



Tradequity

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Win for Women as East Africa Community Gender Policy is launched

Rose Nganga*

Imagine a world where women and men and boys and girls are guaranteed equal rights and opportunities. This is the sole goal the newly launched East Africa Community (EAC) Gender Policy seeks to achieve. The journey which begun in 2006 culminated in a victory for both men and women as the policy roots for gender equality and equity, two pillars upon which the first steps to this journey were founded.

“Insecure land rights reduce women's ability to pledge the land as collateral for loans”, said Dr Focken, adding that female farmers were less likely to invest in their land or to adopt efficient agricultural practices if they were uncertain of reaping the benefits in the long-term.

During the launch at the EAC headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania recently, Christophe Bazivamo the community's Deputy Secretary, General Productive and Social Sectors, said that the policy was developed out of the recognition that there still are disparities among men and women in various spheres of life.

The Treaty establishing the EAC in Article 121 provides for women participation in governance including appropriate affirmative action at all levels.

Rwanda leads in women representation with 64 percent in the national Parliament, 38 percent in Cabinet and 45 percent in public



The EAC Gender Policy identifies 14 key priority actions that it believes will also promote gender equality and equity within laws, policies, programmes and projects of the community, if applied

service. Kenya is among other partner states lagging behind in meeting the one-third gender representation at all levels in government. Women representation in Parliament stands at 28 percent, 29 in Cabinet and 37 percent in public service.

Dr Kirsten Focken, German Development Cooperation (GIZ) Programme Manager said there is still a lot of work needed to be done beyond the launch if the policy is to achieve its purpose.

“We take note that there is still more to be done in the achievement of gender equality as progress is hampered by inadequate resources and technical skills; conflict between statutory and customary laws, and captivity to patriarchal attitudes, beliefs and practices”, said Dr Focken.

“If women had equal access to production resources as men, they would increase yields on their farms by 20 to 30 percent”, said Dr Kirsten Focken, the Cluster Coordinator for German development support to the EAC through GIZ. It provided support in developing the policy, which identifies 14 key priority actions that

should also promote gender equality and equity within laws, policies, programmes and projects of the community, if applied.

The actions are meant to address gender concerns in governance and participation, education and training, health and HIV and Aids, gender-based violence, environment and climate change, and energy.

Other concerns are in agriculture, food security and nutrition; trade and economic empowerment; security, peace building and conflict resolution; mining and extractive industries; access to safe water, sanitation and housing; and migration.

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– This cover story has been adapted from articles published in The East African

Ghana-US Deal for Economic Cooperation

Ghana and the US have struck a deal to deepen economic cooperation for the mutual benefit of the two countries. It commits both sides to jointly explore business and investment opportunities for the growth of their respective economies. Finance Minister Ken Ofori Atta and the visiting US Secretary of Commerce, Wilbur Ross, signed the agreement in Accra, Ghana.



This paves the way for Ghanaian businessmen and government to interface with American businesses and federal agencies for economic prosperity. Kojo Oppong Nkrumah, Deputy Information Minister, conveyed that the agreement covered the areas of agriculture industry, infrastructural and energy.

(GNA, 06.07.18)

Industrialising Zambia by 2030

Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry Christopher Yaluma of Zambia stated that the Zambian government is working hard to ensure that the country is industrialised by 2030. Yaluma assured would be investors that government will continue creating an enabling environment that supports thriving of the industrial sector.

Yaluma mentioned Zambia is looking for investors who can work with government closely in industrialising the country. He said that for a long time, the country has been depending on copper mining, hence, the need to diversify.

(LT, 12.09.18)

Power Deficit in Zambia

Zambian President Edgar Lungu said he is doubtful that the country will not experience further power deficit resulting in load shedding this year and beyond. As a result of massive investment from both the public and private that are participating in the energy sector, there will be no load shedding in the country.

Lungu disclosed that the country will produce over 3,700 of electricity by 2021 from the current of 2,800 MW of electricity. Opening the third session of the 12th National Assembly in Lusaka, President Lungu assured that there will be rationing of electricity in the country.

(LT, 14.09.18)

High Taxes Barrier to Growth

East African businesses are feeling the heat of increased taxes as governments look for easier ways of raising money to finance persistent budget shortfalls and fund infrastructure projects. But economists argue that the new path taken by the governments to balance their books is dangerous as it would stifle economic activities, lead to job losses, and make the region uncompetitive in terms of attracting both local and foreign investments.

Global rating agency Moody's said reliance on a 'spontaneous' increase in revenues from taxes poses a great risk to the implementation of regional budgets and the countries are likely to struggle to narrow their fiscal deficits.

(TEA, 14.09.18)

Zambia's Economic Growth Drops

Zambia's economic growth slumped to 2.6 percent in the first quarter of this year, down from 3.2

percent during the corresponding period last year, mainly driven by negative growth rates in the agriculture and transport sectors, Central Statistical Office (CSO) data reveals.

Although CSO data points out that the country's gross domestic product (GDP) hit an estimated K61.1bn in the first quarter of this year, compared to K54.4bn during the corresponding period in 2017, year-on-year growth rates have slumped to 2.6 percent, compared to 3.2 percent over the corresponding period.

(LT, 03.07.18)

Kenya to Diversify Debt Portfolio

Ministry of Treasury, Kenya is considering luring fund managers and insurance firms via private bond placements. Kenya's Treasury has held a meeting with fund managers and insurers, sending its strongest signal that it is considering offering debt through private placement.

This would diversify the country's debt portfolio and reduce banks' dependence on government businesses, a fresh move to force local lenders back to the mass market. As at the end of June 2018, banking institutions held more than 55 percent of the US\$23.7bn local debt, followed by pension funds at 27.1 percent, insurance firms at US\$6.3 percent.

(TEA, 13.07.18)

Dip in Copper Price

The intensified trade war between US and China has resulted in the price of copper (Cu) to dip for a second session by 0.1 percentage point to trade at about US\$5,900 a tonne. Copper, which is Zambia's major source of foreign exchange, has seen a gradual downward trend in its price on the global market in the past few months from its high of over US\$7,100 per tonne in February 2018.

Recently, the US and China has been involved in a 'super power' trade war after President Trump threatened to impose tariffs of US\$34bn worth of Chinese products, a fight that is likely to hurt other economies across the world.

(DM, 12.09.18)

Internet Call Expensive

The Zambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ZACCI) stated the private sector remained supportive of full liberalisation of the telecommunications sector, but it should not be driven by high costs.

ZACCI President Michael Nyirenda said the chamber had reservations on the decision made by the Zambian Government to introduce a 30 Ngwee daily charge on Internet phone calls because it added to the high costs of doing business, which was already high. Cabinet approved the issuance of a Statutory Instrument to facilitate the introduction of a 30 Ngwee daily tariff to charge through mobile phone operators and Internet providers. *(ToZ, 20.08.18)*

Food Import Surge

Kenya's food imports crossed the Sh100bn mark in the six months through June 2018 for the first time, official statistics show, underscoring the country's growing reliance on foreign markets despite improved weather. Food and beverages order bill from abroad stood at Sh108.51bn in the January-June period, a 12.55 percent rise over Sh96.41bn in the same period last year, data collated by the Bureau of Statistics indicate.

Kenya's dependence on foreign markets to feed her citizens has nearly doubled in the review period compared with Sh55.80bn at the same time in 2015 and is more than two times the Sh33.66bn in 2010. *(BD, 10.08.18)*

Kenya – US Trade Ties

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta met US President Donald Trump at the White House in Washington DC and invited the US to increase its trade and investments in Africa. During a bilateral meeting held, the two Presidents also agreed to bolster the Kenya-US partnership in peace and

security, especially in the Horn of Africa region.

We have had strong relations that stretch back – all the way back to our own independence. And we are here to cement that partnership. We are here to strengthen the support we have received as a country, especially with regards to our security and defence cooperation. *(SD, 28.08.18)*

ICC's Forum on Trade Facilitation

A business forum aimed at engendering trust between public and private sector actors as important stakeholders with significant in trade facilitation has been held in Accra, Ghana.

Jointly organised by the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation (GATF) and International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Ghana in collaboration with the Ministry of Trade and Industry the forum was targeted at unearthing measures that could help improve trade facilitation in the country. On February 22, 2017, the first multilateral TFA was entered after the World Trade Organisation (WTO) obtained the needed two-thirds acceptance for the agreement from its 164 members. *(B&FT, 23.08.18)*

UK-African Trade Deals

British Prime Minister Theresa May's visit to Kenya – the first time a UK leader has visited in 30 years – could not come at a more difficult

time for the leader of the Conservative Party.

Officially, the delegation of UK Ministers, business people and officials are arriving, with focus on a renewed partnership between the UK and Africa, which will seek to maximise shared opportunities and tackle common challenges.

It also signal another attempt to reassure the British public that the UK is capable of 'going it alone' after Brexit and forging new trade deals with Commonwealth partners. *(BD, 29.08.18)*

Sugar Import Safeguard

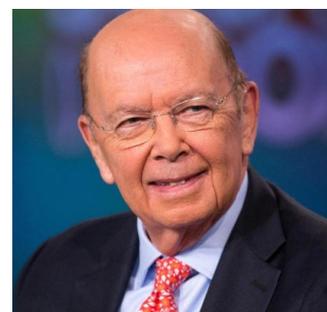
A key Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) committee has recommended that Kenya be granted a two-year extension to limit on sugar imports from the trade bloc's Member States, offering relief to local millers that feared competition from cheap producers.

The COMESA Council of Ministers agreed to Kenya's application for more time before fully opening up its market to imports after more than a decade of being allowed to protect local sugar farmers. However, unlike previous extensions, COMESA has formed a joint committee that will see the implementation of safeguards and report back to the business bloc on the progress. *(BD, 16.07.18)*

Ghana-US\$ 1.6bn Trade

Wilbur Louis Ross, the US Secretary of Commerce, has said trade between the US and Ghana has increased from US\$1.2bn in 2016 to US\$1.6bn last year, and expressed optimism that it will increase in the ensuing years. He assured that the US will support Ghana to move from a natural resource extraction economy to that of value addition, vertically, integrated, manufacturing and service-based industry.

He lauded government's flagship initiatives including the 'One District One Factory' programme noting that many American companies are ready to support the initiative. Ross applauded Ghana's strong growth rate last year, adding that it provides a suitable business climate for foreign investors that makes Ghana a welcoming place for investment. *(GNA, 09.07.18)*



Trade Enabling Infrastructure

China Development Bank (CDB) in Changsha, China, signed an agreement providing a US\$500mn facility to the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) to enable the African trade finance bank to support trade enabling infrastructure projects across the continent.

The facility will also be used to support Afreximbank's trade finance intermediaries to provide medium to long term financing for sub-projects in various sectors, including energy, telecommunication, transportation, agriculture, medical sector, industrial park or any related trade finance transactions. "This facility strengthens our capacity to realise our mandate and makes it possible for Afreximbank and CDB to achieve important development outcomes in Africa", said Afreximbank President Oramah. *(B&FT, 18.09.18)*

Kenya-Tanzania Standoff

Business and transport was paralysed at Namanga border town as Kenyans protested mistreatment by Tanzanian authorities after several milk traders were arrested and placed in custody at Tanzania. Traders on both sides of the border incurred big losses at the key entry and exit point for goods as heavy police presence did little to return normalcy.

The busy Namanga road was barricaded, blocking hundreds Lorries ferrying goods from Tanzania

to Nairobi. About 100 trailers ferry goods into Kenya daily, underlining long-running trade disputes between the two States that has seen Tanzania recently restrict entry of Kenya-made goods to its market like confectionery, juice and ice cream. *(BD, 08.08.18)*

Curtailling Illegal Fuel Dumping

Illegal fuel dumping and adulteration in Zambia is costing government an estimated US US\$81mn in lost revenues per annum, according to the Energy Regulation Board (ERB). ERB Executive Director Langiwe Lungu stated that through the ongoing Fuel Marking programme, the regulator has established that there has been rampant illegal fuel dumping and adulteration in the country, which when curtailed, could translate to about US\$81mn in revenue to government per annum.

"Through the ongoing Fuel Marking programme, the ERB has established that there has been rampant illegal fuel dumping and/or adulteration in Zambia, which when curtailed, could translate to about US\$81mn in revenue to government per annum", Lungu stated recently.

(News Diggers, 28.09.18)

Nairobi-Dar Spot Ends

Kenyan officials have announced the end of the long-running trade dispute with Tanzania following a bilateral meeting between the two states in Dar es Salaam. The move

will see Kenya-made goods, such as textiles, which had been denied preferential access, get to the Tanzanian market with much ease.

Kenyan Trade PS Chris Kiptoo held talks with his Tanzanian counterpart Elisante ole Gabriel to resolve the standoff. "The two partner states have called for effective and timely implementation of agreements made during bilateral meetings, with a view to ease the flow of goods and services", reads a joint communique.

(BD, 15.07.18)

Raising China-Zambia Trade Ties

The Republic of China says it will continue to foster trade relations with Zambia, by laying a good foundation for economic growth for the benefit of the two people. Chinese Commerce Investigator of Laws and Regulations who is also in charge of International Business and Trade Relations Li Peng said China and Zambia have strong relations alongside cementing bilateral ties, especially in the area of education.

Li disclosed this recently in Changsha city, Hunan Province during the national ethnic policy and management seminar which was held from August 29 to September 18, 2018. *(LT, 23.09.18)*

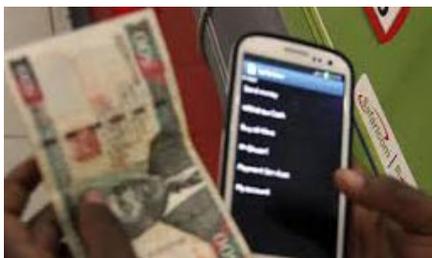
Rampant Smuggling at Borders

The lack of scanners and sniffer dogs at the Busia border is hindering the war against smuggling. According to the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA), this has resulted in the Busia One Stop Border Post being named among the most notorious for attracting unscrupulous traders who bring in contraband sugar.

KRA Western Regional Coordinator John Gathatwa said monitoring the porous border also proved a major challenge in the fight to stop influx of uncustomed goods from Uganda. He said the agency had reached an agreement with the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) and other State bodies to conduct patrols along the border to tackle the smuggling menace. *(SD, 09.08.18)*

UN Push for Mobile Payment

UN agency and the African Union (AU) are pushing for cross-border mobile money payments to boost electronic trade on the continent. The AU has been piloting the use of a common payment system in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region and is scheduled to roll out the same across Africa.



The move is intended to facilitate inter-connectivity between registered mobile money account owners across the continent, totalling 277 million. These represent 140 mobile money schemes across 39 countries. The roll-out of the common payment system will

coincide with the commencement of trade under the CFTA expected later in 2018. *(BD, 24.07.18)*

Peru to be ECOWAS Observer

Peru hopes to become an observer State of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the future, the Head of Mission of Peru to Ghana, Madam Patricia Ruez Portocarrero has announced. She said Peru has participated in various integrated processes, such as the African Union (AU) and the South America Africa cooperation Forum.

The Ambassador noted that currently, Peru held President of the Andean Community, which includes Bolivia, Columbia and Ecuador. The country is also assuming the Presidency of the Pacific Alliance for a period of one year ending July 2019. The Ambassador made the announcement when she addressed a reception at the embassy's residency in Accra to mark the 197th Anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Peru. *(DG, 27.07.18)*

New Dry Port at TAZARA

The Dar-es-Salaam Corridor Group (DCG) and the Tanzania-Zambia Railway Authority (TAZARA) have entered into a partnership agreement to develop a dry port at the terminal end of TAZARA in Kapiri Mposhi.

In a statement, TAZARA head of public relations Conrad Simuchile stated that the DCG will be expected to begin constructing the dry port on a Build-Lease-Transfer (BLT) Public-private-Partnership (PPP) model. He stated that DCG will further be required to take hold of the four-hectare piece of land, construct the dry port, operate (lease) it for 25 years and, thereafter, transfer all the immovable assets to TAZARA.

(www.news.diggers.com, 26.09.18)

Import Exemptions Abused

It has been learnt that some traders are abusing the import exemptions granted them under the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET) programme by re-bagging imports from Asia and tendering them in as West African produce to be able to escape payment of duties.

ECOWAS sub-regional Aviation Policy

The ECOWAS is in consultation with government of Member States to develop a sub-regional policy on taxes in a bid to bring down the high aviation taxes that stakeholders say is hampering the growth of the sector in the region.

The consultation follows a study commissioned by ECOWAS and undertaken by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) on charges taxes and fees in aviation in the sub-region and will lead to the adoption of a common policy on aviation charges and fees. *(Modern Ghana, 20.07.18)*



The traders usually importers of finished goods are taking advantage of the lousy implementation of the CET to flood the market with repacked goods imported from Asia under the guise of manufacturing them in an ECOWAS Member State. The move allows the importers to unduly enjoy some tax exemptions under the CET. *(DG, 17.05.18)*

Double Taxation in EAC

Tanzania and Burundi missed the July 18, 2018 deadline set by the region's heads of state to ratify the East African Community (EAC's) Multilateral Double Taxation Agreement. Regional businesses said the delay in implementing the agreement signed eight years ago is denying the region investments. Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda have ratified the agreement.

Peter Mathuki, East Africa Business Council ambassador to the EAC, said harmonising fiscal policies to remove tax distortions within the region is integral to achieving the EAC Treaty's objectives of a Single Market and ensuring free movement of goods, services and labour. Fiscal harmonisation is a prerequisite to a successful and functioning single market. *(TEA, 18.08.18)*

ECOWAS Single Currency

The ECOWAS central bank governors and monetary policy members of West African countries discussed the readiness of ECOWAS

member countries to meet the deadline for introducing single currency by 2020.

Single currency discussion is part of the issues to be addressed at the 2018 Mid-Year Statutory Meetings of West African Monetary Agency (WAMA), West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) and West African Institute of Financial and Economic Management (WAIFEM) to be hosted by Nigeria soon. The meeting will review the progress made in the implementation of the ECOWAS single currency roadmap, and implementation ECOWAS Monetary Cooperation Programme (EMCP) initiatives. *(allAfrica, 05.09.18)*

FOCAC Summit for China-SADC

The Executive Secretary of the SADC Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax met with Chinese Ambassador to Botswana and Special Representative to SADC, Dr Zhao Yanbo in Gaborone, Botswana on August 06, 2018.

The meeting was a follow-up to the one previously held on May 18, 2018, in which the two parties discussed matters of mutual interest, with particular emphasis on the upcoming Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Summit, scheduled for September 2018 in Beijing, China. Dr Tax commended China for its continued commitment to strengthen the cooperation with the SADC Secretariat and, bi-laterally with SADC Member States.

(https://www.sadc.int/08.08.18)

Climate Change Action Plan

Sporadic weather changes being experienced in Kenya are the target of an ambitious Sh1.8tn programme set to be rolled out under the Ministry of Environment. The Kenyan government is preparing to unveil the five-year ambitious climate change action plan which will seek to restore water catchment areas, boost afforestation and ensure clean environment.



It follows concerns that climate change will negatively impact the country's future development and achievement of the goals of Kenya Vision 2030 – the long-term development blueprint – and the government's Big Four Agenda. It could frustrate the focus on ensuring food and nutritional security, affordable and decent housing, increased manufacturing and affordable healthcare. *(DN, 04.09.18)*

Selling Drugs Improperly

More than half of the drugs prescribed, dispensed or sold to patients around the world are done improperly, the President of the Pharmaceutical society of Ghana (PSGH), Benjamin Kwame Botwe, stated.

Quoting the World Health Organisation (WHO), he said “globally, more than 50 percent of all medicines are prescribed, dispensed or sold inappropriately. As a result, which 50 percent of patients fails to take them correctly”. Making the assertion to commemorate World Pharmacists Day, Botwe said the grim reality showed that more pharmacists were needed for the effective use of medicines.

(DG, 26.09.18)

Inflated Electricity Bills

The pain of increased electricity costs started after Kenya Power began using the newly announced tariffs for its August billings. Thousands of pre-paid power consumers have complained that they are now getting fewer units compared to what they got for similar amounts in July 2018 despite the new billing structure having removed the monthly fixed charge of Sh150.

The inflation of bills mainly affected those buying between 11 and 200 units – the majority of middle class users. Manufacturers also complained of higher billings with the

new tariffs. Such an increase is expected to hurt the competitiveness of Kenya-made products in the regional and global markets.

(BD, 03.08.18)

Visit for Shared Prosperity

Minister of State for Africa Harriett Baldwin concludes a four-day visit focussed on shared prosperity, sustainable development, tackling climate change and the illegal wildlife trade. Minister for Africa Harriett Baldwin travelled to Commonwealth countries Zambia and Malawi between July 25-28, to strengthen relations, and focus on shared prosperity, sustainable development, and joint efforts to tackle climate change and the illegal wildlife trade.

In Zambia, Minister Baldwin and Minister Matthew Nkhuwa signed the Energy Africa Compact, a partnership between the UK and Zambian governments and the private sector to support the growth of the sustainable energy sector. *(GOV UK, 28.07.18)*

Consumers to Pay more Taxes

Consumers are expected to pay more for products and services following the conversion of the Ghana Education Trust (GET) Fund and National Health Insurance component of the full value added tax VAT rate of 17.5 percent into levy.

Finance Minister of Ghana Ken Ofori Atta in the mid-year budget review presented to Parliament

proposed the conversion of the National Health Insurance value added tax of 2.5 percent to a straight levy of 25 percent and conversion of the GET Fund VAT rate of 2.5 percent to a straight levy of 25 percent. *(DG, 20.07.18)*

Off-grid Solar for Home

Fenix International and MTN, have installed off-grid solar systems on 30,000 homes, providing electricity for more than 150,000 people, over the course of nine months. The people in these households in rural areas of Zambia have mostly been in poverty. According to Zambia's Central Statistical Office, in the report 2015 Living Conditions Monitoring Survey, most rural households have incomes of about US\$810 per month. That is about US\$5.40 per person per day.

Nearly all the rural people have had no electricity until now. Lighting has been largely from kerosene lamps, which are very expensive to operate and which foul household air. People who have had cellphones have had to charge them outside the home, and very few other electric products have been in use. *(Clean Technica, 14.09.18)*

Rainfall Patterns – Power Threat

Hydropower dams planned for eastern and Southern Africa could put electricity supply at risk for vast regions because they rely on the same rainfall patterns for electricity generation. This significant dependence of hydropower generation on areas with the same rainfall pattern means that within eastern and southern Africa the majority of hydropower generation will be vulnerable to the same dry periods and droughts, which could lead to electricity shortages and power scarcity.

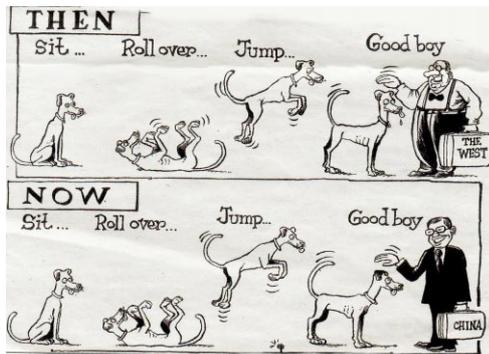
This could pose a significant challenge for electricity security as hydropower is heavily relied upon in Africa. For example, hydropower accounts for over 90 percent of national electricity generation in Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia and Zambia.

(Climate Change News, 20.09.18)

Indebtedness to China Raises Questions about Kenya's Sovereignty

Francis Karugu*

The tired cliché states that history repeats itself. At the tail-end of the 19th Century, an unholy assemblage known as the Berlin Conference was called by Otto Von Bismarck to decide how Africa would be divided among European powers. Soon after, over 90 percent of Africa was occupied by Europeans who claimed ownership of lands and natural resources.



Some of these Europeans claimed that they had entered into sale and lease agreements with local chiefs. Perhaps the dubious nature of these agreements is best illustrated

by the case of John Boyes, whose evidence before the Carter Land Commission of 1932 claimed ownership of Mount Kenya. He claimed that Chief Wang'ombe Waihora, as leader of the Kikuyu who lived next to the snow-capped mountain, had sold it to him.

Even though the Commission dismissed this claim, Boyes was not any different from the pedigree settlers like Hugh Cholmondeley, The Third Baron Delamere and Colonel Ewart Grogan. The conspiracy today, however, is between the Chinese while the role of 'local chiefs' has been taken by top political leadership whose raw capitalist wealth accumulation is music to the Chinese expansionist advances in Kenya.

Recently, Senator Mutula Kilonzo Junior warned fellow senators that Kenya has become indebted to China in return for sub-standard projects whose socio-economic viability cannot be verified. To drive the point home, Senator Mutula mentioned the case of Sri Lanka, which has now ceded its most lucrative port to China. Struggling to pay its debt to Chinese firms, Sri Lanka formally handed over the strategic port of Hambantota to China on a 99-year lease in a deal that analysts have said threatens the country's sovereignty.

Similarly like Kenya, Sri Lanka took the bait when its politicians allowed expensive loans and commitments, while dumping money into white elephant projects. This has now come to haunt them as the projects for which they borrowed cannot now finance their debt obligations. Much of that lending has come from China during the Kenyatta-Ruto administration. The commercial viability of these Chinese-funded project, is highly doubtful and like in Sri Lanka, it is just a matter of time before China comes to collect.

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 – This has been abridged from an article published in Standard Digital on July 25, 2018

Low-Cost Schools Are Transforming Africa

Tom Vander Ark*

Most of the children in Nairobi, Kenya attended private schools. As professor, James Tooley shared in his book, *The Beautiful Tree*, edupreneurs in the slums of Africa and Asia are addressing the problem of access to educational quality by developing low-cost private schools. The most important group working in low-cost private schools is Bridge International Academies led by Jay Kimmelman. After selling an assessment system to a publisher 15 years ago he began investigating developing world education in communities where parents are earning less than US\$2 per day.

With a shared vision to create a high-quality, affordable education system, Kimmelman and cofounder Shannon May launched Bridge in 2007 and opened a school in Nairobi, Kenya in 2009 and began to engineer out cost and design in quality. A mobile payment system made the tuition of about US\$5 per month, which was easier to pay. By the end of 2010, they had 1,300 students and a well-developed school development system. The model is based on well-supported teachers, lessons based on the curriculum of the countries served, and a technology platform enabling data-driven personalised instruction.

Further, in 2016, the government of Liberia created a partnership through which Bridge was allocated 25 schools to manage. In 2017, they were awarded another 43 schools. The Learning in Liberia report revealed impressive learning gains for Bridge pupils after hardly four months. An evaluation of the partnership schools after the first year showed learning gains of 100 percent. Bridge infrastructure being light and inexpensive, it can be used in temporary settings including refugee camps.

In the decade since Professor Tooley introduced the concept of low-cost private schools to the West, progress made by Bridge International suggests a global shift towards leveraging the private sector as an important partner in the delivery of UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The development includes a shift to a focus on learning rather than access. With a huge amount of fundraising for the Liberia programme and new investment from organisations like the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority, Bridge aspires to be serving 10 million children by 2025.

* Advocate for Innovations in Learning & CEO of Getting Smart
 This has been adapted from an article published in Forbes on August 06, 2018

Targeting Inequalities in the Health Sector through Fiscal Policy

Targeting Inequalities in the Health Sector through Fiscal Policy Health is increasingly recognised as a key aspect of human and economic development globally and countries are increasing investment in actions and reforms to improve health outcomes and accelerate progress towards meeting the health Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Unfortunately, Ghana's health sector continues to face reoccurring challenges despite its adequate budgetary allocation to the sector. Ghana's healthcare system needs to be targeted towards the marginalised populations and less developed communities, as they continue to face challenges in access, cost and infrastructure in healthcare facilities. Hence, to ensure sound health and universal health coverage, the government of Ghana should use fiscal policies targeted at these challenges. For those in rural communities and lack National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) coverage, spending on healthcare remains a major challenge. Catastrophic healthcare spending, or critical spending on healthcare, pushes a household further into poverty, which is evident in poor households. The main objective of this paper is to provide an insight into the current state of investment in health sector in Ghana in a manner that will support evidence-based policymaking.

This can be accessed at: http://www.cuts-international.org/ARC/Accra/pdf/BriefingPaper_Targeting_Inequalities_in_the_Health_Sector_through_Fiscal_Policy.pdf



ReguLetter

The July-September 2018 issue of ReguLetter carries cover story entitled, 'Don't Strangle Indian E-Commerce' which states that E-commerce in India is facing huge buoyancy, both in terms of the market and policy space. In terms of the market, the majority investment in Flipkart by US retail giant Walmart, and a substantial proposed investment by Alibaba in Reliance Retail recently made news. Some pundits say that some of these moves might result in market distortions. Apparently, vested interests are muddying the waters.

A Special Feature by Tom Struble opines that the European Union's attack on Google is the latest salvo in an escalating war. Another article by Lawrence H Summers states that a backlash against the current paradigm of global integration is reshaping economic policy in a way that may plague us for years.

This newsletter can be accessed at: www.cuts-ccier.org/reguletter.htm

Our Twitter Handle (@cutsafrica)



@cutsafrica September 24: Is #ChinaInAfrica #DebtDiplomacy or #UnconditionalSupport? Is #EuropeInAfrica #Securocracy or #MarshallPlan for #Africa? #Aid or #Trade? Is this New #ScrambleForAfrica?

@cutsafrica September 21: #Ghana is ranked fastest growing Economy of #Africa by #WorldBank. Work is required to ensure that the #growth is #sustainable and #equal for everyone in the society #LeaveNoOneBehind

@cuts_nairobi September 11: Today is a day to celebrate the economic, social and political progress achieved by countries in the south. Happy United Nations Day for South - South cooperation!

@cutsafrica September 4: #Africa Visits by #Merkel and #May Opportunities or new #ScrambleForAfrica

@cuts_nairobi August 17: #Kenya's six National Reference Group Meeting, #NRG6, is here! Illuminating discussions around #trade, #agroprocessing, #climatechange & #PrivateSector development within East Africa. Looking forward to the outcomes!

@cuts_accra August 14: Banks in #Ghana in frantic #merger talks to meet the #December deadline directive by BoG to increase their capital base to a minimum of GH¢400m. #Mergers will present them with a formidable front to provide better services

@cutsafrica July 24: If African governments are serious about diversifying their economies and providing higher-paying manufacturing jobs to their people, chocolate production is an obvious industry to pursue.

@cuts_accra July 13: Mid-year #budget review: Tax net needs widening, not deepening to ensure that all #Ghanaians are roped into the tax net to increase #revenue and #development in #ghana

Sources

BD: Business Daily, B&FT: Business & Financial Times, CNR: City Newsroom, DG: Daily Graphic, DN: Daily Nation, DM: Daily Mail, GB: Graphic Business, GNA: Ghana News Agency, LT: Lusaka Times, SD: Standard Digital, TEA: The East African, ToZ: Times of Zambia

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