

News Analysis

Nile Basin states to get Commission after 25 years of negotiations

Health

Climate change health plan launched

Business

Uganda drills 72 wells ahead of oil production

THE INDEPENDENT

You Buy the Truth, We Pay the Price

Issue No. 832 Aug. 23- 29, 2024

Ushs 5,000, Kshs 200, Rwf 1,500, SDP 8

The interests driving Uganda in the DRC

Angola peace talks renew search for solutions



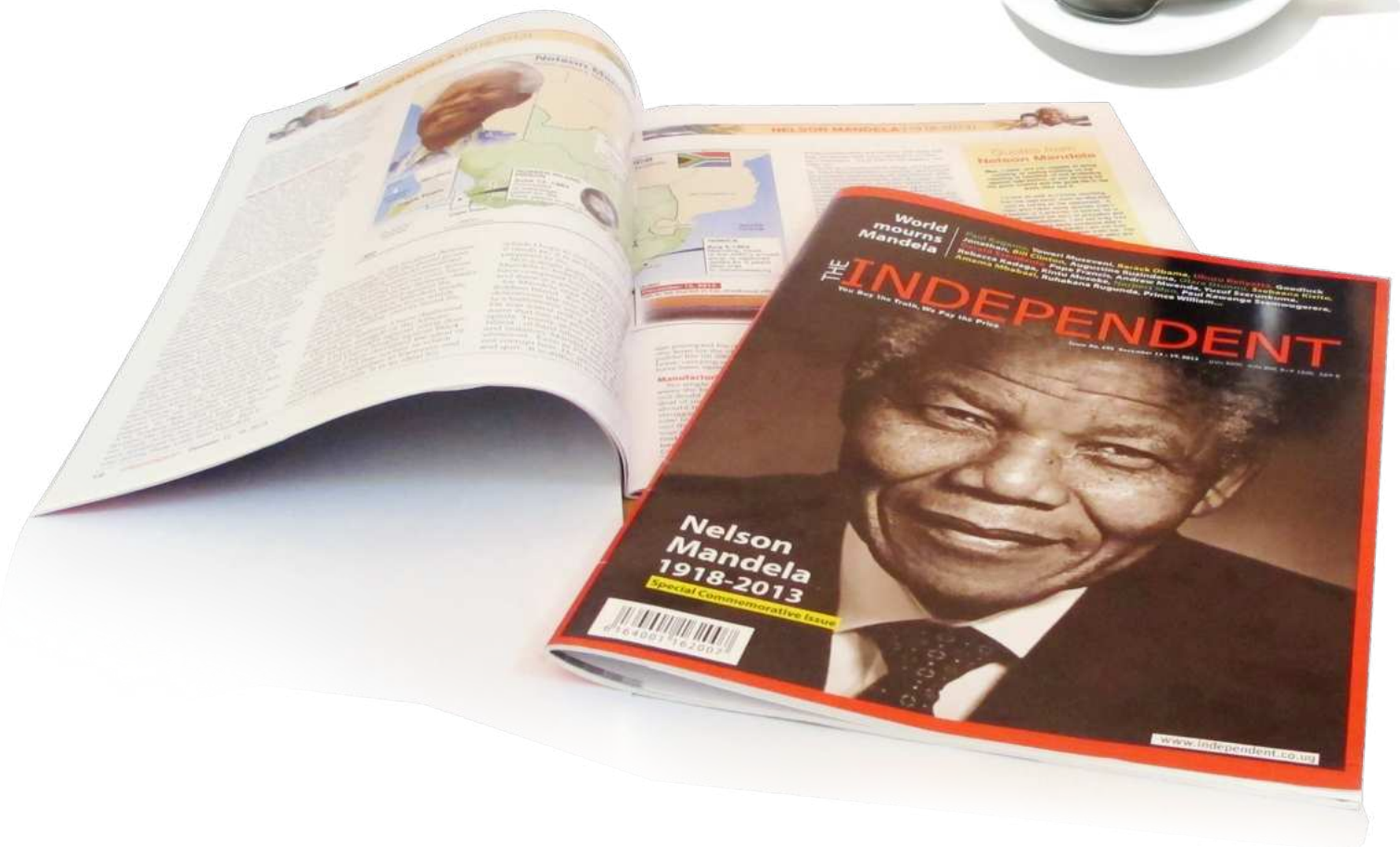
6164001162007

www.independent.co.ug

THE **INDEPENDENT**

You Buy the Truth, We Pay the Price

YOU BUY THE
TRUTH
WE PAY THE
PRICE





Make Yaka payments
conveniently
With you, always.

Dial *185*4#

Airtel is regulated by Uganda Communications Commission (UCC).
Contact Airtel Customer Care on 100 (toll-free) and UCC on 0800 222 777 (toll-free).



Cover story

The interests driving Uganda in the DRC

Angola peace talks renew search for solutions

4 The Last Word

Kitezi as tip of an iceberg: Why the disaster at the KCCA landfill for city garbage is a sign of worse disasters to follow

09 Analysis

Nile Basin states to get Commission after 25 years of negotiations

10 Health

Climate change health plan launched: Rockefeller funded research exposes climate related gaps in Uganda's health future

21 Business

Uganda drills 72 wells ahead of oil production: However, progress on the \$4.5 billion refinery remains limited

32 Comments

No primary differences between people: Unlike liberalism's core principle of Individualism, ubuntu does not believe there are primary differences between people

Inbox



Follow us on Twitter @
<http://twitter.com/#!/ugandataalks>



Follow us on Facebook @
www.facebook.com/TheIndependentMagazineUganda



THE INDEPENDENT

Letters are welcome !

The Editor welcomes short and concise letters from our esteemed readers on topical issues. Please send them to:

The Editor, *The Independent*
Publications Ltd,
P.O Box 3304,
Plot 82/84 Kanjokya St,
Kamwokya,
Kampala, Uganda.

Email: editor@independent.co.ug

Understanding Brand Rwanda

Refer to: "Understanding Brand Rwanda: What the inauguration of Kagame for another term told about the Rwanda he is building" (The Independent Aug.16). Welcome back to Rwanda Andrew Mwenda. You will furnish us with Rwanda many times as before until you stopped going to Rwanda and writing about it.

Alule

Rwanda utopia versus Uganda dystopia

Refer to: "Understanding Brand Rwanda: What the inauguration of Kagame for another term told about the Rwanda he is building" (The Independent Aug.16). The irony is that many Banyarwanda in Uganda don't want to go back home. I am wondering why they are not interested in the utopia you are talking about. It perturbs my mind. Why would someone continue staying in the Ugandan dystopia when life in Rwanda is so good?

Ron

Mwenda writes about the Rwanda he has seen

Refer to: "Understanding Brand Rwanda: What the inauguration of Kagame for another term told about the Rwanda he is building" (The Independent Aug.16). Mwenda is talking or writing about what he has seen. But beneath all this is a hidden agenda of torture, imprisonment and absolute neglect of human rights. One could easily compare what Mwenda

has written about Rwanda, with North Korea. It also has clean roads, well dressed police officers and army, but what larks beneath is scaring. So, the Rwandese in Uganda might be knowing a thing or two about their "Rwanda" that we don't know.

Nkuutu Kibedi

Welcoming Talkio Mobile

Refer to: "Here's all you need to know as Talkio Mobile readies for launch in Uganda" (The Independent Online Aug.20). Welcome to Uganda. Uganda's mobile market is very tricky. Untrue information often seems to be given to intending investors. However, you can capture the market by: a) reaching to remote areas upcountry

(Airtel has tried to cover many remote areas). These are villages that the guys living in urban areas stay or reach during weekends, holidays and while on leave.b) Your network must be available, stable and clear.

Adakun Andrew Martin

Excitement engulfs Mbale ahead of 2024 Imbalu launch

Refer to: Tension, excitement engulfs Mbale ahead of 2024 Imbalu launch" (The Independent Aug.02) Well elaborated details and concerns in the preservation of our culture. Banamasomelo assuming cultural leadership are twisting the mode of

leadership from moral authority built from bottom up to formal authority commanding from above – this kind of leadership will always rely on begging to enforce foreign system contrary to the basic culture. The institution of Umukuuka also sounds

a new formation whose constitution is nowhere to be found and hence the unknown culture imposed on the known tradition.

Komoli

IGP reshuffles top police officers

The Inspector General of Police (IGP), Abbas Byakagaba, announced a significant shake-up of the Uganda Police Force leadership. The reshuffle, aimed at enhancing efficiency and effectiveness, involves several seasoned officers taking on new roles.

Among the notable changes, was AIGP Joseph Mugisa who was transferred from the Directorate of Fire Prevention & Rescue to the IGP's office. SCP Apora James will now lead the Directorate of Logistics & Engineering in an acting capacity. SCP Joseph Obwona has been appointed Acting Director of Interpol & International Relations, while SCP Stephen Tanui will head the Directorate of Fire Prevention & Rescue.

Other key appointments include SCP Elias Kassirabo as Attaché at the Uganda High Commission in Nairobi, SCP Yusuf Ssewanyana as Deputy Director of the Interpol Division, and CP Sarah Kibwika as Acting Deputy Director of Human Resource

Administration & Management.

The reshuffle also affected several other senior officers, with CP Proscovia Achola taking over as Acting Deputy Director of Force Fleet Management, CP Irene Ameri Kimara as Acting Deputy Director of Logistics & Engineering, CP Simon Peter Okosh as Acting Deputy Director of Operations, CP Philip Acaye as Acting Deputy Director of Traffic & Road Safety, CP Hillary Kulaijye as Deputy Director of the Chief Political Commissariat, and CP Moses Muluya as Deputy Director of Welfare Production & Sports.

While the Uganda Police Force did not disclose specific reasons for these transfers and appointments, they are widely seen as part of the IGP's ongoing efforts to reorganize and strengthen the force. The changes come at a time when the police force is facing various challenges, including corruption, brutality, and inadequate resources.

Irish Ambassador questions Uganda's crackdown on protests

A meeting between Irish Ambassador Kevin Colgan and Ugandan Foreign Minister Jeje Odongo Abubakhar exposed tensions simmering beneath the surface of the two countries' traditionally cordial relations.

Ambassador Colgan raised concerns regarding the recent arrests and detentions of Ugandan citizens who participated in anti-corruption protests. He expressed alarm over allegations of torture against some detainees.

Minister Odongo acknowledged the legitimacy of public anger towards government corruption, a stark admission that highlighted the seriousness of the situation. He claimed the unrest stemmed from the actions of a few corrupt officials, emphasizing the government's efforts to hold them accountable.

However, Minister Odongo's justification

for the use of force against protestors – citing unconfirmed intelligence of foreign involvement – drew a skeptical response from Ambassador Colgan. He likely pressed for a more transparent and rights-respecting approach to managing public dissent. Despite the disagreement, both parties maintained a commitment to fostering strong bilateral ties. Minister Odongo reaffirmed Uganda's desire to explore new avenues of collaboration with Ireland on issues of mutual interest. Whether this translates to concrete action in light of the current tensions remains to be seen. In a separate announcement, Ambassador Colgan revealed the relocation of the Irish Embassy to a new location. This move signals a continued commitment to Ugandan-Irish relations, but the shadow cast by the recent crackdown may require significant diplomatic effort to navigate.

Museveni meets AU commissioner to discuss agricultural summit

President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni welcomed H.E. Ambassador Josefa Sacko, the African Union Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment, during a courtesy call at State House Entebbe yesterday. Ambassador Sacko was accompanied by Uganda's Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries, Hon. Frank Tumwebaze.

During the meeting, President Museveni and his guests focused on preparations for the upcoming Extraordinary Agricultural Summit of Heads of State and Government, scheduled to take place in Kampala in January 2025.

President Museveni expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to host the summit, highlighting the vast agricultural potential in Africa.

"That is music to my ears, and I am thrilled to host this summit. The potential for agriculture is huge in Africa. Uganda is uniquely positioned because we have preserved our indigenous agriculture—cows, goats, bananas, cassava, fish, etc. Our task has been to modernize and commercialize it," he stated.

He further emphasized the impact of colonialism on Africa's agricultural heritage, attributing food insecurity in parts of the continent to the disruption of traditional practices.

"When you hear that people in Africa don't have food, it's because of colonialism and the dislocation of people from their heritage. They start despising themselves and worshipping everything foreign. But in agriculture, you are at home in Uganda—we have crops from the forest, tropical savanna, and temperate regions," President Museveni added.

Ssenyonyi threatens legal action over Kiteezi landfill deaths

Leader of the Opposition, Joel Ssenyonyi, vowed to take legal action against the government and Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) if the families affected by the Kiteezi Landfill tragedy are not swiftly compensated. Speaking at a press briefing in Parliament, Ssenyonyi condemned the negligence that led to the deaths and demanded immediate compensation for the victims' families.

"If compensation is delayed, we will support these families in taking legal action

against the government. This is a clear case of negligence," Ssenyonyi stated.

He also urged the government to develop a comprehensive waste management plan to prevent future tragedies. Ssenyonyi criticized the government's initial response, which included a payment of Shs5 million to bereaved families and Shs1 million to the injured, calling it inadequate.

"Shs5 million isn't enough to cover burial expenses. This is not compensation at all," he said.

The opposition leader also demanded a detailed plan to address waste management issues across the city, warning of another potential disaster due to accumulated garbage.

Describing the tragedy, in which 34 people died, as "unfortunate," Ssenyonyi expressed frustration over the lack of accountability, saying, "It is sad that in this day and age, people can die under garbage heaps,"

Ssemujju criticizes Museveni for appointing musicians as presidential advisors

Kira Municipality MP Ibrahim Ssemujju Nganda criticized President Museveni for diminishing the significance of presidential advisory roles by appointing individuals like singer Edirisa Musuuza, popularly known as Eddy Kenzo. Ssemujju's comments followed Museveni's decision to appoint Kenzo as a senior presidential advisor on creatives.

Kenzo, who also serves as the president of the Uganda National Musicians Federation, is among a growing number of musicians appointed by the President as envoys and advisors. Others include Mark Bugembe (Buchaman), appointed as the President's special envoy to the ghetto, Catherine Kusasira as the Presidential Advisor on Kampala, and Jennifer Nakanguubi, also

known as Full Figure.

Ssemujju questioned the suitability of these appointments, particularly in Kenzo's case, citing a lack of formal qualifications for such a significant role. "When you compare the quality of early presidential advisors like Prof. George Kanyeihamba, Gen. David Sejusa, and Ephraim Kamuntu, it undermines the office to appoint individuals without the necessary knowledge or experience," Ssemujju remarked.

"I appreciate Kenzo as a musician, but I don't believe his value lies in advising the President," he added.

Reports indicate that President Museveni currently has over 100 advisors.

UPDF accused of interfering in Katanga murder case

The ongoing murder trial of Henry Katanga has been marred by controversy after defence lawyers accused the Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF) of interfering in the case.

In a dramatic turn of events, pathologist Dr Richard Ambayo, who conducted the postmortem on Katanga's body, faced intense cross-examination from defence lawyers. They alleged that Ambayo had leaked his report to the UPDF before it was presented in court, leading to an independent inquest into Katanga's death.

Ambayo denied the allegations, insisting that he had not shared the report with anyone before it was tendered in court. However, his credibility was further questioned when he retracted his earlier testimony, stating that he did not know Martha Nkwanzu Katanga, one of the suspects. This contradicted his previous statement that Martha had helped him

identify Katanga's body.

Defense lawyer Elison Karuhanga suggested that Ambayo's credibility may have been compromised by the investigating officer, Detective Sgt. Beteise. Karuhanga argued that cognitive bias could have influenced Ambayo's findings.

The defence team also pointed out inconsistencies in Ambayo's testimony, such as his earlier statement that the entry wound was on the right side of the head, which contradicted his postmortem report. The defence presented evidence suggesting the entry wound was on the left side of the head.

As the trial continues, the defence lawyers are seeking to undermine Ambayo's credibility and cast doubt on the prosecution's case. The outcome of this trial will have significant implications for the ongoing investigations into Katanga's death and the role of the UPDF in the case.

Besigye's tormentor's trial delayed

The pre-trial hearing for Superintendent Gilbert Arinaitwe Bwana, a police officer accused of aggravated trafficking and sexual exploitation, was postponed. Arinaitwe, known for his involvement in the harassment of Dr Kiiza Besigye, appeared before Justice Andrew Bashaija, but the prosecution requested an adjournment to provide the defence with necessary documents.

Arinaitwe is alleged to have recruited and exploited a vulnerable woman, forcing her into unprotected sex and using intimidation tactics. The prosecution contends that his actions constitute aggravated trafficking, exacerbated by his position as a law enforcement officer.

According to court documents, Arinaitwe lied to the victim about a job opportunity and instead exploited her sexually. The state alleges that Arinaitwe's actions violate the law and constitute a serious crime. The offence is further aggravated by his position as a law enforcement officer, who is expected to uphold the law and protect citizens from harm.

The trial judge adjourned the matter to October 17, allowing the state to disclose its evidence to the defence before the accused can enter a plea. The case highlights concern about abuse of power and exploitation by those in authority.



Col. Nakalema calls for academic help on youth jobs

Col. Edith Nakalema, head of the State House Investors Protection Unit (SHIPU), convened a meeting with leading academicians to address the critical issues of youth unemployment and wealth creation in Uganda. Recognizing the substantial youth population, Col. Nakalema emphasized the need for a collaborative approach that tailors solutions to the specific needs of young people.

While the government has implemented initiatives like the Youth Livelihood Fund and Presidential

skilling programs, Col. Nakalema acknowledged that challenges persist. She advocated for a comprehensive approach that combines government efforts with private sector involvement, civil society engagement, and academic expertise.

Makerere University's Vice Chancellor, Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, commended Col. Nakalema for her efforts and suggested that the government leverage graduates through initiatives like national service. By providing meaningful employment

opportunities and skill development programs, the government can harness the potential of young people and contribute to the country's overall development.

In addition to government initiatives, the private sector can play a vital role in creating jobs and internships for young people. By partnering with educational institutions and providing mentorship opportunities, businesses can help young people develop the skills and experience they need to succeed in the workforce.

Ugandan youths get security skills boost through US partnership

In a move aimed at enhancing Ugandan skills and creating job opportunities, Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) is partnering with SkyBridge Tactical, a prominent American security firm. The collaboration announced during a meeting between OWC head Gen. Salim Saleh and SkyBridge CEO Steve Rumbley, focuses on training and certifying over 5,000 Ugandans in the private security sector.

SkyBridge's expertise will be precious for Ugandan veterans and young people seeking to enter the workforce. Gen. Saleh enthusiastically endorsed the initiative, recognizing its potential to not only equip participants with marketable skills but also empower them financially. This aligns

perfectly with President Museveni's vision for national development, which prioritizes skills training, job creation, and wealth generation.

The partnership takes a multifaceted approach. Trained personnel will have the opportunity to find employment abroad, gain valuable experience and potentially accumulate resources. Upon their return, these individuals can then contribute directly to Uganda's development by investing their skills and capital back into the country. This creates a win-win situation, as Ugandans gain valuable experience and income while contributing to the nation's economic growth.

Campaign to end child hunger launched

The government and World Vision joined forces to launch a new initiative aimed at eradicating child hunger and malnutrition. The "ENOUGH" campaign, launched on August 21, seeks to mobilize communities, partners, and stakeholders to improve the lives of over 5 million people across the country.

"The right to food is a fundamental human right," stated Rukia Nakadama, 3rd Deputy Prime Minister and Minister, during the launch. She emphasized the government's commitment to addressing malnutrition through modernized agriculture and improved service delivery.

The "ENOUGH" campaign addresses the root causes of hunger, including poor

agricultural practices, inadequate nutrition education, and limited access to healthcare. The government has pledged to strengthen multi-sectoral collaboration, close policy gaps, and increase funding for agriculture to support the campaign.

Jeremiah Nyagah, National Director of World Vision Uganda, underscored the organization's dedication to improving the well-being of vulnerable children. "Every child deserves the right food to develop a healthy body and mind," he said.

Nyagah highlighted the impact of poverty and hunger on violence against children, citing previous campaigns that have shown reductions in child marriages, violence in schools, and child sacrifice.

Uganda unveils digital education plan

The First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Janet Museveni, unveiled a groundbreaking Digital Agenda Strategy for the Ministry, while also overseeing the expansion of nine technical institutes.

Speaking at the launch event, the first lady highlighted the critical role of education in Uganda's development, especially for its young population, which constitutes over 70% of the country's 46 million citizens. She emphasized the importance of nurturing this youth into a skilled, innovative, and productive workforce.

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sub-sector was a key focus, as it offers crucial employment opportunities for young Ugandans. The First Lady expressed gratitude to the Islamic Development Bank for its continued support in funding the expansion of TVET

infrastructure and the construction of the new Ministry Headquarters in Kyambogo.

The First Lady also noted the transformative potential of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in education delivery, ensuring access and learning under any circumstances. She emphasized that the strategy not only prepares Uganda for future challenges, such as those posed by COVID-19 but also positions the nation for a more digitally-driven future.

Cybersecurity was another key aspect addressed by the Minister. She stressed the importance of protecting learners and educators from harmful online content and assured that measures have been implemented to ensure the safe and effective use of technology tools in schools.

Young leaders champion second chances for young mothers

At the National Youth Parliament Session, Uganda's young leaders rallied for greater support for young mothers. These women often face social stigma, financial hardship, and a lack of resources, forcing many to drop out of school.

The passionate pleas called for the government to invest in the future of these young mothers through education and economic empowerment programs. Joyce Nakato, leader of the Uganda Youth and Adolescent Health Forum (UYAHF), stressed the importance of such initiatives. "We believe young people have the energy, commitment, and potential to define their paths," Nakato said. Her organization empowers young advocates to participate in regional discussions and advocate for themselves.

Nakato highlighted a successful motion by Eastern Region youth advocates urging the government to create programs specifically designed to reintegrate young mothers back into their communities and schools. "We implore the government to offer young people, especially young mothers, a second chance," she reiterated.

Reagan Wanyama, leader at Elite Youth of Uganda, presented a motion requesting government support for re-enrolling young mothers in school.

"Hearing directly from those facing challenges is crucial," Wanyama said.

"This parliament serves as a platform for dialogue with stakeholders to address our concerns,"





Kitezi as tip of an iceberg

By Andrew M. Mwenda

Why the disaster at the KCCA landfill for city garbage is a sign of worse disasters to follow

The collapse of the garbage-filling dump at Kitezi is symptomatic of the wider governance crisis that has engulfed our country. Uganda is in disarray, without a central brain able to direct it anywhere. The aging President Yoweri Museveni is exhausted both physically and mentally. His ability to manage the affairs of state has been greatly diminished. And this has happened at a time when power has not only been greatly concentrated in the presidency but dangerously personalised in his hands. So bad is the situation that he must approve every big and small thing that must happen in the country. This has led to the proliferation of blue letters.

Many people are blaming the administration at KCCA for negligence, corruption and incompetence. Under normal circumstances, this would be a fair and legitimate criticism – and it partly is. The bigger problem, however, is that KCCA is part of the near collapse of administrative effectiveness in the country. True some parts of our state acquired and have over time improved high levels of administrative competences under Museveni. Institutions such as NWSC, NSSF, HFB, URSB, UNRA (which they want to close), etc. are exemplars. But these few islands of efficiency live in a big sea of institutionalised corruption and incompetence.

It is difficult to see how this can be overcome even if Museveni were to retire. Part of the problem is the attitudes that have come to dominate the social consciousness of Ugandans. One such attitude is the ethic of making money as a virtue regardless of how one acquires it. Every rich person is lionised in our media whether he acquired that money through looting the state or working hard. The other problem is the way democracy has evolved in Uganda under Museveni. To hold power, individuals must compete for votes without any regulation on campaign financing in a context of a very poor and desperate electorate. The two reinforce each other.

As part of the neoliberal agenda of “unleashing markets”, Uganda adopted a philosophy that states are inherently corrupt and inefficient. To solve this problem, our country, on the advice of the masters of this world in Washington, London and Paris, adopted a philosophy of free, unrestrained

(read unregulated) enterprise. If leaders mismanaged a state enterprise, the argument was that such outcome was inevitable given state ownership. The solution was NOT to punish the culprits and try to improve management. Rather it was to privatise the entity and liberalise the sector to allow competition. These ideas were (in and of themselves) not necessarily wrong. It is the way that the state was demonised that destroyed ethics in the public sector, creating a self-fulfilling prophesy.

When political competition was introduced in a society with such a philosophy and with a desperately poor electorate, it made a bad situation worse. Just like public enterprises were sold in cut-throat markets, votes became fair game. Political contests came to resemble financial competition. With a philosophy that glorifies money, voters could only listen to those candidates who had oodles of cash. Hence, people in public office could misappropriate public funds and carry their loot to their constituencies to buy votes. Elections became contests over money rather than ideas. The marketisation of the economy led to the marketisation of politics.


This system was not dangerously destructive since Museveni held sway over the core elements of the state. With incredible skill and tenacity, the fiddled with, he manipulated and controlled the chaos his economic and political reforms had unleashed. In some cases, he cajoled, in others he bribed while in many he intimidated and coerced obedience. But as he has aged, his ability to retain control over this chaos has significantly diminished. This is because multiple centers of power had proliferated and are vying for influence. Because power is now highly personalised, the struggle for influence has retreated to state house inevitably setting off family feuds.

This is the tragedy of Uganda. The country has lost all sense of the nation with distinct interests independent of Museveni's. For instance, the interests of Uganda are best served by a functioning city. This is critical because the most skilled citizens with high productivity levels live and work in Kampala and its surrounding Wakiso district. This area produces about 65% of GDP and 75% of tax revenues. Visitors, be they investors and tourists first enter

Kampala before visiting other areas. And the impression one gets of the country is when they get into its capital city.

However, Museveni and most of his family members have little contact with the city – its restaurants, streets, bars, night clubs etc. Besides, the president's bread (votes) is battered from rural constituencies. The city is seen as a scene of resistance to his rule. So, government has starved it of funding. Last financial year, KCCA was allocated only Shs40 billion for infrastructure – roads, drainage, schools, markets, health centers etc. against a national road infrastructure budget of shs 4.1 trillion. Basically, the source of 65% of our GDP and 75% of revenues got less than 1% of the road budget. How is this possible? Well because all decisions are made by one old man who has grown impervious to the crisis in the city.

While Kampala's infrastructure is collapsing, government is everyday finding money to fund a private sugar factory at Shs500 billion, a private pharmaceutical plant at Shs 50 billion, a collapsed road construction company Shs200 billion, and Shs1.3 trillion to build a ghost hospital in Lubowa etc. How is this possible? Because thinking for the country has now taken a back seat. These projects are promoted by family members and other wheeler dealers around the president in the name of national development when in fact they create avenues for personal enrichment.

The money making and vote buying culture that has engulfed our country has progressively eliminated public spirited individuals from public life. It has led to the success of crooks seeking personal gain. This corrosion of the public ethic is rooted in the philosophy that governs our economics and has not captured our politics. Therefore, discussion of Kitezi must be integrated into discussion of the overall management crisis of the country. Kitezi is not the first and won't be the last national disaster. Many are going to follow perhaps with worse consequences. I really pray that my analysis and predictions are wrong because future generations of Ugandans will be happy that I was wrong. 

amwenda@ugindependent.co.ug

The interests driving Uganda in the DRC

Angola peace talks renew search for solutions

By Independent Team



Details about peace talks between the governments of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda in the Angolan capital, Luanda, on Aug.20 remain scanty but it has not deterred pundits from insisting that without Uganda's issues being considered, the international community should expect minimal progress.

The meeting between the foreign Ministers of the DRC and Rwanda was scheduled to talk about a peace agreement proposal presented by the Angolan President, João Lourenço, to Rwanda's Paul Kagame and Félix Tshisekedi of DRC.

Lourenço handed the proposal to Kagame during talks held on Aug. 11 before his inauguration ceremony in Kigali. Lourenço then flew to Kinshasa the next day and met with Tshisekedi.

The meeting of foreign ministers is the third meeting and follows one which agreed to a ceasefire in force since Aug.04 having been agreed on July 30 under Angola's mediation.

Even as efforts to secure a lasting cessation of hostilities continue, Congo experts like Prof. Kristof Titeca insist that understanding Uganda's interest in the DRC is key.

In an essay entitled 'Uganda and the DRC conflict: the interests driving Kampala's involvement,' Prof. Titeca argues that, in his view, Uganda's main interests in the DRC are economic, but these are closely connected with political and security interests.

"Understanding them is key to the conflict in the region," he says in the essay published on Aug.20 in the online scholarly journal, *The Conversation*. Prof. Titeca has researched and written extensively on Ugandan and DRC conflicts, including authoring books like 'The Lord's Resistance Army: Myth and Reality' (2010), 'Rebel Lives' (2019), and 'Negotiating Public Services in the Congo' (2019).

His latest essay shows the increasing need to keep the international community and his readers glued to his research in the region. It is framed as a response to the July 2024 report by the UN Group of Experts on the DRC which stated that the Ugandan army and intelligence officials were providing active support to the M23 rebel group.

In seeking to highlight an "ambiguous and often tumultuous" relationship between Uganda and its western neighbour, the DRC, Titeca says this has made headlines in recent months. Unstated is the fact the report dwelt largely on old issues, and the headlines were largely to refute some of its findings.

The newsy element of the report

were that during the period it reviewed, evidence emerged of frequent M23 and the Alliance Fleuve Congo (AFC) activities on Ugandan territory. The AFC leadership, including Corneille Nangaa, who recently resided in Kampala, held meetings with representatives of Congolese armed groups and individuals closely linked with M23. It said Nangaa and Lawrence Kanyuka benefited from the support of the Ugandan public figure Andrew Mwenda (also the Executive Director of Independent Publications Ltd) in

The president has been in power for close to 40 years, and his basis of legitimacy is waning – particularly for the "Museveni babies," the large proportion of the population born under his rule. They want public services and jobs

approaching several embassies in Kampala in March 2024 to contest sanctions imposed on M23 leaders and to elicit sympathy for the cause of AFC and M23.

"Mwenda has long been known as the liaison between the Governments of Uganda and Rwanda," the report says. Mwenda has since explained that his discussions with several western embassies in Kampala were not correctly represented in the report.

The Group of UN Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo was first appointed in 2004 and its mandate has constantly been renewed mainly due

to delays in completing its work. Its latest tranche was renewed on October 12, 2023 with a mandate to submit its final report in February/March 2024.

It presented the report on May 31, 2024. The delays mean that the report generally has historical information. Prof. Titeca's response also covers a lot of history.

Talking about the M23, it says the group, which is active in eastern DRC, was first defeated in 2013. But it has resumed hostilities in the vast area since 2021. It details how the UN report also found that Uganda was tolerating the group's activities on its territory, with supplies and recruits coming through the country.

Uganda has denied the claims of the UN report, calling them "laughable, baseless and illogical," says Titeca. Prof. Titeca is referring to an interview the Deputy Defence spokesman, Deo Akiiki, gave to a journalist in Kampala regarding claims of Uganda backing the M23.

"The allegations are laughable, baseless and illogical to say Uganda is working to destabilise DRC," the spokesman said, "Our forces have been working together with DRC forces to ensure peace returns to eastern DRC."

Prof. Titeca says this means Uganda 'wants to safeguard its relations with Kinshasa.' "M23's key demands are an end to violence and discrimination against Congolese Tutsi, and a safe return to the DRC for its members," Titeca says.

Prof. Titeca's intention appears to add currency to ideas he and his colleagues have written about in the past. That is the view that Uganda's interests in the DRC are economic, but these are closely connected with political and security interests.

"Understanding them is key to the conflict in the region," says Titeca.

Political interests

Under political interests, he says this has important political meaning for Uganda at national and regional levels.

First, the economic importance of the Congolese market has strong political significance for the Yoweri Museveni regime.

"The president has been in power for close to 40 years, and his basis of legitimacy is waning – particularly for the "Museveni babies," the large proportion of the population born under his rule. They want public services and jobs.

Prof. Titeca and his colleague Anna Reuss, first made this argument in 2017 in an essay entitled 'When revolutionaries grow old: the Museveni babies and the slow death of the liberation' published in the Third World Quarterly journal.

In that essay, they argue that as the legacy of Museveni's liberation struggle starts to lose its importance as the



founding fathers of this struggle start to die off, and for most of the (young) population, the struggle becomes something of the past, with little relevance for today.

They argue that the 'moral' character of partisan identities and importance of ideology reduced, and the unifying force of the founding generation disappears.

Titeca argues that: "Through this process, identity and ideology are replaced with ambition and patronage, transforming revolutionary parties more and more into 'ordinary parties,' vulnerable to defection, corruption and petty factionalism."

According to them, the generation that succeed the founding fathers of the struggle lack an independent power base or constituency to speak of and instead base their power on the new institutional context of patrimonialism (mixing public and private) and spoil politics. They say the new elites' power base is mainly based on their links with the highest levels of the regime.

"The disadvantage is an increasingly narrow power base and disconnect with society: power is increasingly situated and concentrated within a small group of people.

"This increases the vulnerability of the regime, by potentially exposing it to frustrated political elites or large sections of the population".

According to them, with 80% of the population of Uganda below 30 years of age, youth are, in terms of numbers, the most powerful voting bloc. Yet an estimated 64–83% of these 'Museveni babies' (those born during the Museveni regime) are unemployed and come to towns in search of livelihoods.

They yearn for jobs and development, putting pressure on the labour market and social services, as they constitute the bulk

of an estimated 700,000 young Ugandans who enter the labour market each year. They are discontented, dissatisfied and concerns about government failure to address citizen priorities.

According to Titeca, "the regime fears the prospect of youth protests." He says a taster of this was on show in 2011 during the "walk to work" protests and the recent protests are a reminder of what can happen when economic stability is lacking.

"The Congolese market is seen as key. It explains why Uganda is co-financing the construction of 223 kilometres of roads in eastern Congo. The project was launched in June 2021, and has been defended by Museveni as holding major economic benefits for Uganda," he says.

According to him, access to the Congolese market underlies regional geopolitical tensions also.

He says Rwanda has comparable economic interests in eastern DRC, particularly when it comes to gold. Similar to Uganda, Rwanda has little domestic gold production, but is a major exporter of the commodity: since 2016, gold has been its most important export product. Gold export earnings have risen to US\$882 million in 2023 and it's widely accepted that most is smuggled from the DRC.

Both Rwanda and Uganda have in recent years signed mining contracts in the DRC. These common interests are a source of regional geopolitical tensions. Studies have found that the re-emergence of M23 in November 2021 was a direct result of these tensions.

He cites an article titled: 'The Golden Laundromat: The Conflict Gold Trade from Eastern Congo to the United States and Europe.' The article was published in October 2018 on a website run by an organisation called *The Sentry* co-founded in 2016 by George Clooney, the American actor and filmmaker, together with other

celebrities.

The Sentry is involved in drawing global attention and resources to stop and prevent mass atrocities. Its co-founder is John Prendergast, the human rights and anti-corruption activist and author of many books including 'Congo Stories: Battling Five Centuries of Exploitation and Greed' of 2018.

Prendergast became well known when he worked for the U.S. National Security Council as Director for African Affairs and was a special adviser to Susan Rice at the United States Department of State. He also co-produced the documentary 'Journey Into Sunset' about northern Uganda and he is also executive producer of 'Staging Hope: Acts of Peace in Northern Uganda.'

Prendergast's activism has been criticised by the Ugandan academic, author, and political commentator, Mahmood Mamdani as "simplistic, counter-productive, and detrimental to the reality on the ground, especially regarding Darfur and Northern Uganda."

The Sentry article says its investigation raises significant concerns that gold mined from conflict areas in eastern DRC is reaching international markets, including the supply chains of major U.S. companies and in products that consumers use every day.

Documents reviewed and interviews conducted by *The Sentry* raise serious concern that the corporate network controlled by Belgian tycoon Alain Goetz has refined illegally-smuggled conflict gold from eastern Congo at the African Gold Refinery (AGR) in Uganda and then exported it through a series of companies to the United States and Europe, potentially including Amazon, General Electric (GE), and Sony.

Readers will recall that in March 2022, the U.S. sanctioned Alain Goetz, the proprietor of the African Gold Refinery



on Sebugwawo Road in Entebbe, Uganda, and a network of companies involved in the illicit movement of gold valued at hundreds of millions of dollars per year from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

The U.S. Department of Treasury statement said since 2016, AGR has sourced illicit gold from mines in regions of DRC that are controlled by armed groups, including the Mai-Mai Yakutumba and Raia Mutomboki that are involved in destabilising activities in South Kivu, DRC. AGR has a refining capacity of 219 tonnes per year and is considered one of the largest gold refineries in Africa, after refineries in South Africa and Ghana.

“The expansion of Ugandan interests in eastern DRC – through the road works and the redeployment of Ugandan troops there in November 2021 – was seen as a direct threat to Rwandan interests in the area,” he says.

“The more M23 expanded its zone of influence in eastern DRC throughout 2022 and 2023 – directly supported by Kigali – the more Kampala saw M23 as a threat to its interests. Or, to be more precise, an M23 which was solely under the influence of Rwanda.”

He says Uganda has had fluctuating relations with Rwanda. The Museveni government was initially close with Rwandan president Paul Kagame and the Rwandan Patriotic Front. But they have had ups and downs. Regional influence has been a major point of contention.

“In this context, Museveni cannot allow Kagame to have sole control over eastern DRC. And Kampala also wants to protect its economic interests in the area,” he says.

Security concerns

Titeca argues that security is closely intertwined with economic interests. He says a clear example of this is *Operation*

Shujaa – Uganda’s military operation in eastern DRC.

The operation, in collaboration with the Congolese army, was launched a month after a series of suicide attacks in October 2021 in Kampala by the Allied Democratic Forces rebel group. The group is active in the North Kivu and Ituri provinces of eastern DRC.

The Ugandan army wants to weaken the rebel group. At the same time, this military operation also serves economic functions: the road works in eastern DRC are explicitly part of the military operation.

The operation also intends to protect its oil infrastructure. Uganda has important oil deposits in its western region, which borders the DRC. This promised oil revenue is important for the Museveni regime.

Economic incentives

Titeca says central to understanding Uganda’s interests in eastern DRC is the second Congolese war (1998-2003).

The war broke out in 1998, after Rwanda helped bring Laurent-Desiré Kabila to power in the DRC in 1997. Uganda was one of the countries drawn in to the conflict. Rwanda’s and Uganda’s interest in natural resources, such as gold and timber, as well as the illicit regional trade in these goods, played an important role.

In 2022, the International Court of Justice ordered Uganda to pay the DRC US\$325 million for looting gold, diamonds and timber during the war.

That has influenced the way Uganda is perceived by Congolese and international observers. These commodities remain important for Uganda.

A recent investigation, for example, documented the ongoing smuggling of Congolese timber to Uganda and other parts of east Africa. But it is gold which is particularly important. Uganda exports

far more gold than it produces: in 2021, for example, it produced 2.9 tonnes and exported 30.2 tonnes.

Titeca says it is widely accepted that most gold exported as Ugandan is smuggled from the DRC.

Since 2016, gold has been Uganda’s most important export product. The latest available data for the financial year of 2023 shows gold brings in US\$2.7 billion in revenue, or 37% of Uganda’s export earnings.


The DRC is also important in another way for Uganda: as an export market. In June 2024, Uganda exported US\$60 million more than it imported, with the DRC as its largest market.

The balancing act

In sum, Uganda has a multitude of related interests in eastern DRC. During periods of upheaval, such as the current M23 crisis, Uganda tries to protect these interests. This is a difficult balancing act.

M23’s presence in the region forces Kampala into action to protect its interests. Leaving eastern DRC or M23 only under the influence of Rwanda is seen as a threat to these interests. But Kampala doesn’t want to upset Kinshasa – it wants to keep its access to the Congolese market.

The recent findings of the UN Group of Experts report therefore suggest some kind of compromise. The report indicates largely passive support for M23, suggesting that Uganda is achieving some leverage over M23 while retaining relations with the DRC.

“The crisis in eastern DRC cannot be understood in isolation. Neighbouring countries are involved in a variety of ways. Understanding, or solving, the conflict needs to involve these countries,” Titeca says. 



A section of the River Nile. The Nile River Basin Commission is expected to improve the management and harness investment opportunities along the river course that runs for over 6000km from its source in Uganda. COURTESY PHOTO/WATER JOURNALISTS AFRICA.

Nile Basin states to get Commission after 25 years of negotiations

By Ronald Musoke

Following South Sudan's recent accession to the Nile Cooperative Framework Agreement and subsequent depositing of the instrument of ratification at the African Union's Legal Council offices in Addis Ababa, the River Nile Basin will finally get a fully-fledged Commission this October.

The new Commission will replace the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), an institution that has been running the affairs of the 10 riparian countries of the Nile Basin since 1999.

Dr. Florence Grace Adongo (PhD), the Executive Director of the NBI, told *The Independent* on Aug.22 that the announcement for the establishment of the commission will officially be made during the second Nile Basin heads-of-state summit scheduled for October 17 in Kampala.

She said the summit is building on the momentum "arising from South Sudan's

recent accession of the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA)" on July 8, and her depositing of the instrument of ratification at the AU in Addis Ababa on Aug.14.

The CFA which came into being in 2010 effectively seeks to sidestep the 1902, 1929 and 1959 colonial agreements which were apparently made in favour of both Egypt and Sudan when it came to utilization of the River Nile's water resources.

The CFA is therefore a legal agreement that provides for how the business of the Nile River Basin will be conducted in the current times by all the member states of the Nile Basin. It talks to the principles that have been adopted by the 10 countries among which include the use in terms of managing and equitably developing the resources so there is benefit for all the citizens.

"It also provides for the institutional arrangement and that is where the establishment of the Nile River Commission

with its Secretariat in Entebbe comes in," Dr. Adongo said, adding that: "It also brings in the issue of dispute resolution among member states."

Since the CFA's conclusion 14 years ago, six member states (Burundi, Ethiopia, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda) have signed and acceded to the treaty. DR Congo, Egypt, Kenya and Sudan have not.

However, in order for the CFA to go into force, at least six member states must ratify the treaty. Also, within 60 days of the CFA coming into force, member states are required to establish a Commission.

Nile Basin Summit agenda

Dr. Adongo told *The Independent* on the sidelines of a recent regional coordination group meeting of the Nile Basin Investment Programme in Kampala that the heads-of-state summit is intended to "affirm the critical need to strengthen cooperation on

the use, development and protection of the Nile River and its Basin.”

She noted that over the last 25 years, the NBI has been performing its core functions and supporting member countries to realise benefits from Nile cooperation in areas of water resources development, transboundary (water) governance, knowledge generation and management to support countries to undertake planning, decision making and also undertake joint projects.

“From our assessment, some of the countries in the Nile Basin remain underdeveloped and, from the same assessment, we notice that the development of this resource (River Nile) can be used to transform the Nile Basin,” Dr. Adongo told *The Independent* on Aug.22. “It is very important that we have more investments in the Nile Basin that can change the lives and economies of the Nile Basin countries through the Nile Basin Commission.”

During the upcoming summit, the heads of-state-and-government will be expected “to promote engagement with non-members of the Nile River Basin Commission and launch the Nile River Basin Investment Programme.”

Should the Commission be endorsed by the Nile Basin leaders, it will become a fully-fledged legal entity and inter-governmental organization headed by the Executive Secretary based in Entebbe.

It will also enable the cooperating countries to deliver more in terms of water security, food security, energy security, climate action, environmental conservation and transboundary governance, Dr. Adongo said. Should the summit take place this October, it will be the second time the leaders of the Nile Basin countries agree to meet in Uganda. The very first of such summits was held in Entebbe in 2017.

The Nile Basin comprises 10 countries through which the Nile—the world’s longest river—flows. These include; Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. Eritrea is an observer state of the NBI.

With about 10% of the entire continent’s landmass lying in the Nile Basin and with 25% of the continent’s total population (560 million), the basin has one of the most population dense areas in Africa.

Yet the region also continues to grapple with challenges such as; underdevelopment, inadequate electricity for industrialization, increasing population, environmental degradation as well as vagaries of climate change. As a result, these same countries continue to face the challenge of meeting the ever-increasing demands for water, food and energy amidst all these various challenges.

The Nile basin’s environmental assets such as wetlands, forests, river banks are increasingly getting under pressure from

expanding economic activities and lack of effective cross-border mechanisms for protection, restoration and sustainable utilization of these ecosystem.

Why South Sudan ratified CFA

Early this month, during the Nile Council of Ministers meeting in Kampala, Pal Mai Deng, South Sudan’s Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation attempted to offer reasons as to why his country ratified the treaty.

He told the meeting that the Nile Basin region is experiencing the worst form of climate crises with Kenya, Burundi, Ethiopia and South Sudan being “hugely affected by torrential rains, landslides and devastating flooding which call for a joint frontline action to combat and mitigate the risks.”

Minister Deng said his country, South Sudan, is committed to the Nile Basin Initiative’s (NBI) shared vision, and his country will work to support NBI’s endeavours to promote joint investment and basin-wide cooperation.

“This climate existential threat requires cooperation and collaboration among the Nile Basin countries for us to be able to adapt and mitigate the risks,” he said, adding that, “Accelerating basin investment in structural and non-structural measures and knowledge and experience sharing may help mitigate the impact of climate change in the region.”

“In addressing the problem of climate change, our strategy is now geared towards water, energy and food security, water resources development and management, with robust climate resilient water infrastructures,” he said.

At the same meeting in Kampala this month, Sam Cheptoris, Uganda’s Minister of Water and Environment who also doubles as the current chairperson of the Nile Council of Ministers (Nile-COM) noted how the Nile Basin is “set to move forward with the establishment of the Nile River Basin Commission.”

Jessica Alupo, Uganda’s Vice President who was the Chief Guest at the Nile-COM meeting in Kampala said the challenges the Nile Basin is facing require collective action by all the basin states since many of these challenges cut across country boundaries; no one country can therefore address them alone.

Alupo noted that even when the Nile riparian states have differences, they should not lose sight of the need to work together to address common problems. “The cost of inaction can be big as all of us know. Cooperation on the Nile is therefore not an option for the member states but a necessity,” she said.

“As a community of nations sharing a major water course, the Nile, working together to explore viable options for addressing the current and future challenges should continue motivating us to cooperate

under the Nile Basin Initiative.”

“While Nile Basin States are sovereign and the decision to ratify the CFA entirely lies with them, I still wish to take this opportunity to request the countries that have not yet ratified the CFA to consider doing so in order to enable us have an all-inclusive legal and institutional framework for cooperation on Nile basin issues.”

However, Eng. Daw al-Bayt Abdul Rahman Mansour, Sudan’s Minister of Irrigation and Water Resources told the meeting in Kampala that although the NBI has made significant strides over the last 25 years towards, building trust and confidence for joint action among member countries, more efforts are needed from the institution to consolidate the ongoing cooperation among the member countries.

Minister Mansour told the meeting that the growing pressures on the basin finite water resources calls for innovative and wise use of the water resources, and NBI institution remains the only regional platform for addressing challenges in optimally managing our trans-boundary water resources.

“Sudan emphasizes that working in a consensus manner has to be put into consideration for the establishment of strong and new organization. This, however, becomes a great challenge to riparian countries, particularly in the area of cooperation in the River Nile water and building of confidence among us.”

Egypt’s misgivings

At the same meeting, Dr. Aref Gharib who represented Hani Seliwam, Egypt’s Minister of Water Resources and irrigation said that although Egypt values the opportunity to reaffirm its sincere commitment to promote collaboration with Nile Basin Countries, as Egypt has consistently been at the forefront of regional cooperation since the 1960s.

However, Dr. Gharib said “the NBI had strayed from its founding cooperative principles, notably highlighted by the Nile-COM’s departure from consensus in drafting the CFA.”

“This has resulted in an imbalanced framework that favours unilateralism and lacks provisions for prior consultation, thereby perpetuating a concerning trend of unilateral actions across the basin,” he said.

“As a result, Egypt made the decision to halt its participation in the NBI’s technical activities in 2010. It is important in this regard to emphasize that the draft CFA ratified only by some of the Nile Basin states, and not all Nile Basin states.” “Therefore, the purported CFA is yet a draft until it is finally approved all the 10 NBI states and hence any subsequent acts based upon it fail to produce legal effects,” he said.

In a blog for the European Journal of International Law, Dr. Mahemud Tekuya (PhD), the author of a book titled: “The Nile



H.E Natalina Edward Mou (2nd Right, background), South Sudan's Ambassador to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the African Union presents the instrument of ratification of the Nile CFA to the AU's Legal Council on Aug14 in Addis Ababa. COURTESY PHOTO/NELSAP-CU

in Legal and Political Perspective: Between Change and Continuity," recently argued that while the CFA represents a significant step towards institutional cooperation across the Nile Basin, its implementation could be "extremely challenging."

He noted that under customary international law, a treaty does not create either obligations or rights for a third party without its consent. He says given that Egypt and Sudan have continued to reject the CFA, it is devoid of any legal relevance in relation to the two upstream countries.

He said considering the geography of the Nile Basin, where upstream water utilization does not affect other upstream states (except, to a lesser extent the states on the Equatorial Nile sub-basin) implementing the CFA without the involvement of Egypt and Sudan is impractical.

"The purpose of a basin-wide agreement on the Nile Basin is to govern the interests of both upstream and downstream states regarding the use, allocation and management of the Nile watercourse."

Yet, that appears not to be the only challenge. Dr. Tekuya said assuming the CFA can still be practically implemented, its entry into force creates two parallel basin-wide institutions.

According to Article 30 of the CFA, the NRBC would succeed in all rights, obligations and assets of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) as soon as the Agreement enters into force. But, since Egypt and Sudan refuse to sign the CFA, the question arises: "What will happen to the rights and obligations under the NBI of the states that are not parties (and do not plan to be parties)

to the CFA?"

"Although the establishment of the NRBC without the downstream members of the NBI could exacerbate the existing disputes over the CFA, the legal ramifications of the situation are clear. Under international law, the ramifications of Article 30 apply only to states that are parties to the CFA and NBI."

"As for the downstream states that are not parties to the CFA, Article 30 is irrelevant, and another agreement would be necessary between the future members of the NRBC and downstream states to transfer the rights, obligations and assets of the NBI to the NRBC."

However, Dr. Adongo told *The Independent* that since 1997, all the ten Nile Basin countries including Egypt participated in the negotiations of the CFA up to the very end in 2009.

"They (member countries) addressed the issue of equitable utilization of the water resources by all the Nile Basin countries. They also negotiated a shared vision to achieve sustainable socio-economic development through equitable utilization and benefit from the common Nile Basin water resources."

"There are also areas that the member countries agreed to; that with the coming up of (the Nile River Basin) Commission, this will be addressed and it was provided in the CFA's annex (Article 14b)."

Dr. Adongo told *The Independent* that the member countries felt that it was time for them to sign the CFA and ratify and once the commission comes into being, the members can continue with the negotiations as implementation of the commission's work.


"In any case, the commission will be there to support the member countries to ensure that any gaps that were not filled are filled." She told *The Independent* that the CFA is very clear on what is supposed to be done and how to address what was not concluded.

However, she said she cannot speak for the countries that are yet to ratify the CFA because they have to make their independent decisions. Still, she noted that what's happening in the Nile Basin is nothing new.

"Look at other river basin commissions around the world; look at the Mekong River Basin Commission, not all countries have signed the agreement but the Commission is there."

"Look at the Zambezi Watercourse Commission; Zambia did not sign at the beginning but Zambia is still there and they are participating. Even in Europe, the Danube Commission, 14 countries did not come on the same day to establish the Commission."

"This is not new. Countries need to have time to consult, consider and take the right decisions. And we have seen them come; we started with one and now we have six, and the door is still open. It's only that the CFA provides that once six countries have ratified, you can start the commission but it doesn't close the door for the rest."

"So, we still believe that we shall realise the ten, it's just a matter of time. We are going to talk and continue talking; engagement never stops in transboundary management of water resources," she said. 

Making fun of Trump

With Harris, Democrats try a new tack to take him down

By Agencies

A goal of every presidential campaign is to get voters to size up the opponent and, repulsed, decide, “No way.”

President Joe Biden’s approach was to persuade the electorate that Donald Trump is a national menace. Kamala Harris is instead casting him as Dennis the Menace.

The Harris campaign and her Democratic allies have set out to downsize Trump, pushing the idea that he’s a bumbling, cartoonish figure who’s not so much fearsome as he is laughable. Or as Harris’ running mate, Tim Walz, might say: “weird.”

All week, speakers at the Democratic convention in Chicago lampooned Trump’s fixations. What is it with his focus on crowd size? (More on that later.)

Why does he keep talking about Hannibal Lecter, the cannibal from a horror film that was in the theaters before millions of Americans were born? (Keep reading.)

A video shown at the convention imagined Trump as an offender in the classic TV series “Law & Order,” complete with an unseen narrator intoning: “This is the story of Donald Trump.”

Before he dropped out of the race last month, Biden had depicted Trump as a tower of malevolence — leader of a dark political movement bent on trashing democratic traditions.

A potential downside of Biden’s message is that it ascribed to Trump an outsized importance and risked demoralising voters. If Trump’s grip on the electorate is such that he could end the two-century-old American experiment, perhaps individual voters are powerless to stop him.

Harris is taking a cheekier tone, making the case that Trump’s personality renders him eminently beatable — while having fun doing so.

A news release her campaign sent out this month previewed a Trump news conference at his home in Bedminster, New Jersey, as opposed to his other home in Palm Beach, Florida. It reads like something out of the satiric website *The Onion*.

“Donald Trump to Ramble Incoherently and Spread Dangerous Lies in Public, but at Different Home,” the release says.

Sen. Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii, said in an interview: “There’s an old saying: Take the job seriously, not yourself. And I think that’s what she [Harris] embodies. We all know this is a serious business. We all know what’s on the line. But just staring voters in the eye and telling them what the stakes are feels



like you’re just lecturing.”

The handoff from Biden to Harris was bound to introduce new campaign messages and tactics. They’re two different people, from different parts of the country and with different life experiences. Biden, 81, comes from a courtlier era in American politics. Harris, 59, belongs to a generation and a social set that tend to be more iconoclastic.

“Biden went to the Senate at the age of 29,” said Chris Korge, national finance chairman of the Harris Victory Fund. “People in that body disagreed but were respectful to each other. It’s not within his character to ridicule or make fun of people. It’s not how he fights.”

Harris, he said, is someone with “rock star status” who has shown she’s able “to communicate with younger people.”

While they were serving in the Senate, Harris, Schatz and other generational peers, like Cory Booker, D-N.J., would exchange “sassy texts” poking fun at their “old school” colleagues, he said.

“She’s irreverent and fun and not very self-serious and occasionally sarcastic,” he said. “In a room full of self-serious people, she is among the least. She’s disciplined, she’s smart, she’s prepared — but she manages to be pretty aggressively normal when you sit next to her and have lunch.”

Presidential conventions tend to channel the person at the top of the ticket. This one is no different. One of Harris’ longtime allies is Barack Obama, the former president who left the United Center convulsed with laughter Tuesday night after a sight gag about Trump and ... crowd size?

A bit of background. To Trump, the size of his crowds is important. Very important. Maybe all important. So is his anatomy. A CNN headline during the 2016 presidential campaign read: “Trump defends size of his penis.”

In his speech, Obama used a quick hand

gesture to suggest the psychological root of what he called Trump’s “obsession with crowd sizes.” Holding his hands a few inches apart, he looked down at them for an instant and then back up.

Did that mean what we think it means?

“We all came to that conclusion,” agreed Korge, who was watching from the audience.

A Trump campaign spokesman, Steven Cheung, said in a statement about the convention: “Kamala Harris and Democrats don’t have any real solutions for all the issues this country faces, so they resort to blatantly false personal attacks. They have nothing to offer Americans.”

Trump has balked at the notion that he’s getting too personal in his commentary on Harris, pointing to Democratic mockery of him as justification for his most scurrilous attacks, like questioning her intelligence, criticizing her looks and speculating about her ethnic makeup.

It’s too early to tell whether Harris’ disparagement of Trump is the path to victory. Still, after one month on the trail, Harris has erased Trump’s edge in the polls. And she has gotten her party into the spirit.

In his speech Wednesday night, former President Bill Clinton said he has been puzzled by Trump’s fascination with Hannibal Lecter, or, as Trump has described him, “the late, great Hannibal Lecter.”

Though Obama dubbed him the “Secretary of Explaining Stuff,” Clinton conceded, “I’ve thought and thought about it, and I don’t know what to say.”

The crowd laughed.

For those who are still wondering, Trump seems to be suggesting that Lecter-like psychotics are among the migrants entering the U.S. illegally. Hannibal Lecter, a fictional movie character, isn’t and never will be available for comment. [PL](#)

Source: Internet



Uganda drills 72 wells ahead of oil production

However, progress on the \$4.5 billion refinery remains limited

By Julius Businge

Uganda's oil sector is advancing significantly with 72 out of 457 wells drilled at the Tilenga and Kingfisher oil projects as TotalEnergies and CNOOC Uganda Limited push towards commercial production slated for 2025.

Energy and Mineral Development Minister, Ruth Nankabirwa, said during a media briefing on August 21 in Kampala, that Tilenga Project has made substantial progress, with 63 of the planned 426 wells now drilled across Nwoya and Buliisa Districts.

Meanwhile, the Kingfisher Project in Kikuube District has seen the completion of nine out of the 11 wells required for the initial phase of oil production.

The Tilenga Project, which spans both sides of the Nile, is exhibiting promising hydrocarbon indicators in its targeted reservoirs. Nankabirwa also noted that development plans for a Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) facility are awaiting government approval and licensing.

She said drilling operations have concentrated on six out of the 31 well pads designated for the Tilenga project, which will accommodate 426 producer and injector wells. The well pads—Jobi-Rii 05 & 04, Ngiri 03 & 01, and Gunya 01 & 04—are being actively developed, with all three drilling rigs operational. As of August 16, 2024, seven

well pads are over 85% complete and ready for rig installation, Nankabirwa confirmed.

The Tilenga Industrial Area, set to host the Central Processing Facility (CPF), Drilling Support Base, and Construction Camp, is nearly complete at 99.7%. The area has been handed over to the Drilling and Wells Contractors and the Engineering, Procurement, Supply, Construction, and Commissioning (EPSCC) contractor.

The CPF construction is progressing with main pipe racks and foundation bases, achieving an overall completion rate of 47.8%. Meanwhile, the 4,000-person Construction Camp is assembling accommodation units, currently housing about 2,500, with additional recreational facilities under development.

Land acquisition for the Tilenga project has been largely successful, with 99.7% of project-affected persons (PAPs) compensated and in-kind compensation (land for land) completed for 21 out of 33 PAPs, representing 63%.

Kingfisher project

The Kingfisher Project in Kikuube District, operated by CNOOC Uganda Limited, is also advancing. This project includes a Central Processing Facility (CPF) with a capacity of 40,000 barrels per day and plans to drill 31 wells across four well pads.

Since beginning production well drilling in January 2023, nine of the eleven wells required for First Oil have been completed.

Construction of well pad sites and infield roads is 92% complete, and approximately 1,020 acres of land have been acquired.

Both Tilenga and Kingfisher projects are implementing livelihood restoration programs, including transitional and psychosocial support, agricultural improvements, reproductive health services, and vocational training.

To meet its 2025 commercial production target, Uganda must complete two critical infrastructure projects: the refinery and the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP). However, progress has been impeded by financial constraints.

Regarding the \$5 billion EACOP project, Nankabirwa reported significant advancements since the issuance of a construction license in 2023, which allowed civil works to commence at the Main Camps and Pipe Yards (MCPYs) in Hoima and Sembabule districts.

Engineering, Procurement, Construction Management, and Commissioning (EPCMC) activities are ongoing in London and Dar es Salaam, with Worley and subcontractors ICS Engineering and Norplan reporting an overall EPCMC progress of 39.2%, with detailed engineering at 89.1%, surpassing the planned 88.3%. The construction of the thermal insulation plant in Nzega District, Tabora region in Tanzania, was completed and commissioned in March 2024, with seven batches of line pipe, totaling 500 kilometers, delivered to Tanzania, five of which reached the Thermal Insulation System plant.

In contrast, progress on the \$4.5 billion refinery remains limited. Nankabirwa indicated that negotiations for key commercial agreements, including the Implementation, Crude Oil Supply, and Shareholders Agreements with Alpha MBM Investments LLC, commenced in January 2024 and are ongoing. [IP](#)

Afreximbank records a 24.5% surge in profit to \$826.2million

By The Independent

Africa's multilateral lender, African Export Import Bank, has recorded a significant 24.5% increase in net interest income for the first half of 2024, reaching \$826.2 million driven by increase in loans and advances.

The Bank also recorded a surge in fees and commission income that increased by 20.07% to reach \$71.2 million during the same period under review.

Operating expenses during the period rose by 30.38% to \$152.8 million driven by higher personnel and administrative costs to support the Bank's initiatives and subsidiaries amidst a high inflationary external environment.

Nevertheless, the Cost to Income Ratio remained low at 16.98%, well within the



strategic upper limit of 30%. The lender said in a statement that its liquidity position remained robust, with cash and cash equivalents closing at \$3.9 billion, down from \$5.6 billion at the end of 2023, while the Liquid Assets to Total Assets ratio stood at 12.50%. Shareholders' funds rose by 1.64% to \$6.2 billion, reflecting internally generated

net income of \$407.7 million. The Bank's Capital Adequacy Ratio remained strong at 25%.

Denys Denya, Afreximbank's Senior Executive Vice President, said the Bank's strong performance in H1 2024 underscores the effectiveness of the Group's strategy and its commitment to operational excellence.

He said the Bank remains focused on maintaining a healthy liquidity position, sound asset quality, and strengthening its institutional capacity to support Africa's growth and development aspirations.

Denya also highlighted Afreximbank's ongoing role in implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area by promoting economic integration, industrialization, and trade across the continent, further contributing to the continent's economic resilience in the face of global challenges. **PL**

dfcu Bank records a surprise 45% surge in net profit to Shs 42bn

The turnaround was achieved through proactive management strategies aimed at reducing non-performing loans, diversifying the loan portfolio, and minimizing concentration risk

By The Independent

Dfcu Bank has recorded a robust 45% increase in net profit to Shs 42 billion for the first half of 2024, buoyed by significant reductions in credit losses and strategic cost management.

This marks a substantial rise from Shs 29 billion in the same period last year, highlighting the bank's successful efforts to strengthen its financial performance.

The bank's profit growth, a 48% year-on-year improvement compared to the full year 2023, was driven by a combination of factors. Key among them was a 114% reduction in net loan loss provisions, which shifted from a loss of Shs 50 billion in June last year to a credit of Shs 6 billion in June this year.

This sharp turnaround, the lender said, was achieved through proactive management strategies aimed at reducing non-performing loans, diversifying the loan portfolio, and minimizing concentration risk. As a result, the non-performing loans ratio was slashed to 5.2% from 15.2% in the previous year.

This comes as Stanbic Bank Uganda,



a unit of South Africa's Standard Bank Group, recorded a 17.6% increase in net profit to Shs 235.5 billion for the first half of 2024 on the back of robust revenue growth and improved asset quality despite operating in a challenging economic environment characterized with high inflation.

Bank's assets surges

dfcu Bank's asset base also saw a modest increase, growing by Shs 6.5 billion to Shs 3.16 trillion in June 2024, up from Shs 3.15 trillion in December last year. This growth was primarily driven by a 4% increase in investments in government securities, reflecting a cautious approach to credit risk during the first half of the year.

The Bank maintained a stable deposit base at Shs 2.32 trillion as of June 2024, with management focusing on balancing the deposit mix to keep interest expenses in check.

In addition, shareholders' funds grew by 6%, rising from Shs 644 billion in December 2023 to Shs 684 billion in June 2024. This increase was largely attributed to higher retained earnings at the half-year mark.

The bank remains well-capitalized, with core and total capital ratios at 29% and 30%, respectively. Its liquidity position continues to be strong, with an average liquid assets ratio exceeding 40%. With such a solid financial foundation, dfcu Bank is well positioned for future growth and enhanced financial performance, according to management.

Last year, dfcu Bank recorded a slight decline in net profit from Shs29.4 billion to Shs28.7 citing an increase in expenses. The bank's assets at the time also declined from Shs3.2 trillion in 2022 to Shs3.1 trillion in 2023 as its liabilities reduced from Shs2.6 trillion to Shs2.5 trillion, according to the financial results. **PL**

Raising revenue from land

What African cities might learn from Hong Kong's unique land-lease system

By Astrid R.N. Haas

Land prices across many African cities are soaring. This is because land is a city's key asset. As urbanisation progresses, demand for land will rise, and therefore so will land prices, because the supply of land in cities is limited. Investments in public infrastructure, and zoning regulations that convert land to alternative uses, will also boost land value.

In fact, studies have shown that simply converting rural land to urban can increase its value by 400%. All these changes are driven by the government and collective action, rather than by private individuals. But the beneficiaries of higher land prices will be property owners, unless there are mechanisms in place to recoup the value. Thus, city governments across Africa are seeking ways to capture this value, boost revenue and reinvest in public goods and services.

Hong Kong is a prime example of effective land value management. It is often cited as a case study. Land revenue has funded high quality public transport, as well as social infrastructure like schools and hospitals.

As a researcher focused on helping African cities raise finance and funding for large-scale public infrastructure and services, I wanted to know more about these land-based financing models when I moved to Hong Kong. An important initial finding is that Hong Kong uses multiple and distinct instruments for different purposes. This article explores just one of these instruments: the land lease system. I will examine other instruments in future articles.

Land lease system

Since 1 July 1997, all land in Hong Kong, except for one plot, has been owned by the People's Republic of China. The Hong Kong government therefore does not sell parcels of land, but rather leases out the use rights for a specific period. The allocation process of leases, which are now granted for 50 years, is done by annual public tenders and auctions, managed by the Hong Kong government's Land Department.

Developers bid on these tracts of land based on a minimum bid price. This is determined by the location, permitted use, maximum zoned height and minimum floor-to-area ratio required, among other factors. Whoever is successful in the auction then pays a one-off land premium to the Hong Kong government as well as ground rent for the duration of the lease. The rent is currently calculated at 3% of the rateable



value of the land.

Each tract of leased land usually comes with a building covenant that stipulates the conditions of development. This is to prevent speculative holding of empty plots. The requirement is usually that 60% of the agreed floor space must be constructed within four or five years of the lease being issued. If this does not happen, the government can retake the site without compensation. There are exceptions: for example, in April 2020 the Hong Kong government extended covenants by up to six months due to the economic pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic.

All the revenues generated by the premiums and ground rents are earmarked and directly deposited into a Capital Works Reserve Fund which was established in 1982. This fund can only be used to finance public works and further land development. The government estimates it will earn about US\$11 billion in land premiums from the lease of 18 sites during the 2023/24 financial year.

This system allows the government to maintain control over land use while providing private use rights that generate revenue to invest in infrastructure. It essentially establishes the basis of a capitalist society on a relatively socialist land tenure system.

Colonial legacy of land

The system has its origins in the time when Britain colonised Hong Kong in 1841. The British government aimed to develop the island's harbour into a commercial

trading post. A legal framework was developed to attract commercial enterprises, particularly from the UK; for one thing, Hong Kong was declared a freeport. This also meant that the British government could not rely on revenues from customs duties to support the colony. Consequently, there was a strong emphasis on raising revenue from the increasing demand for land.

In contrast, the British colonies in Africa focused on exploiting natural resources. Institutional structures, including those to do with land management, focused on short-term extractive gains rather than long-term trade and economic growth of the colony.

Another difference was that when the British annexed Hong Kong in 1841, the population on the island was only about 7,500 people, including 2,000 boat dwellers. British African colonies like Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania not only had much larger indigenous populations, they were already organised into kingdoms, ethnic groups and clans, each with their own customary land management systems.

So, while land tenure systems in Hong Kong were established on a relatively blank slate, in many African contexts the colonisers introduced their own tenure structures, disregarding the existing ones, leading to conflict with existing ways of managing land. These tenure structures were often established to exclude Africans from central urban areas. The repercussions continue in how African urbanisation is managed today.

The pre-colonial realities and the contrasting colonial goals have resulted in


very different land markets. While African cities often have multiple and overlapping land tenure systems, Hong Kong maintains one exclusive leasehold system from which it generates significant revenues.

Further lessons of running a leasehold system

For a public auction system to work as in Hong Kong, there needs to be transparent land administration, predominantly government-owned land, and a thriving real estate market. Developers, after they pay for the lease, must be able to convert land into buildings and lease or sell units. In African cities, despite high land demand, high construction and mortgage costs pose challenges in converting land to buildings. This could potentially limit similar auction demand where land has enforceable building covenants to prevent speculation.

While Hong Kong's system has largely been successful, African cities should also consider lessons from its current experiences. Importantly, land revenue is volatile and generally will follow macroeconomic cycles. For instance, the Hong Kong government's revised budget for the year 2022/23 highlighted that land revenue was more than US\$6 billion lower than expected, due to reduced developer demand. This means that while land revenue is suitable for financing upfront infrastructure capital costs, the year-on-year volatility does not make it suitable for financing recurrent expenses, like those in health and education. It also means that for all capital expenditure that a city invests in with land revenue, sufficient operating budget needs to be found to cover the running costs over time.

Furthermore, for land to provide strong revenue for capital investments, high land prices are necessary, which in turn raises property prices and rental costs. Therefore, African cities facing acute affordable housing shortages must carefully consider supporting policies, if pursuing land-based financing, to ensure residents are not priced out of the market.

African cities should continue to pursue land as a revenue source for infrastructure financing, especially because publicly created value should benefit the public. However, instead of trying to replicate Hong Kong's unique land-lease system, which has been shaped by very different historical and institutional factors, they should design land-based financing systems that work in the local context. 

Astrid is an independent feminist urban economist, based in Hong Kong, working across research and practice, supporting cities in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Source: The Conversation.com

Ghanaian-based flooring company eyes Ugandan market



David Basil is a Ghanaian-based entrepreneur running a premium flooring company called Modern Floors. He spoke to Julius Businge during his recent visit to Kampala during the Uganda Buildcon International Exhibition.

Who is Basil David Anthony, and what does Modern Floors do?

David Basil is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Modern Floors, a UK-trademarked flooring brand that wholesales and retails high-quality and affordable artificial carpet grass, AstroTurf, Vinyl (PVC/SPC) tiles (LVT), carpet tiles, adhesives, waterproofing materials, and other indoor and outdoor flooring products for residential and commercial spaces. The company was founded in 2017 in Ghana and has since expanded to more than 10 countries across Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Europe, utilizing both online and physical distribution channels, including Amazon-approved distribution. Modern Floors has opened four showrooms in Ghana and has led various social impact initiatives, such as feeding and refreshing over 200 children, supporting underprivileged girls in Ghana, and empowering artisans through skill-based training.

As CEO, what makes you inspiring?

I strive to ensure that my work adds value and makes a positive impact on the communities we serve. I believe in collaborating with young, forward-thinking entrepreneurs and in fostering innovation and sustainability within the construction industry. I am open to new opportunities, which is why we came to Uganda to showcase our impressive range of products at the Uganda Buildcon International Exhibition at the Uganda Manufacturers Association from August 8-10.

What business opportunities have you identified in Uganda, and how do you plan to utilize them?

Like any market outside Ghana, Uganda has unique growth factors linked to modern flooring, driven by urbanization, economic development, and changing consumer preferences. Our flooring products are distinct and unmatched, which makes us optimistic about entering and growing in this market. We've made significant progress in Kenya, and we hope to continue expanding into new markets.

At the continental level, how does the

African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) impact businesses like yours?

We all seek an expanded market to reach more customers, grow our businesses, and contribute to the African economy. However, our countries remain divided on many issues, including taxation and the free movement of goods and services. African leaders need to take action to support entrepreneurial growth. Africa offers significant opportunities in trade, industry, construction, manufacturing, agriculture, and more. Companies like Modern Floors are ready to align with these opportunities and grow.

What entrepreneurial advice do you have for Ugandan start-ups struggling to meet their daily goals?

Start-ups worldwide succeed by understanding their market, staying agile, and focusing on customer experience. Begin by identifying a clear niche and target audience, then differentiate your offerings with unique value propositions. It's essential to maintain financial discipline by managing cash flow carefully and avoiding unnecessary debt or expenditure.

How does the concept of digital entrepreneurship boost business growth?

At Modern Floors, digital entrepreneurship drives our growth, along with our core ethical business values. Embracing digital tools for marketing, sales, and operations enhances efficiency and helps reach a broader audience. Any serious entrepreneur must build a strong online presence and leverage social media to connect with customers. Continuous innovation and adaptation to market changes are critical for improving business performance.

What can your clients expect for the future of Modern Floors?

I am passionate about creating value, fostering innovation, and driving growth in the flooring industry and beyond, while also making an impact in new markets for Modern Floors. We will continue to study the Ugandan market and integrate our business into it. 

UDB's bold move to support enterprises

Uganda Development Bank recently marked a significant milestone with the graduation of 60 participants from its inaugural Enterprise Development Program (EDP).

The colorful graduation ceremony took place in Kampala. "This diverse group of participating businesses, including SMEs, women, and youth enterprises, reflects the inclusive nature of the program and

its potential to contribute to Uganda's economic growth," the development lender said. Beneficiaries were trained in all forms of business enterprise development.

AVIATION

Kenya Airways achieves profits

For the first time since 2013, KQ has reported a profit before tax. This achievement marks a major turnaround for the airline, in line with the strategic recovery plan launched in 2021, executives said on Aug. 19 in a notice. In the six months to 30 June 2024, Kenya Airways PLC achieved a profit after tax of KShs 513 million, compared to the KShs 21.7 billion loss reported in the same period of last year. "This success is a direct result of our focused strategy, Project Kifaru, which emphasizes customer obsession, operational excellence, financial discipline, innovation, and sustainability. The impressive performance reaffirms the operational viability of our business and highlights the effectiveness of our Board, Management, and Staff's collective efforts," management said, "These results are also a reflection of the significant gain of the Kenya Shilling exchange rate against the dollar. The Shilling improved by 18% over the period." Total operating costs rose by 22%, aligning with the expansion of its operations as "we continue to recover from the effects of Covid-19. Direct operating costs were up 36%. Fleet ownership costs increased by 11%, whereas overheads decreased by 22% partly due to the strengthening of the Kenya Shilling against world major currencies."

BANKING

KCB screens green loans worth KShs. 615bn in 2023

KCB Group screened loans worth KShs. 615 billion for environmental and social risks in 2023 as the Bank races to support projects with positive environmental impacts. This constitutes half of the Group's loan book as of last year's end, cementing KCB commitment to sustainable finance.

Additionally, KCB approved green loans worth KShs. 21.4 billion representing 15.5% of the total loan portfolio in 2023 and highlights its commitment to community-focused initiatives to create sustainable value for all its stakeholders. The green loans disbursed were directed toward projects in e-mobility, climate change adaptation and mitigation, energy efficiency, and renewable energy.

The details are contained in the 2023 KCB Group Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) and Sustainability Report launched on Tuesday, highlighting the Group's progress towards its sustainability commitment. KCB has become the first financial institution in Africa to assure its report through external auditors, ushering in a new era of transparency and ESG disclosures.

KCB Group CEO Paul Russo said: "We



are increasing focus on sustainability and environmental responsibility. We are proud to announce the release of the first assured report, setting a new standard in ESG reporting in Africa. This report confirms that our key performance indicators and metrics accurately reflect the bank's performance, enhancing transparency and accountability. This is borne from a belief that by aligning business practices with sustainability principles, financial institutions can drive long-term value creation, enhance their reputation, and mitigate risks associated with environmental and social challenges."

AWARDS

MTN Uganda recognizes Ericsson & GD Experts



The recently concluded 2024 MTN Uganda Suppliers's Forum was a landmark event, celebrating the spirit of collaboration and innovation that fuels MTN Uganda's success. Among the forum's highlights was the presentation of the Supplier Innovation Award to Ericsson and GD Experts Ltd. The Supplier Innovation Award was an acknowledgment of suppliers who have made extraordinary contributions to enhancing MTN's service offerings through innovation, excellence, and a commitment to MTN's mission. "We are thrilled to honor GD Experts Ltd for their groundbreaking work in

advancing our technological capabilities and helping us deliver world-class services to our customers," said Michael Sekadde, the MTN Uganda Human Resources General before handing over the award. GD Experts Ltd has been a driving force in our journey toward digital transformation. Their remarkable ingenuity and expertise have led to the development of solutions that significantly improve the firm's operational efficiency and service delivery. Their unwavering dedication to innovation and excellence has solidified their position as a valuable partner said MTN executives.

BUSINESS PICTORIAL



Finance Trust Bank MD Annet Nakawunde (2nd L) and Executive Director Annette Kiggundu (R) present a symbolic cheque for Shs2 billion to FUFA President Moses Magogo (2nd R) and Executive Committee member Rogers Byamukama at the bank's offices on August 22. The sponsorship will go towards the FUFA Women's Super League and Elite League.



MTN Uganda CEO Sylvia Mulinge (L) presents a gift to Capital Markets Authority CEO Josephine Okui Ossiya during a courtesy visit to the CMA. The two leaders, along with their respective teams, engaged in fruitful discussions on regulatory and developmental matters, exploring potential collaborations to enhance public awareness and drive investment in Uganda's capital markets.



URA Commissioner John Musinguzi (center) and bishops look on as Equity Bank officially returns the land title for the Janani Luwum Church House to Church of Uganda Archbishop Kaziimba Mugalu on August 22. This follows the successful repayment of a Shs 65 billion loan used to construct the 14-story commercial building in the heart of Kampala.

Umeme's profit declines as concession nears conclusion

The electricity distributor recorded 1.61% decline in profit after tax to Shs 12.99 billion for H1, 2024

By The Independent

Uganda's electricity distributor, Umeme Limited, has reported a slight decline in profit after tax for the first half of 2024, with earnings down by 1.61% to Shs 12.99 billion.

This decline occurred despite increases in both gross profit and revenue, primarily driven by rising operating costs and higher amortization expenses.

The company's Earnings Before Interest, Tax, Depreciation, and Amortization (EBITDA) demonstrated positive momentum, rising by 10.24% to Shs 268.47 billion. However, Earnings Before Interest and Tax (EBIT) decreased by 9.56% to Shs 30.16 billion largely due to increased amortization costs.

Umeme's total revenues grew by 7.08%, reaching Shs 1.15 trillion, buoyed by higher electricity sales. This revenue growth reflects the company's resilience in a challenging economic environment.

However, the bottom line was pressured by a 25.6% increase in operating costs, significantly impacted by higher expenses related to repairs and maintenance.

In response to the financial performance, Umeme's Board of Directors has recommended an interim dividend of Shs 42.23 billion for the period

ending June 30, 2024. This recommendation comes as the company prepares for the natural termination of its concession in March 2025.

The company's total assets declined by 6.98%, influenced by increased amortization and reduced capital investments. Liabilities also decreased, indicating prudent management of financial obligations. However, shareholder equity dropped by 11.17%, driven by a significant reduction in retained earnings. Looking ahead, Umeme has confirmed that its concession with the government will officially conclude on February 28, 2025, followed by a 30-day transition period.

In compliance with the concession agreement, Umeme is required to provide a certified report, at its own expense, verifying that the distribution network is in good repair. Any discrepancies identified must be rectified before the network is handed back to the Uganda Electricity Distribution Company Limited (UEDCL). Additionally, Umeme must ensure the network is free of hazardous materials.

The government, meanwhile, is obligated to pay the Buy Out Amount within 30 days after the concession's end, facilitating the final transfer of the distribution network to UEDCL [\[PL\]](#)



Climate change health plan launched

Rockefeller funded research exposes climate related gaps in Uganda's health future

By Patricia Akankwata

As climate change intensifies, Uganda is experiencing severe health consequences, including floods, droughts, and temperature fluctuations. These environmental changes contribute to waterborne diseases, vector-borne illnesses, malnutrition, and mental health problems.

As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned, climate change will increasingly impact the environmental determinants of health. This includes the emergence and re-emergence of infectious diseases, such as Ebola and Malaria, driven by changes in temperature and rainfall patterns. Additionally, climate change damages health infrastructure, disrupts food supply, causes malnutrition, and negatively impacts mental health.

To address these challenges, the Ministry of Health in partnership with Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH), launched the Climate and Health National Adaptation Plan (H-NAP) with support from the Rockefeller Foundation and the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a crucial step towards building resilience in the country's healthcare system.

While speaking at the launch on Aug. 22 at Sheraton Kampala Hotel, William Asiko, Vice President and head of The Rockefeller Foundation's Africa Regional Office, said that climate change poses the most significant threat to the health and well-being of billions of Africans.

"Initiatives like Uganda's Health National Adaptation Plan demonstrate how African nations are rising to this challenge by implementing necessary climate solutions and setting a global example,"

The H-NAP is informed by a comprehensive Vulnerability and Adaptability Assessment (VAA) conducted across 716 health facilities. The VAA conducted by Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH) following the WHO-recommended approach and funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, revealed significant vulnerabilities to various climate hazards, including drought, floods, storms, rising water levels, landslides, lightning, heat waves, and cold waves.

The results from the VAA show that



William Asiko, Vice President and head of The Rockefeller Foundation's Africa Regional Office

nearly half (48%) of the healthcare facilities face drought, 40% are exposed to floods, 31.1% to storms, 12% to rising water levels, 12% to landslides, 9% to lightning, 2.0% to heat waves, and 0.1% to cold waves. Regional referral hospitals have the least exposure compared to lower-level facilities, which are more vulnerable to storms, high water levels, floods, drought, and landslides.

Also, a significant proportion of facilities lack water safety and management plans to address contamination risks. About 55.1% of facilities exposed to drought and 58.7% exposed to floods lack water safety plans, contingency plans for monitoring and reducing contaminants, and onsite water purification equipment. Additionally, 61% of facilities do not have long-term drought management or emergency water supply plans (59.7% for floods, 66.7% for landslides), highlighting a critical gap in ensuring safe water access during and after hazards.

As for infrastructure, many health facilities in Uganda lack adequate infrastructure to cope with climate hazards, such as stormwater management systems (75.6% for storms) and natural floodwater infiltration systems (68.6% for floods).

The Permanent Secretary at the Ministry

of Health Dr. Diana Atwine said that this plan will address the significant threat climate change poses to public health and enhance the resilience of the health sector against climate-related impacts in the country.

"I urge all Ministries, Departments and Agencies to join forces in mitigating the detrimental effects of climate change on both our environment and health," she stated


"By working collaboratively, we can implement effective strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect our natural resources, and ensure that our healthcare systems are equipped to address the health challenges posed by climate change,"

Dr. Herbert Nabaasa, Commissioner in charge of Environmental Health said that the H-NAP is a critical roadmap for building a climate-resilient health system in Uganda.

"By implementing the outlined interventions, we can effectively mitigate the health impacts of climate change and ensure that essential healthcare services remain accessible to all, even in the face of extreme weather events,"

He added that the key interventions include enhancing water and sanitation infrastructure, strengthening disease surveillance, and training healthcare workers on climate-related health issues.

"These measures will help to prevent the spread of waterborne and vector-borne diseases, improve access to clean drinking water, and ensure that healthcare facilities are equipped to respond to the health needs of vulnerable populations,"

The H-NAP outlines strategic interventions aligned with the WHO's framework and proposes a range of short-term and long-term interventions across ten components: climate-transformative leadership and governance, climate-smart health workforce, integrated risk monitoring, and sustainable financing among others. Specific actions include developing guidelines for mainstreaming climate and health, training health workers, enhancing disease surveillance systems, and revising infrastructure standards for climate-proofing. 

By Melody Chironda

The African Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) is in talks with Bavarian Nordic to facilitate technology transfer for African manufacturers," said Dr. Jean Kaseya, the Director General of the Africa CDC, who addressed the continent on the Mpox outbreak and other health emergencies in Africa.

Dr. Kaseya called for the importance of collaboration between Bavarian Nordic and the African CDC to ensure vaccine accessibility.

"We have a clear plan to have these 10 million doses in Africa by the end of 2025," he said. Furthermore, he expressed gratitude for the European Union's assistance procuring 215,000 doses through its emergency humanitarian initiative.

Africa had experienced a 160% increase in Mpox cases compared to the same period in 2023

"We are working with all African member states to see how we can strengthen the supply and we can also strengthen the communication component to ensure a smooth introduction of this vaccine in Africa," said Dr. Kaseya.

"The most important one for me as Director-General of Africa CDC is to say every day, we need local manufacturing. I want to recognise and thank Bavaria Nordic for agreeing to do the tech transfer in Africa so that Africa can manufacture the vaccine at a lower price and without compromising on the quality."

The Danish biotechnology company, Bavarian Nordic, played a crucial role in controlling the outbreak by rapidly developing the Jynneos vaccine, also known as Imvanex, during the initial outbreak of mpox in 2022 and 2023. It is the only company with mpox vaccine approval from the European Union, the U.S., and other countries.

Following the recent declarations by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Africa CDC of mpox as a global health emergency for the second time in just over two years, Bavarian Nordic announced plans to scale up production, to deliver 2 million doses this year and 8 million doses by 2025 to help contain the virus in Africa. In line with these efforts, Africa CDC has committed to providing 10 million mpox vaccine doses by 2025, demonstrating its strong dedication to strengthening health security across the continent.

As of August 20, 2024, Africa had experienced a 160% increase in Mpox cases compared to the same period in 2023, with a total of 18,910 cases and 541 deaths reported across 12 countries. "It means there is almost an increase of 1,400 cases in one week. We have also seen an increase in deaths, even if it's not well reflected here, with 24 additional

Mpox surge grips Africa

Africa CDC's vaccine hopes rise on Bavarian Nordic pledge



deaths compared to the previous week. An alert is coming from Burundi, DRC, and Central African Republic, where we are observing a rise in both deaths and cases," he said.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo) has been hit particularly hard, accounting for the majority of cases and deaths. He added that armed conflict in eastern DRC is hampering efforts to curb the outbreak. He then commended Angola's President João Lourenço's role in facilitating dialogue between DRC and Rwanda for a ceasefire, saying that this ceasefire is crucial, especially as Mpox becomes a major issue in eastern DRC, particularly in South Kivu. The ceasefire, he said, will aid the government, partners, and Africa CDC in supporting the response efforts in the region.

"We need to consider the impacts following our declaration of a public health emergency of continental security, recognizing that the effects are growing and spreading not only in Africa but also to other continents, he said.

Dr. Kaseya also commended South African President Cyril Ramaphosa's call for solidarity within Africa and with international partners.

Ramaphosa, who is the African Union Champion on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response (PPPR), supported Africa CDC's declaration of Mpox as a Public Health Emergency of Continental Security. He said this "decision empowers Africa CDC to lead and coordinate response efforts across the continent, from community engagement to high-level political collaboration".

He appealed to the global community, partners, and organisations to mobilise stockpiles of vaccines and other health countermeasures for use in Africa through the mechanisms by Africa CDC to ensure fairness in distribution, transparency, and coordination. Ramaphosa urged for a more coordinated approach to ensure that, when Africa responds to this outbreak, all partners unite under the leadership of Africa CDC, as outlined in its statute approved by the heads of state.

"Africa requires robust support in funding, research, and the sharing of technologies, with financial contributions directed to the Africa Epidemic Fund under the leadership of Africa CDC," he said.

Professor Jean-Jacques Muyembe, a Congolese microbiologist and General Director of the National Institute for Biomedical Research (INRB), shared findings from a randomised, double-blind clinical trial conducted in Koli, Sankuru, and Tunda, Maniema. Despite challenging conditions, the trial concluded that tecovirimat used empirically during the 2022 Mpox outbreak, was ineffective.

"The time of legion resolution, both in patients treated with tecovirimat and in patients who received placebo, this time is not different," Muyembe said.

Dr. Muyembe called for renewed attention to public health measures learned from past epidemics like Ebola and Covid-19, including hygiene practices and precautions against sexual transmission, to prevent the spread of disease. **PL**



An Exposure to the Business of Art

By Dominic Muwanguzi

Aaron Wasala fresh from graduating from art school, began exhibiting his artwork in galleries around Kampala. This was not hard because naturally he had a good talent in painting that earned him a good reception among several gallerists. Years later, Wasala is still regarded as an upcoming artist selling his art at a few hundred dollars, yet some of his contemporaries are already making headlines selling thousands of dollars. So, what happened to Wasala? Despite his extraordinary abilities to make good art, the young artist was never lucky enough to find a good art patron who could usher him into the art market. The galleries where he sold his art exploited him and turned him into a surviving artist. Today, if he doesn't have an exhibition, he can find it very difficult to survive and as a result he has resigned himself to selling his art for peanuts to make ends meet.

This is a common scenario among many young artists as they leave university to join the art industry. Because they have no idea of what the art market is like, they end up at the deep end of the art market. Today, perhaps more than ever, because of the heavily commercialized art world, it really does matter for every artist to understand how the business of art works. "It is important that a young artist learns the business of art

before they begin to practice professionally. This helps them to navigate successfully in the industry because no one wants to be a surviving artist," says Professor Diana Tyson who's facilitating a workshop the Business of Art to fresh art graduates of Margaret Trowel School industrial and Fine Art Makerere, which falls under College of Engineering Design Art and Technology (CEDAT).

Through the workshop, the professor

with a vast experience in Business teaching and now art collector, provides valuable knowledge and skills to the participants on how they can steer through the art market. She emphasizes how the business of art, like art itself, is exclusive to a specific group of people and requires particular skills and exposure for one to emerge as successful. "Naturally, the way one sells water is not the way they sell a

painting or sculpture,” she notes and elaborates further, “Water is a need which one can’t live without and yet a painting is a want, which can be purchased after several considerations. Therefore, the artist needs to be mindful of this sharp contrast and apply the pull strategy on their client, which literally means making the potential buyer comfortable around the art,” she advises.

According to Prof Tyson once the client becomes comfortable around the art and artist, they’ve now established an emotional connection which often times can lead to a good relationship between the two parties. “The art buyer/ collector may find interest in the work and later buy it because of the way the artist related to them. Sometimes it’s not because they really love the artwork but because they feel guilty not supporting their new friend,” she notes.

While it is important to focus on the intricacies of how to sell the art, it is equally crucial for the young artist to create different avenues where they can sell considering the long-term and not short-term benefits. Tyson advises that group shows, art fairs, personal studios, public avenues and the internet are good platforms to sell art for a burgeoning artist. “A young artist should be careful not to sell through a gallery fast because it is profit oriented and has many bills to pay. All these expenses usually are transferred to the artist through percentage deductions in sales and framing if the work is to be framed,” remarks Tyson.

The forty percent charge by a gallery is risky for an artist who has barely found their right footing in the competitive art market. This expense can be dodged if the artist sells through their studio or public venues like Museums which operate profit free because they are funded by the local council. Similarly, art fairs are a perfect podium for the young artist to connect with art collectors who have the potential to support their career. “Art collectors are usually looking for new artists to invest in their money. When they buy a young artist’s work, they do it as a form of investment knowing so well that years later their price will triple or quadruple in the secondary market”, explains the experienced art collector.

With a global competitive art market and now focus turned onto the Africa Contemporary art scene, it is appropriate for young artists to get exposed to the business of art. This annual workshop, now in its second year, is helpful in equipping



the Ugandan burgeoning artists with knowledge and skills in navigating the delicate art market. Perhaps, such classes can be the beginning of a conversation on how art institutions like Makerere University art school can incorporate such a practical discipline into one of the course units for finalist students to avert possibilities of their exploitation as they step into the industry. [IPL](#)

The workshop was organized and coordinated by Dr. Ritah Nabuyungo Edopu- Head Department of Fine Art and Dr Lilian Nabulime a lecturer at Margaret Trowel School of Industrial and Fine art, Makerere University. Upon completion of the workshop the graduates were provided with an opportunity to hold a series of group international exhibitions in New Jersey, USA later this year.



Joseph Tamale Mirundi dies at 60

Uganda's blunt social philosopher rests, leaving no friend not honoured and no enemy not punished

By Nnanda Kizito Sseruwagi

Rarely in the course of time and the spread of geography has humanity experienced the presence of a man like Joseph Tamale Mirundi. He was an oddity—a misfit. I found it difficult to listen to him in the later parts of his life of public commentary because I felt his political language had crossed over from its quintessential eccentricity to utter vulgarity. What I did not lose was the clarity that most lost or never appreciated about him – that he was above all a philosopher.

Many who perceived Mirundi as a drunkard or a “barking dog” for hire by politicians, business people and even pastors, miss the software of the man. At his core, Tamale was someone who reflected deeply about things. That is what philosophy is. That is who philosophers are.

Mirundi, like many people in poor societies like Uganda, was a misused – and abused talent. He served his intellect to the purposes offered by the economic structures that he found himself confined to. Born in ancient

Greece, in the age of Socrates, Aristotle, Zeno, Heraclitus, Empedocles and others, Tamale would quite easily have emerged as one of the greatest philosophers in history.

He did not make obvious the common nonsense that society finds rational. He questioned norms, not merely in speech but also conduct. He lived like “a madman.” He was the only man who enjoyed popular space in Buganda while insulting the Kingdom and its highest royal persons. When the lawyer, Male Mabirizi, sued the Kabaka, Tamale was the only public figure who supported his unconventional legal action. Society might have consciously reproached Tamale’s “madness,” but it subconsciously licensed him as a social philosopher to practice his craft. That’s why for the most slanderous things he said about people in the highest offices in both the central government and Mengo, nobody sued.

It was even interesting to see the official government Twitter (X) handle, the official NRM Party handle, and several Ministers and senior public servants honour his service to the

country, yet if anybody listened, his “service” was vicious criticism. He indeed never merely criticized but rather insulted all these institutions. Why did he enjoy that license to abuse, offend, and denigrate everybody?

At the risk of being accused of overstressing his significance, let me suggest that Tamale Mirundi was comparable to the ancient Greek philosopher, Socrates. Tamale argued that “you Ugandans don’t read. So, it doesn’t make sense for me to write for you big books...” Indeed, many Ugandan “elites” kindly refer to Tamale’s work as pamphlets or street magazines. But he insisted that they were books. Unlike Tamale, Socrates never wrote at all, yet 2,415 years later, we still reference his knowledge. The most we know is what his students especially Plato wrote about their master.

The nature of society Tamale was born into confronted unique circumstances and was defined by peculiar contradictions. So, it might be difficult for those who have a Westernized epistemic view of a philosopher to understand Tamale as

one.

Whereas he might not write and command global attention like Yuval Noah Harari, Slavoj Žižek or Mahmood Mamdani, Tamale was as much a philosopher, but one who was aware of his audience. He was not a philosopher for the World Economic Forum audience. He was a philosopher for millions of boda boda riders and taxi touts in a dilapidated third-world city. He communicated to housewives in Nansana and Kasubi. He clearly knew they would not access him on CNN. So, he did not, and neither was he able to package himself like Noam Chomsky for CNN. He understood that his audience is on Ugandan TikTok and YouTube. If Chomsky wakes up every day to write, Tamale woke up every day to record interviews with countless young and old vloggers to make content for his audience. He had the intellectual rigour and self-discipline to show up on time for his radio programs on different stations for many years. And whereas his books might have been thirty pages each, they were many, and on different subjects. Altogether, his books would make up a solid text for a “conventional” book.

In 2014, I was a little boy in senior two, but with a politically conscious mind. I used to listen to Tamale Mirundi regularly. So, I gained a keen interest in his books. I remember walking to the Aristoc Booklex branch along Kampala Road on a Monday morning on the first day of the term on my way to school. After looking for his book, “Understanding Mafia Politics,” in vain, I inquired from one of the attendants if he could trace it for me. He laughed, then kindly led me out of the bookshop and pointed towards the furthest end of the street, next to Diamond Trust Bank. He said, “...you see that brown lady, seated on the ground vending Newspapers?” I said “Yes.” He said, “...go to her, she will help you.”

When I approached the lady, she quickly pulled out the book from a big brown sack carrying several titles by Tamale Mirundi. I was so surprised. I asked her how much the book cost, she said, “Only 5k!” I offered to buy two more titles, making three books at less than Uganda sh. 15,000/=. I was initially disappointed that Tamale Mirundi’s “books” are sold in sacks on the streets. I imagined that any author worth his name must have a book on a clean shelf at Aristoc Bookshop. However, over the years, I appreciated the complexity of Tamale Mirundi’s simplicity. He was not just a lousy

NRM mouthpiece on the radio. He was a thinker who reflected deeply on the nature of his society, and his place in it.

Xanthippe, Socrates’ wife described him as “a good-for-nothing idler who brought to his family more notoriety than bread.” History remembers Socrates as a lousy father and husband, who neglected his family while “misguiding” the youth of his generation. Mirundi ticks these boxes, not as an irresponsible family man but as a somewhat public nuisance who made his family famous.

His eccentric life might have belied out his intelligence, but the record of


his interviews on hundreds of media channels will give him immortality. He must have reflected on this too, given his insistence on how to be addressed.

He was Yozefu Tamale Mirundi, born in 1964 at Matale village in Rakai District. He was the 9th child of Mr. John Mirundi and Mrs. Molly Mirundi. He was an independent intellectual and a popular participant in many talk shows on both radio and television. He was a self-made man, who rose through the ranks from being a newspaper vendor to working as the Press Secretary to President Yoweri Museveni.

Tamale was a restless ball of energy, who, even on his deathbed at Kisubi Hospital was still rumbling with thoughts and ambition. Whenever he fell sick, he quickly left the hospital against the advice of doctors and addressed the media in his frail element. He would say that keeping away from his journalist friends and audience would kill him faster than sickness.

Tamale also shares similarities with another popular character in philosophy, Lucius Cornelius Sulla. Sulla was a Roman general who became the first to seize power through force. Tamale was as unique in his character and fate as Sulla. Like Sulla, Tamale was born poor but revenged upon life by defining himself as rich and arrogant.

When he conquered money, Tamale used it to serve his appetites without restraint, just as Sulla did. His chief reward was a bottle of beer. But he also found time, between attacking Mengo and NRM, to raise his children as the most loving father in the world would. He was also a jolly man, funny to listen to, even when you did not like what he said. Where Sulla filled Rome with his laughter and made a hundred thousand enemies, Tamale filled Ugandan radio, television and TikTok with humour, but also made thousands of enemies while at it.

Lastly, what I find most inspiring in Tamale is that he lived on his terms. He lived full throttle like he knew someday he would be dead. So, he made living worthwhile by living as he deemed, without budging into the dictates of society, religion or political authority. He was the archetypical embodiment of a free man. There is no friend he never honoured, and no enemy he never punished. He registered all his scores alive. He said it all before he died. He leaves behind no debt to anybody. What a man! 

Nnanda Kizito Sseruwagi is a lawyer

what I find most inspiring in Tamale is that he lived on his terms. He lived full throttle like he knew someday he would be dead. So, he made living worthwhile by living as he deemed, without budging into the dictates of society, religion or political authority

Khiddu Makubuya, former attorney general, dies at 75

A studious academic blighted by his legal opinions

By Ian Katusiime

Former Attorney General Prof. Khiddu Makubuya has been described as a humble and hardworking academic but many also noted his service to the NRM government where he infamously gave a legal opinion arguing that Dr. Kizza Besigye could not be nominated as a presidential candidate while he was in jail. This was in late 2005 after Besigye's heroic return from exile in South Africa to run for president.

Besigye was arrested on November 14, 2005 and thereafter; debates, legal and political, ensued. Makubuya stood his ground and said Besigye could not be nominated while on remand at Luzira prison facing charges of treason and rape.

One of Attorney General Makubuya's deputies however said Besigye, who was then aiming at his second presidential run, could be nominated. It set off several debates among other lawyers but Makubuya's legal opinion earned him intense criticism. The High Court ultimately ruled against Makubuya who was head of the bar as Attorney General.

Nineteen years later, commentators were quick to point out Makubuya's stance when news broke that he had passed on.

When Makubuya made headlines again, it was another controversy: the compensation of businessman Hassan Basajjalaba with hundreds of billions of shillings. The case ended Makubuya's political career after he was forced to resign in 2012.

It was the end of a life in public service that began in the mid-1990s when Makubuya was appointed as a member of the Uganda Constitutional Commission, a body that advised on the constitution making process that led to the new constitution in 1995.

Early life

Makubuya was born July 30, 1949. He studied law at Makerere University Kampala and immortalised his name in the law school when he became the first student to pass with a first class law degree in 1974. It is an exclusive club



that few have managed to enter to-date. His feat earned him a position as a special assistant at the Faculty of Law.

This marked the beginning of his journey into academia. Makubuya's talents took him to Yale University in the U.S. where he earned a master's degree in law. In 1979, he was appointed lecturer at Makerere University which at the time was a high honour. In 1982, his star rose higher when he earned the stripes of senior lecturer.

These were times of peril and many of his ilk were running into exile but according to Makubuya's contemporaries, the young academic stayed behind to teach which was a passion he was nurturing. Makubuya earned a Doctor of Juridical Science from Yale University after his master's program. The DJS is defined as "a highly specialised research doctorate in law designed for those seeking to pursue careers as teachers and scholars of law."

Some of the several lawyers Makubuya taught are Justice and Constitutional Affairs minister Nobert Mao and longtime legislator Abdul Katuntu of Bugweri County. They

attended Makubuya's "Introduction to Law" class in the late 1980s.

Time in Cabinet

After the NRM captured power in 1986 and ushered in an era of stability, many people joined politics and Makubuya seized the opportunity. In 1996, he was elected MP for Katikamu South in Luwero district. He was then appointed state minister for Luwero triangle to oversee the reconstruction of his home area after it was ravaged by the guerilla war that brought NRM to power.

Makubuya served in other ministerial posts in the office of prime minister and as minister of foreign affairs. But according to those who knew him, he remained humble and was never fazed by the pomp and circumstance of cabinet positions unlike many of his colleagues.

In 1999, Makubuya was rewarded with the high profile post of minister of education at a time the government was introducing a signature programme: Universal Primary Education aimed at mass enrollment. It is here that he also made his mark by working hard to establish a license for Ndejje University according to Prof. Eriabu Lugujo, a contemporary of his from Makerere.

In 2005, Makubuya hit a high point in his career when he was named attorney general in a cabinet reshuffle. The appointment turned out to be a poisoned chalice as his opinion on Besigye's presidential bid haunted him throughout his time.

In 2011, he was transferred to the ministry of general duties. In his new position, he faced mounting pressure from parliament regarding his advice as attorney general for government to provide compensation to Basajjalaba worth Shs142billion. The businessman lost tenders to manage markets and demanded his pound of flesh. A year later, Makubuya resigned from cabinet and retreated into quiet life.

Makubuya has been praised as a studious and diligent academic who rose from humble beginnings to serve in cabinet. He died at Nakasero Hospital on August 19 after a long illness. He is survived by a wife and children. **IPL**

By Muxe Nkondo



No primary differences between people

Unlike liberalism's core principle of Individualism, ubuntu does not believe there are primary differences between people

Uubuntu is based on a simple yet radical premise, that there are no primary differences between people. If we take that message into our politics and legal systems we can address the failings of liberalism.

Many of the forces that have shaped history have been underpinned by a false belief that there are fundamental, primary differences between people. Imperialism, apartheid, and patriarchy created hostility, contempt, condescension accompanied by social, economic, and political mistreatment. The belief in primary difference is not restricted to the powerful. It is also found amongst the oppressed and excluded.

There is no scientific backing, nothing to justify the broad range of beliefs, attitudes, and practices based on the perception of difference. Research across various disciplines shows that belief in primary difference has no basis, no legitimacy whatsoever. Reference by those who would believe the difference was real to a metaphysical reality has been exposed for what it is – a fallacy, a myth. No scholar has been able to establish the reality of racial, ethnic, or gender essence. It is based on ignorance, irrationality, and unreasonableness.

What can be done to convince a racist, a tribalist, or a patriarch, for example, that recognition of a common humanity would enhance the possibilities of peace? This is an internal and social phenomenon. It is a matter of attitude, thinking, and behaviour. The good news is, that it is possible because human beings are capable of empathy and fairness, which moves human behaviour beyond egotistic desire and appetite.

The idea of primary difference and its political sociology is complex. It takes identity difference for granted. It presumes that human populations can be partitioned into distinct kinds based on their cultural and physical difference. Racial, ethnic, and gender differences make no sense without belief in primary difference. It is not the presence of objective physical differences that creates races, ethnic groups, and gender enclaves, but social interpretations upon such differences can create antagonism. It is categorical in that it takes for granted the presence of identity groups as natural kinds, not historical and contingent constructions. It is also one-dimensional.

Primary difference relegates gaps and

asymmetries between groups to a realm of primary, antagonistic differences. With the differences regarded as fundamental and insurmountable, individuals in such groups become irredeemably negative to each other. Other people in other groups are not viewed as companions but, at most, as means to ends. Nothing can be learnt from such people, the thinking goes. The only way to deal with them is through power and violence, both subjective and systemic.

But as we reject the idea of primary difference, we should also avoid rejecting the individuals who perpetrate it, dismissing them as monsters, in-educable and unsociable. If we reject them, we will just be one more example of intolerance, leaving no space for learning and mutual recognition.

The politics and limits of liberalism

Liberalism's constant enlargement of its sympathies without fundamentally transforming how the self relates to the other, its moral philosophy, has now found its limit. It is not enough for liberalism to pride itself on constantly extending sympathy and adapting itself to the other. Tolerance is not enough; it leaves the egotistic self as the centre of reference to which the other is just a blank page on which to inscribe its story. This is the challenge; to make the self-open, cordial, flexible, and responsive to the other.


Individualism, a core principle of

liberalism, maintains that the rights of individuals are fundamental and justifies the actions of coercive government as promoting those rights. Ubuntu maintains that the rights of individuals are not fundamental and that the collective can have rights that are independent of and even opposed to what liberals claim are the rights of individuals. The principle of secondary difference takes equality and justice to be the basic ideal and justifies power insofar as it promotes the common or public good.

The self and the other

A major principle of the African philosophy of ubuntu is, in short, take care of yourself but care for the next person as well. But for us now, in the grip of individualism, this notion is rather obscure and faded. Without doubt, the liberal system overemphasises individualism at the expense of social cohesion. A whole field of antagonistic relations between the self and others have been constructed and institutionalised world-wide, grounded in the liberal notion of individualism.

To shift this balance, we have to make sure that the new values and principles have to be inscribed in policy and law. They have to be inscribed in a Bill of Rights and a Bill of Responsibilities to ensure implementation, just like liberal principles have been.

But we are not naïve – a cosmopolitan social democratic community is hard to achieve. It is work in progress. Changing people's beliefs and attitudes is a very tall order, but the failure of liberalism in modern history points in this direction. Consequences on the lives of people must be the measure of leadership. It is learnable, our being allows it. The happiness and well-being of all require it. It will enable us to move in and out of our identity spaces: the translatability of language and culture as they move in space and time proves that much. New vocabularies are possible. 

The principle of secondary difference takes equality and justice to be the basic ideal and justifies power insofar as it promotes the common or public good

Muxe Nkondo was a social policy, national strategy development, and discourse analysis scholar and practitioner, former Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) at the University of North (now Limpopo) and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Venda, South Africa, a Harvard Andrew Mellon Fellow in English. He passed away on Sunday, August 18, 2024. This article was first published on February 13, 2024. Source: LSE Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa

By Magezi Kiriinjju



Parliamentary democracy could be a blessing

A major advantage is the relevance it gives small parties as long as they can send a member to parliament

The minister of internal affairs, Maj General Kahinda Otfiire was recently quoted in the media addressing another person at a gathering saying; “we fought for democracy, the right to choose my leader. I have heard voices in parliament saying the president should be elected by parties. I respect that view of yours but i don’t share it. Tell your colleagues who are peddling that idea that they should be humble enough to understand why those of us who framed the constitution said the president shall be elected by the people.”

A few days later, the leader of opposition in parliament Joel Ssenyonyi was also quoted saying; “the major reform they want to bring in this parliament is to change the presidential system such that the president is elected by parliament. They want to go through somebody from opposition to bring and table a private member’s bill regarding reforms. Then the state will take over that.”

First, Otfiire is aware that Chapter Eighteen of Uganda’s constitution provides for an amendment where applicable saying “Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, Parliament may amend by way of addition, variation or repeal, any provision of this Constitution in accordance with the procedure laid down in this Chapter.” So, while he doesn’t share the view, he should also be humble enough to acknowledge that the very constitution he helped frame provides for changes when majority want or circumstances necessitate so. But most unfortunate, the two gentlemen have created an impression that a parliamentary system of governance is undemocratic and will bring untold disenfranchisement of Ugandan voters. That is not true at all, in fact, it might even be better than our current presidential system in which the winner takes it all.

So, what is the difference between parliamentary democracy and presidential democracy? Electorally, in a presidential democracy, a leader is elected directly by voters. I Magezi will cast my vote for NRM candidate Kiriinjju for president but retain a choice to vote for Rwabugyiri for member of parliament on FDC ticket. In simple language, my vote for president has no bearing for my vote for member of parliament. I have a choice to vote one party for president and another for member of

parliament directly.

But in parliamentary democracy, my vote for the party member of parliament is also a vote for the party presidential flag bearer. This means, if NRM fronts Magezi for president, any vote for any member of parliament for NRM is also a vote for Magezi the presidential candidate. This means that the presidential candidate of the party with most members of parliament depending on the threshold constitutionally agreed will automatically become president or prime minister.

Therefore, the notion that members of parliament choose the president is not true, it is voters who decide which party gets majority parliamentarians to be able to form the next government.

What advantages does parliamentary democracy offer that are better than presidential democracy?

In parliamentary democracy, the executive branch derives its legitimacy from and is accountable to the legislature/parliament. The two branches of government are interconnected. The head of government, a president in a republic or prime minister in a monarch, comes from the majority party in the parliament and is accountable to the parliament.

Under parliamentary system, it is easier to replace a president or prime minister if his/her leadership becomes untenable. The ruling party has capacity to recall the individual without elections, replace her/him with another party member. The recent example is United Kingdom where the Conservative Party recalled prime minister Boris Johnson and replaced him with Liz Truss who ruled for one month and was also recalled and replaced with Rishi Sunak all without going through an election.

Another example is South Africa where president Thabo Mbeki was recalled by his party, the ANC on suspicion that he interfered in legal processes against Jacob Zuma. He was replaced by Kgalema Motlanthe as president. Therefore, the executive must maintain confidence of majority members of parliament to stay in power. Otherwise, parliament could easily recall their services and replace them with new leaders.

A major advantage of parliamentary democracy is the relevance it gives small parties like the Conservative Party of

Lukyamuzi, the Peoples Progressive Party of Bidandi Ssali and Uganda Peoples Congress of Jimmy Akena in Uganda. As long as they can send a member to parliament, they stand a chance to participate in government through coalitions should the major parties fail to achieve the required majority to form government. An example is Israel and South Africa today.

Because the LIKUD party failed to get enough MPs to form government, Benjamin Netanyahu was forced to ally with smaller parties like the Shas, United Torah Judaism and Otzma Yehudit to form government. In South Africa, the African National Congress of Cyril Ramaphosa failed to reach the threshold of parliamentary majority to form a government and allied with the Democratic Alliance, the Inkatha Freedom Party and the Patriotic Alliance to form a national unity government, with Cyril Ramaphosa being re-elected President of South Africa.

This also means the cost of elections goes down, otherwise in a presidential democracy, if all parties fail to get the required majority to form a government, the two leading parties go back to voters in a re-run. This is another round of costly campaigns and printing materials to be used in facilitating a free and fair election.

But also, this coalition arrangement expands the manifesto by combining the agendas of the parties that have entered into an agreement to form a government. This in the end is advantageous to citizens who stood a risk of enduring unpopular policies of the winning political party.

Therefore, if you come from small parties like CP, DP, PPP and or large parties like FDC or NUP that cannot win an election in a presidential system, you should be the one supporting the adoption of a parliamentary democracy system because all you will need is to make sure NRM fails to make the required majority in the House and then ask for a coalition to participate in governance of Uganda as opposed to being a perpetual opposition. **[PL]**

The writer is a Communications Officer at the Government Citizen Interaction Centre (GCIC) and a member of the Campfire Ideological Study Group

By Joseph Were



Agora and the crisis of digital media

New communication technology-enabled activist journalism needs empirical frameworks of accountability

The recent public flogging of Agather Atuhaire, Godwin Toko and Jimmy Spire Ssentongo should be a top discussion issue for anyone involved in news media. It is discouraging that most discussion so far has centred on whether or not their organisation; the Agora Centre for Research, should provide financial accountability to those wielding the whip.

Providing accountability to a mob would be unprecedented as organisations such as Agora are known to account strictly to their internal subscribers and external funders. In this case, the American development agency, USAID, is said to be involved together with the ICT Think Tank, the Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA). Details are scanty but that is peripheral if not tangential.

Equally dismissible are debates on whether organisations such as the Agora Centre that are sponsored to pursue specific agendas; in this case anti-corruption, human rights advocacy, and good governance should pass off as news media enterprises.

Identity is essential to professional journalism. Atuhaire, Toko and Ssentongo all have connection to some legacy media establishments. Atuhaire is a journalist and lawyer, Toko is a lawyer and media columnist, and Ssentongo is a professor of Ethics, columnist and cartoonist. All are activists.

Under Agora, they host online discussions called “Spaces” on any issue, publish cartoons, and hold public “exhibitions” on corruption, human rights abuse, potholes etcetera on their social media handles.

On its website, Agora Centre takes pride in “fearlessly tackling topics that mainstream media approaches cautiously”. It adds that “AGORA disrupts conventional digital tools usage, influencing social media to foster public discourse amidst tightening government restrictions on freedom of speech, assembly, and association.”

Does what Atuhaire, Toko and Ssentongo do under Agora Centre qualify as media activism, non-objective journalism, or plain activism? In this era of evolving new communication technology (NCT) spaces, the question is pertinent but irrelevant to the issue at hand.

The issue that should concern anyone involved in news media in the era of

NCTs is the extent to which accountability crusaders of any kind are easily outflanked by mobs, be they real or bots, online. This is doubly critical in the context of autocratic, repressive, and corrupt regimes.

In the case of Atuhaire, Toko and Ssentongo, the corrupt cabal and its surrogates has demonstrated its ability to take down lone ranger activists. This raises the question: how can they better protect and defend themselves?

To invert this problem leads to assessing what mistakes media activists such as Atuhaire, Toko and Ssentongo make and avoid them. This should illuminate what they could do to better protect themselves in the future.

Money and media accountability have been unlikely companions since the invention of the printing press and mass media in the 1800s and the invention of the telegraph, radio, and TV. Now it's the turn of the internet and a shift toward NCT-driven individual journalist driven by consumers and financiers. This has left legacy media frayed without consumers, sponsors, or

ability to monetise its feeble presence in the NCT space.

But it appears the principles espoused by ethical legacy media; including the emphasis on accountability and professional identity deserve a dust-off in the context of NCTs. Essentially, there needs to be a return to the past of journalism.

So far emerging individual activist media operators using NCTs have lacked the scrutiny and standards that are commonplace in legacy media. These individualistic ventures have operated without discernible clearly delineated theoretical and empirical frameworks and concepts. They practice the kind of online lynching that Atuhaire, Toko, and Ssentongo now face. The facts here are fleeting and deciphering truth from travesty is difficult. That needs to change.

What is not in doubt is that the case of Agora and others highlights the urgent requirement for new theoretical and empirical frameworks and concepts around online or digital activist journalism.

Anyone with knowledge of organisations with lean formations that are typical in online or digital activist media operations can attest to the importance of rigorous founding protocols, operational structures, and accountability auditing mechanisms backed by firm boards of directors.

Successful traditional journalists and small newsrooms that have weathered storms are built on bedrocks of cultures, normative standards and journalistic ideals that shield them. These media practitioners have courage and seek as much as possible to be accurate, fair, honest, neutral, objective, and firm as they comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.

For success in the future, activist journalists must search in the past of legacy media practice to find protection. They will find they need to start to ‘give the Devil the benefit of law’ instead of cutting “a great road through the law to get after the Devil” to paraphrase Sir Thomas More. The successful media model of the future is one where sturdy principles of the old buttress the fledgling experiments of the new in a spectrum of novel platforms. [WPL](#)

Successful traditional journalists and small newsrooms that have weathered storms are built on bedrocks of cultures, normative standards and journalistic ideals that shield them

By Sithembile Mbete



Africa on the UN Security Council

Why the continent should have two permanent seats and five non-permanent seats to correct historical injustice

Africa's desire to be fully represented in all decision-making organs of the United Nations (UN), particularly in the Security Council, is informed by three factors. First, repairing the historical injustice of its underrepresentation in global governance. Second, recognising African contributions in shaping the contemporary world order. Third, the urgency of securing the legitimacy of the UN in the face of emerging threats to international peace and security. At the African Union's fifth ordinary session held in Sirte, Libya in 2005, African leaders adopted the Ezulwini consensus. It expressed Africa's desire "to be fully represented in all decision-making organs of the UN, particularly in the security council". Africa's experience of the UN system over the past 80 years has been one of misrepresentation and underrepresentation.

The media, academics and global political actors portray the continent as a basket-case of backward societies that are always receiving aid, rather than as agents of progress. The continent is excluded from permanent membership of the Security Council, and inadequately represented as non-permanent members. Africa's common position on UN reform calls for no less than two permanent seats, "with all the prerogatives and privileges of permanent membership including the right of veto". Africa also wants five non-permanent seats. Reform of the Security Council is long overdue. Its structure — five permanent members with veto power and ten non-permanent elected members serving two-year terms — is outdated. It reflects the configuration of global power at the end of the Second World War. The Security Council is the most powerful body of the UN. It is the primary body responsible for maintaining international peace and security. Its decisions are binding on UN member states. Africa is the only region without a permanent seat, despite representing 54 of the 193 members of the UN and 17% of the world's population. The council faces a credibility crisis because of its failure to address the biggest conflicts of our time. Expanding representation and democratising its working methods is essential to ensuring its legitimacy, credibility and effectiveness in meeting the security challenges of the future.

Historical injustices

The goal of Africa's common position is

to correct the "historical injustice" of its lack of representation and recognition. And the many injustices the continent has endured over the past 500 years. Over four centuries, the European slave trade trafficked about 12 million to 15 million Africans across the Atlantic to produce sugar, coffee, tobacco and cotton for the global capitalist economy. As the African scholar Adekeye Adebajo argues, "the west's industrialisation was thus literally built on the back of African slavery. For Africa, the slave trade brought about devastating and irrevocable consequences in the form of depopulation, increased warfare to enslave more people, mass migration, and ecological damage that exacerbated diseases and food insecurity". This sorry history takes us to Berlin in 1884, where European leaders parceled out the continent among themselves. A major consequence was the imposition of colonial states that divided communities and operated on a logic of extraction and oppression of their populations. This continues to be felt in the unmanageable governance systems on the continent that are often incompatible with democracy and the rule of law.

This has led to intractable violent conflicts. In the 30 years since the end of the cold war in 1991, African conflicts have dominated the Security Council agenda. African issues took up nearly 50% of the council's meetings and 70% of its resolutions. Africa is (permanently) on the menu, but Africans do not have a (permanent) seat at the table.

Berlin also laid the foundations for the neocolonialism that continues to define Africa's economic relations with the rich nations. Africa loses an estimated US\$203 billion a year through illicit financial flows, profits by multinational corporations and ecological destruction.

In 1945, world leaders gathered to establish the United Nations. Of the 51 original member states only four were African: Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia and the Union of South Africa. Most of Africa was still under colonial rule.

Africa's contribution to the UN

Africa has not been a mere recipient of the UN's largesse, but an active contributor to its success. As more African states gained their independence in the 1960s, they agitated for reform of the Security Council. They succeeded in its expansion from 11 to 15 members, in 1965, with the addition of elected seats for Africa.

The UN's practice and jurisprudence evolved through the activism of African states. Milestones include the declaration of apartheid as a crime against humanity in 1973 and adoption of the international apartheid convention. Over the past 60 years Africans have contributed personnel to UN peacekeeping missions around the world. Four African countries are in the top 10 contributors of peacekeepers. African countries also took up the cause of independence for Namibia in the International Court of Justice. They have also taken leadership in the UN, including two secretaries general. The African Union and African regional actors oversee 10 peace operations. African peace missions have upheld important UN norms by challenging unconstitutional changes of government.

Within the Security Council, successive African members have led informal reforms like: sharing the penholding responsibility on African issues, promoting closer relations between the UN and regional organisations, ensuring security interventions respond to the needs of people in conflict situations. African states have long lobbied the council to reduce poverty and control the flow of small arms as strategies for conflict prevention. Finally, reform of the UN is necessary to ensure its legitimacy in an uncertain future of new and evolving security threats. These include the climate crisis, novel pandemics and new technologies like artificial intelligence. Failure to solve major conflicts in the past decade has dented the institution's credibility. If institutions are perceived to be exclusive and unfair, members stop cooperating with them. The UN turns 100 in 2045. At that point Africa will have 2.3 billion people, making up 25% of the global population. Young Africans will be the world's work force and consumer base, fueling the global economy. Will the membership of the Security Council still look like it does today? The nature of global threats and the definition of international security have changed dramatically since 1945. Such threats can only be resolved by a security council that represents the interests and perspectives of all humanity. ¹

Sithembile Mbete is Lecturer in Political Science, University of Pretoria. This an edited version of the author's address to the UN security council on 12 August 2024.

Source: The Conversation

Stay Informed

Our online platforms have
limitless possibilities



www.independent.co.ug



@UgIndependent



The Independent magazine

