, they are also showing up the faults of the international criminal jurisdiction.●

Daniele Archibugi is a research director at the Italian national research council (CNR) in Rome, Italy.

President Jacob Zuma's cabinet

The full list in alphabetical order below; the deputy President is Kgalema Petros Motlanthe.



Trevor Manuel, former finance minister, now minister in the presidency - national planning commission

1.	Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	Tina Joemat-Peterson Dr Pieter Mulder
2.	Minister of Arts and Culture Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture	Lulu Xingwana Paul Mashatile
3.	Minister of Basic Education Deputy Minister of Basic Education	Angie Motshekga Enver Surty
4.	Minister of Communications Deputy Minister of Communications	Siphiwe Nyanda Dina Pule
5.	Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Deputy Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs	Sicelo Shiceka Yunus Carrim
6.	Minister of Correctional Services Deputy Minister of Correctional Services	Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula Hlengiwe Mkhize
7.	Minister of Defence and Military Veterans Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans	Lindiwe Sisulu Thabang Makwetla
8.	Minister of Economic Development Deputy Minister of Economic Development	Ebrahim Patel Gwen Mahlangu-Nkabinde
9.	Minister of Energy	Dipuo Peters
10.	Minister of Finance Deputy Minister of Finance	Pravin Gordhan Nhlanhla Nene
11.	Minister of Health Deputy Minister of Health	Dr Aaron Motsoaledi Dr Molefi Sefularo
12.	Minister of Higher Education and Training	Dr Blade Nzimande
13.	Minister of Home Affairs Deputy Minister of Home Affairs	Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma Malusi Gigaba
14.	Minister of Human Settlements Deputy Minister of Human Settlements	Tokyo Sexwale Zou Kota
15.	Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation (1) Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation (2)	Maite Nkoana-Mashabane Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim Sue van der Merwe
16.	Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development Deputy Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development	Jeff Radebe Andries Nel
17.	Minister of Labour	Membathisi Mdladlana
18.	Minister of Mining	Susan Shabangu
19.	Minister of Police Deputy Minister of Police	Nathi Mthethwa Fikile Mbalula
20.	Minister of Public Enterprises Deputy Minister of Public Enterprises	Barbara Hogan Enoch Godongwana
21.	Minister for the Public Service and Administration Deputy Minister for the Public Service and Administration	Richard Baloyi Roy Padayachie
22.	Minister of Public Works Deputy Minister of Public Works	Geoff Doidge Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu
23.	Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform Deputy Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform	Gugile Nkwinti Dr Joe Phaahla
24.	Minister of Science and Technology Deputy Minister of Science and Technology	Naledi Pandor Derek Hanekom
25.	Minister of Social Development Deputy Minister of Social Development	Edna Molewa Bathabile Dlamini
26.	Minister of Sport and Recreation Deputy Minister of Sport and Recreation	Makhenkesi Stofile Gert Oosthuizen
27.	Minister of State Security	Siyabonga Cwele
28.	Minister in The Presidency (1) <i>National Planning Commission</i> Minister in The Presidency (2)	Trevor Manuel
29.	<i>Performance Monitoring and Evaluation as well as Administration in the Presidency</i>	Collins Chabane
30.	Minister of Tourism Deputy Minister of Tourism	Marthinus van Schalkwyk Thozile Xasa
31.	Minister of Trade and Industry Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry (1) Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry (2)	Rob Davies Thandi Tobias Maria Ntuli
32.	Minister of Transport Deputy Minister of Transport	Sbusiso Joel Ndebele Jeremy Cronin
33.	Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs Deputy Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs	Buyelwa Sonjica Rejoice Mabhudafhasi
34.	Minister of Women, Youth, Children and People with Disabilities	Noluthando Mayende-Sibiya



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