

## NEWS BRIEFS

### 28 March 2016

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*The daily News Briefs constitute a compilation of current media coverage of the Ethiopian, East African/Horn of Africa regional or global humanitarian situation. They are not a product originally produced by OCHA Ethiopia and, therefore, do not necessarily reflect the UNOCHA-Ethiopia position on any given issue. The views expressed herein are attributable only to the original source and may not in any circumstance be regarded as stating an official position of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA).*

#### ETHIOPIA

##### **Ethiopia Africa's top investment destination for Turkey: official (Sudan Tribune)**

<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article58451>

March 27, 2016 (ADDIS ABABA) –The Turkish ambassador to Ethiopia had disclosed that Ethiopia remains the biggest recipient of Turkish direct investment in Africa.

The newly-appointed Turkish envoy, Fatih Ulusoy, said the horn of Africa's nation had so far attracted \$2.5 billion of the total \$6 billion Turkish direct foreign investments in Africa.

Ethiopia and Turkey also have strong commercial relationship with their trade volume seeing substantial growth every year.

According to the diplomat, Ethiopia is currently Turkey's fourth largest trade partner among African countries.

Last year, the two countries reached an agreement to boost their annual trade volume to half a billion USD after Ethiopia's Prime Minister Haile Mariam Desalegn and Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan discussed bilateral as well as multilateral issues in Addis Ababa.

Both countries also signed a cooperation protocol in the areas of science and technology.

"Flag carriers of the two countries, Ethiopian Airlines and Turkish Airways, fly daily to Istanbul and Addis Ababa thus facilitating their trade relations," Ulusoy told reporters.

The ambassador further said that his government is committed to further consolidate the current economic partnership with Ethiopia and successive dialogues are underway with government of Ethiopia to attract more Turkish investment.

Currently, Turkish investors in Ethiopia are engaged in textile, as well as in construction sectors. The two countries are working together in the energy sector with Turkish companies engaged in installing electric transmission lines and supplying transformers.

Turkey is also supporting Ethiopia's infrastructural development projects including railway.

Last year, Turkey officially announced that it would provide \$300 million loan for the Awash-Woldiya railway project. Many others are also on a process to invest in power generation, food processing and the manufacturing sector.

According to Ethiopian government huge human resources, investor friendly atmosphere, broad market alternatives as well as conducive policy and stable atmosphere are factors that are attracting foreign investors.

*Sudan Tribune* has also learnt that Turkish companies have created more than 33,000 job opportunities in Ethiopia.

There are also activities on going to establish an all Turkish industrial zone in Ethiopia.

The ambassador commended Ethiopia for the role it is playing to ensure peace and security in Somalia and in the volatile east African region at large.

He pledged his country would work together with Ethiopia to ensure peace and stability in the Horn of Africa and to fight the emerging threat of terrorism in the region.

Ulusoy said both Ethiopia and Turkey host a large number of refugees and expressed his government's commitment to cooperate with Ethiopia to improve the condition of the refugees.

Turkish business groups that have invested in Ethiopia have also the desire to support the current drought victims in the country, according to the ambassador.

In terms of diplomatic ties, the ambassador said "Ethiopia and Turkey have enjoyed a long-lasting relation in that Addis Ababa hosted the oldest Turkish embassy in Sub-Saharan Africa".

Ethiopia is Africa's fastest growing economic with an average annual growth of 10.5%.

The country has embarked massive infrastructure projects including power plants that would make a significant stride in terms of its ambitious plan to become a middle income country in 2025.

### **Ethiopia is East Africa's economic fairy tale! (Khaleej Times)**

<http://www.khaleejtimes.com/international/ethiopia-is-east-africas-economic-fairy-tale>

As a global strategist for a Saudi family office with vast interests in East Africa, I am fascinated by Ethiopia. Ethiopia once broke my heart in my college days at Penn. I befriended Amharic refugees who were the sons and daughters of executed nobles from the court of Emperor Haile Selassie, Bob Marley's Rastafari. The Emperor was overthrown in a bloody military coup led by a Marxist-Leninist cabal called the Dergue who launched one of the bloodiest reigns of terror in modern Africa. Haile Selassie was murdered, his court officials gunned down or hanged, hundreds of thousands of poor peasants starved to death in famines. Soviet and Libyan petrodollars turned Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam into Africa's most ruthless Marxist dictator until his regime fell in 1991.

Yet Ethiopia under Meles Zenawi and his successors has evolved into an Abyssinian Tiger, with a decade of 10-12 per cent annual GDP growth. This ancient Coptic Christian empire, literally a "virgin economy", the site of ancient Axum, Lalibela and the medieval fortresses of Gondar, is Africa's fourth largest economy, a nation of 97 million that is a rising power in Est Africa, a magnet for the Gulf's agro-investing elite. Blackstone just invested \$200 million in Afriflora, the world's largest producer of roses. Roses are 11 per cent of exports, dwarfed by coffee, 24 per cent of exports.

It is tragic that 137 years after Thomas Alva Edison invented the light bulb, 600 million Africans have no access to power, that 600,000 people die from cooking fire smoke inhalation each year, that Spain produces more electricity than the entire continent. Ethiopia's \$5 billion Great Renaissance Dam could be the model for Africa's new hydroelectric paradigm, with new projects in wind power, solar and geo-thermals. A nation once enslaved by Mussolini's colonial fascists and Mangistu's Marxists, has now been reborn. Grains of rice, not barrels of oil, will define the Ethiopian-GCC relationship and the Indian Ocean will replace the Atlantic as the focal point of Great Power rivalries. That is why we invest in Djibouti, the Red Sea Dubai.

Ethiopia's "development state" has built the most profitable, highest margin airline in Africa. Ethiopia has 400,000 students enrolled in 32 new universities and the Addis Ababa government spends 22 per cent of the national budget on education. Ethiopia is also the potential food supplier to Saudi Arabia, the strategic rationale behind Saudi billionaire Shaikh Mohammed Al Amoudi's \$200 million 10,000 hectare commercial farm Saudi Star in the Gambella lowlands. Saudi Star could one day produce 140,000 tonnes of rice slashing Addis's rice import bill by \$100 million and exporting rice to the Saudi kingdom across the Red Sea. Industrial agribusiness is the wave of the future in a nation where children starved to death only a generation ago. Now this is a new fairy tale.

Africa utterly bewitched me on my numerous trips - from the marble palaces of Marrakesh to the gold lion's hide savannah of Kenya, from the emerald green rainforests of the Congo to the Gallic charm of Abidjan and the megacity chaos of Lagos in the armpit of West Africa. I grew up on Osibisa, Femi and Paul Simon's Graceland. I dreamt about Joseph Conrad's heart of darkness, Robert Ruark's something of value, Wole Soyinka's country called Biafra, Graham Greene's Liberian journey without maps and Chinua Achebe's Igbo bush folklore as things fall apart. As an international banker, I met a military dictator in Lagos and a kleptocratic petro-billionaire in Luanda and saw the high priests of the oil curse loot the wealth of Angola and Nigeria.

But I also remember an eerie twilight in a slaver's fortress just outside Luanda and wild parties on the rooftop terraces of Lagos hotels with the expat jeunesse dorée. I remember the croaks of the tree frogs and the groans of a dying cheetah. I remember the Angolan wall where Colonel Callan and his white mercenaries were shot and the vastness and timelessness of the Great Rift Valley, the snow capped Atlas or the desert wadis outside Sharm Al Sheikh (listening to a Nancy Ajram concert. Akhas mak Ah!). Africa just seeped into my bloodstream, my nervous system, my soul even when it horrified me and broke my heart, as in Rwanda, Somalia, Algeria and Sierra Leone. Cape to Cairo, the long dead Victorian sahibs dreamt. So do I.

## **Dam figures to revolutionize Ethiopia (The Orange County Register – Opinion)**

<http://www.ocregister.com/articles/egypt-709723-nile-dam.html>

The greatest public works project in Africa will reach a critical stage this year. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, on the Blue Nile, is more than halfway complete. This year, the first diversions of flow of the Blue Nile will begin.

Eventually, the Blue Nile will be stopped sufficiently to fill up the reservoir behind the dam.

This diversion of water, though small this year, has already become a flashpoint in the politics of Africa. If the diversion issue is handled correctly, however, the dam will propel Ethiopia from the ranks of underdeveloped countries through the kind of rural electrification America experienced in the 1920s.

The Nile has two components: the White Nile, which starts in Lake Victoria, bordering Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania, and the Blue Nile, which starts in Ethiopia, winding from Lake Tana through gorges, descending in altitude until it flows into Sudan.

The White Nile meets the Blue Nile in Khartoum, Sudan, from which it proceeds north to the Egyptian border. After entering Egypt, the Nile encounters the Aswan High Dam, creating an expansive reservoir, Lake Nassar. That reservoir permits regulation of the release of water to irrigate farmland alongside the course of the Nile throughout Egypt, ending the annual floods that had overflowed the Nile's banks for thousands of years.

The dam is the realization of the most profound national aspiration of Ethiopia. It was never an international project. The World Bank refused to fund it, because Egypt insists on no diminution of the water it receives from the Nile; and the U.S., Egypt's friend, exercises a veto at the World Bank.

So the Ethiopians taxed themselves, solicited loans from more than half of their population voluntarily tithing every year and obtained help from the Chinese. It is now a symbol of Ethiopia's move into the ranks of the developed world; national pride is running high as its completion nears.

In equal measure, national pride and sensitivity runs high in Egypt. Egypt and Sudan claim 100 percent of the right to the waters of the Nile, based on historic use, and a 1959 treaty co-authored by those countries and Britain, which was purportedly acting on behalf of its soon-to-be former colonies: Uganda, Kenya, and Tanganyika (today's Tanzania). Britain had liberated Ethiopia from Mussolini's Italy in World War II, and stayed in administrative control of major parts of the Ethiopian government for ten years thereafter. Britain's disregard for Ethiopia's interest in declaring that Ethiopia would be prevented from diverting Nile water reflected those lingering colonial attitudes, much resented in Ethiopia.

So, Egypt's resistance to the dam is a mirror to Ethiopia's enthusiasm for the dam. Egypt's position reminds Ethiopians of Britain's colonial disdain. Tensions are made even higher by a worrisome rise in religious tension. Egypt, especially under the short-lived rule of Mohamed Morsi, emphasized that 2/3 of Ethiopians are Christian, in contrast with Muslim Egypt. Egypt's current leader, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, overthrew

Morsi and banned his Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated political party, but the Christian-Muslim contrast is ever present and available for political exploitation.

Traditionally, Sudan has sided with Egypt in regard to anything touching the Nile. The 1959 agreement gave 5/6 of the water to Egypt, 1/6 to Sudan. That was more than Sudan was capable of using at its then level of development. The Ethiopian dam changes Sudan's interests in two important respects. First, unlike Aswan, this dam is upstream from Sudan; meaning it can be used to control the flow of water into Sudan that today overflows the banks of the Blue Nile during the flood time; creating a more steady and reliable flow conducive to greater agricultural production in Sudan. Second, the dam will produce more electricity than Ethiopia can use, with Sudan as the likely purchaser of the excess. Sudan is coming around to the Ethiopian side of the dam issue; and this works strongly against any Egyptian effort to revive the Morsi-era language that the dam is a Christian construct to hurt Muslim nations.

To avoid an international crisis, Egypt also must be brought around. The key is that the dam is for hydropower, not for irrigation, as its location at the lowest elevation in Ethiopia demonstrates. Once its reservoir is filled, therefore, water flow will resume undiminished to Egypt. Gradual filling of the reservoir, and coordination with Egypt's Lake Nasser water releases, can mitigate even this temporary effect on Egypt. Ethiopia should give that assurance in a binding commitment, and a potential crisis can be turned into a blessing for millions.

## REGIONAL

### **Kenya: 38 University Students Injured in Terror Scare (VoA)**

<http://www.voanews.com/content/kenya-38-university-students-injured-in-terror-scare/3254934.html>

NAIROBI, KENYA — A Kenyan police official says 38 university students were injured near Nairobi after they mistook screams from a fellow student for signs of an extremist attack.

This is the third incident in which university students have been injured in a panic following the April 2 extremist attack on Garissa University in which 148 people died, most of them students.

Kiambu County Commander James Mugeru said the stampede occurred Friday following screaming where a student stabbed another.

Mugeru says students jumped out windows from high floors at Kenyatta University.

One person died in December in Strathmore University during a drill to test terrorism responsiveness. Kenya has experienced a wave of attacks from Somali extremist group al-Shabab who have vowed retribution on Kenya for sending troops to Somalia to fight the militants.

### **Security Council Extends Mandate of UN Mission in Somalia (Shabelle Media Network/All Africa – Press Release)**

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201603250562.html>

Stressing the importance of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia to that country's political process, the Security Council today extended the mandate of UNSOM's work until 31 March 2017.

The 15 members of the Council unanimously adopted an extension of UNSOM's work, underscoring the provision of UN good offices to support the Federal Government's peace and reconciliation process, including preparation for an inclusive, free, fair and transparent electoral process in 2016 and universal elections by 2020.

Last month, UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman and Secretary-General's Special Representative in Somalia Michael Keating, met with President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and the speaker of the Federal Parliament Mohamed Sheikh Osman Jawari in the Somali capital of Mogadishu. Mr. Feltman reiterated the UN's support to the Somali people for agreeing on an electoral process for this year.

In its resolution, the Council encourages UNSOM to enhance its interaction with Somali civil society, including women, youth, business and religious leaders to ensure that different points of view are incorporated in the political process.

UNSOM is also asked to conduct a review of the UN presence in Somalia after the elections, to ensure that the UN is properly configured to support the next phase of state-building in the Horn of Africa nation and to present options and recommendations to the Council by the end of January 2017.

Included in today's resolution is strong condemnation of recent terrorist attacks by the group Al-Shabaab, and support for a comprehensive approach to reduce the group's threat in accordance with international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law.

The Council also paid tribute to the bravery and sacrifices made by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali National Army personnel fighting against Al-Shabaab.

### **Hospitals Targeted Across South Sudan (Al Jazeera/All Africa)**

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201603270244.html>

The aid worker could only watch as hundreds of survivors of an attack on the Malakal Protection of Civilians (PoC) site in South Sudan frantically looted the only surgical facility for hundreds of miles.

The 48,000 residents of the UN camp's sea of metal shelters had sought protection from the country's civil war there. But on the morning of February 18, the war caught up with them.

At least 25 people were killed and around half the shelters destroyed in an act Ban Ki-moon, the UN secretary general, said could constitute a war crime.

The following day, as the thousands who had fled returned, they began to scavenge through the rubble for anything that could be of use. Metal pots and plastic jugs that could transport water became as valuable as money.

The medical clinic run by the International Medical Corps (IMC) - a simple tent with metal sides - seemed to hold the greatest promise. It offered basic surgeries but was equipped with valuable medical equipment.

Children sat in the shade, rummaging through piles of now meaningless paperwork for any valuables. Women collected scraps of wood in the rubble. A small boy marauded around the site with a machete, aimlessly hacking away at empty boxes.

"No surgeries for you!" the aid worker shouted over and over at nobody in particular.

About 100 metres away, a clinic run by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) was still smouldering from the fire that had swept through the camp the day before. This was a primary healthcare centre with a maternity ward, family planning centre and a programme focused on preventing mother-to-child HIV transmission. When NGO workers toured the site, they said it appeared deliberately torched - the surrounding buildings were relatively untouched by the flames.

Most of the expensive equipment here was also gone - lost to the fire.

A disturbing trend

According to a report by Human Rights Watch, medical facilities in South Sudan are at long-term risk of destruction, but in recent months they have come under increased attack.

Less than a week after the destruction of the health facilities in Malakal, a clinic run by Doctors Without Borders (MSF) in Pibor, about 250 miles from Malakal - the only healthcare provider in the region, according to the organisation - was looted.

"Currently, it's as pervasive as it's ever been in terms of the lack of respect for medical functions [worldwide]," said Leonard Rubinstein, the director of the programme on Human Rights, Health and Conflict at Johns Hopkins University in the US.

"The reasons vary from country to country, but it's a disturbing trend."

And South Sudan has become one of the most dangerous places for medical facilities.

A casualty of war

A few miles from the rubble of the two healthcare clinics in the Malakal PoC lies the Malakal Teaching Hospital. It was once the primary hospital in South Sudan's second-largest city, but when fighting engulfed Malakal in 2014, it became the scene of a massacre.

One man, who did not give his name, sat in the shade of the hospital entrance, as if to guard the nothingness behind him.

He remembered what had taken place there. When the Nuer "White Army" attacked, around 3,000 people took shelter in the hospital.

"The population was settled [in the hospital], and when the ambush came, all of them were massacred. I can't tell how many were here," he said through a translator.

According to a recent UN report, the attackers "went round the hospital demanding money and valuables, and beat or shot those who didn't have anything to give".

"They targeted specifically Dinka and Shilluk persons and allowed Nuer persons to leave the hospital," the report continued.

Investigators found 15 bodies, but witnesses said that many had been transported to the Nile River, a few hundred metres away.

The hospital's equipment is now long gone.

The man who sat outside gave a tour of the hospital, winding through the piles of rubbish and pointing to the bullet holes in the wall where he said people were shot.

"Medical structures are at risk when insecurity erupts," said Tim Phillip Ros, the healthcare-in-danger project manager at the International Committee of the Red Cross.

To stop the destruction of medical facilities, he believes hospitals must be thought of as a communal asset and not just as another building.

"If you damage a healthcare system, you are not just damaging your perceived enemy, you are damaging your entire community for years and years to come. It's not something which is easily set right," he said.

After war, rebuilding a hospital

In Leer, a major town on the southern tip of Unity State, the population and its medical infrastructure have been devastated by the conflict which has swept through this town.

On a recent Thursday morning, a line of women in colourful dresses waited patiently outside the gates of a recently opened MSF clinic, carrying children, many of whose eyes were caked closed with a white substance. A nurse who was new to the country said she had never encountered it before but it seemed to cause the eye to become infected.

The absence of medical organisations since the autumn meant that existing health conditions had worsened without care.

When asked what the most urgent medical problem facing the population was, one nurse responded: "Malnutrition, malnutrition, malnutrition."

Building or rebuilding a clinic such as this one is a massive task. Everything must be flown in from Juba, and like most newly constructed facilities in wartorn areas, this one doesn't have electricity.

"We have been on the ground for a few weeks, so we are still looking into options in a very basic way and [having to] concentrate to serve the most immediate needs," said Frauke Ossig, MSF's emergency coordinator in Leer. "Its not like we are arriving at a place with a fully functioning hospital and we can start the services [the locals need]."

One of the biggest challenges for the clinic is finding qualified staff as many local doctors and nurses have themselves been displaced.

"We had long-term MSF staff in our project that for sure have been displaced or fled because of the conflict. It's more difficult to find our staff again, and to see if they are still available to work with us," said Ossig.

Little hope for the future

Around 50 percent of the country's medical facilities have been destroyed, according to estimates by the South Sudanese ministry of health, and those that are open are running at a lower capacity.

Dr Thuou Loi Cingoth, the director general of the ministry of health, said the government has a three-step plan to restore access to medical care.

The first is to rebuild and provide infrastructure - buildings, electricity and equipment. Cingoth said the government was working on this but didn't specify how.

"Number two, supplies - drugs. We are doing that," Cingoth said. "South Sudan is the only country in the region where drugs are provided free of charge," he added, sitting below a banner in his office featuring motivational quotations by intellectuals such as Ayn Rand.

In fact, the free drugs are provided by donor countries or humanitarian organisations.

The third point in the government's plan is to make sure that the country has enough doctors and support staff.

Many medical personnel have fled the civil war, leaving the country with a shortage.

### **S. Sudanese official admits lack of democracy in SPLM (Sudan Tribune)**

<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article58441>

March 27, 2016 (JUBA) - A senior member of South Sudan's ruling party (SPLM) has unexpectedly admitted lack of democracy in the entity, attributing it to lack cohesive vision.

Acuil Malith Banggol, an adviser for Syndicated and Popular Organisations at the national secretariat of the SPLM said the problems with his party has been grappling to address were lack of democratisation in the internal structures of the organisation.

"The core of the problem is lack of democratization of the internal structures of the party. It did not democratize its exercise of power. SPLM had failed to democratize itself. It needs comprehensive reform and democratic values. Inference is that the constitutional documents of the SPLM were not democratic enough nor did they put in place internal democratic structures. As elections observer I can well testify to that", Banggol wrote in an opinion article entitled seen by *Sudan Tribune*.

The official specifically cited the open competition seen from the ongoing electoral campaigns within the republican party and democrats in the united states as washing dirty linen in public to select the best candidate as an example of flourishing democracy.

"Washing dirty linen in public – A democratic attitude within the party and in the society encourages debate as a practical derivative of the human right to freedom of expression, freedom of association, no matter how hurtful for the party members. As much as the world disdains the language of Trump, his party has not shied from opening the debate and raising some painful struggles within the party", he wrote.

Its still unclear why the official personally circulated a view largely critical of the SPLM.

Analysts are, however, keen to attribute the cause to the emerging realities and events depicting SPLM as at risk of losing social and political capital it acquired during the war as a liberation movement, after becoming a ruling party following failing to deliver on its core objectives and vision as well as mission for which it waged the war.

Some observers see it as a sign of frustrations and protest aimed at drawing the attention of appointing leadership to lack of recognition of his skills and expertise with an appropriate assignment in strategic and lucrative position for more than a decade.

#### KIIR WARNS OF FURTHER SPLIT

In December last year, South Sudan president Salva Kiir warned of further inevitable split of his faction of the ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), saying there are those "behaving like dogs" who want to take over leadership from him in Juba.

The president who has armed himself with sweeping powers, both at the party level and in the government to appoint and dismiss officials at will, accused unnamed officials in his party and government of causing further divisions and creating factions using "dirty tactics" to cause havoc and to tarnish the image of others.

"There are people who have refused to learn, they don't listen and they have also refused to leave the SPLM. They behave like dogs that even if you beat them, they go and come back and look at you with the same eyes and attitudes. This is the problem we have been facing in SPLM [since] inception," president Kiir was quoted saying.

"And so, we have a problem at the moment that threatens the survival of the SPLM itself," he added.

He accused some officials of stoking division while at the same time positioning themselves to eventually succeed him.

The former rebel commander, turned politician and became president, claimed there were groups in the party which were openly and secretly manoeuvring to secure influential positions in the SPLM.

It was not clear which group he was particularly accusing of allegedly wanting to succeed him since there have been speculations that there are groups comprising members of the Jieng Council of Elders (JCE) and military officers as well as junior party officials

rallying and pushing Paul Malong Awan, army's chief of general staff, to enter the race and succeed president Kiir.

It is speculated that there are currently three different factions, competing and strategizing on how to insert their influence in the party.

### **Tree Regeneration Restoring Hope (IPS/All Africa)**

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201603260018.html>

Nakuru — Maurice Kaduka Lukaro, 54, is a farmer in Oljorai, an area with short grasses and small-scattered bushes in Nakuru county in Kenya's Great Rift Valley. Crop production has declined tremendously in this region. Like the rest of the arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) in the Sub Saharan region, Kenya hosts a population worst hit by the reality of climate change.

Standing between two acacia trees, frequently scratching his white-patched hair, Lukaro is buoyant, however: "some four decades ago, this land used to be green. We used to witness abundant rains. But human activities have continuously caused desertification here," he told IPS.

A village elder in Olosiro recalls the year 2000 when drought caused livestock death and humans suffered from hunger. He says last year while other farmers were facing the brunt of no rains, he had fewer problems as humidity stayed longer on his fields.

Since 2013, Lukaro has practiced Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR), a model in which tree wildlings are protected and stumps coppice-pruned so they rapidly grow or re-grow into trees. As opposed to the conventional wisdom in which trees are believed to compete with crops, FMNR has increased harvests for Lukaro.

He is an active member of Oljorai FMNR group, started with the help of training offered by World Vision Kenya (WV), an international Christian humanitarian aid organisation, which helps vulnerable populations across Kenya.

Lukaro is sure he knows how trees boosted his crops: they reduce the wind that blows away topsoil and provide shade to livestock, who drop manure and urine. Tree-leaf litter form humus, adding organic matter to the earth.

"I incorporate crops and trees in my farm. Before embracing FMNR, three years ago, I used to harvest eight bags of maize and one bag of beans. But last year, my harvest has shot up to 25 bags of maize," says Lukaro, whose fields contrast with the bare, bleak ones of his neighbour, who has neatly burnt the residue from last year's harvest and hacked away all the regenerating stumps, the key to FMNR.

Caroline Njiru, FMNR project manager Kenya, says the initiative began in June 2013 where the organisation trained a couple of farmers as champions by instilling the concept in them and they would later train other farmers.

"We have also been engaging government officials mostly in agriculture and environment where we also train them as champions of the concept because FMNR complements so much government's policy of improving the vegetative forest cover on the farms," told an interview with IPS.

Considering that most Kenyan farmers use fuel wood as a source of energy, with FMNR, the farmers can now get the fuel wood near their homes. Some have turned it into an income generating activity by selling the fuel wood from pruned branches or by burning charcoal.

WV implemented the FMNR initiative in selected ASAL areas, in which tree planting has been challenging their survival rates. But FMNR has proved to be successful because it favours the growth of the indigenous species, which are very resilient in these areas in cases of drought where they still survive.

"Water table in this area has risen. People used to trek for over 10km in search of water to an extent we had resorted to using ones in water pans, which were muddy. But now, analysis done indicates that water table in Olosirwa borehole has risen from the previous 10,000 litres a day to 30,000 litres a day," says Lukaro.

Caroline Njiru, says the initiative has impacted positively on the lives of the beneficiaries, with the biggest transformation being the benefits trickling down to improve the well-being of the child. It has also promoted food and nutrition security.

In neighbouring Tanzania, FMNR is improving lifestyles in families that have reaped the benefits of the FMNR initiative. Ramadhan Saidi, treasurer of Tamatamu Semfuru Bee Keeping group in Singinda North in Tanzania attests to this. Like their Kenyan counterpart, they also relied on one crop, which became a victim to harsh weather on several occasions, driving the families into hunger with malnourished children.

However, Saidi says with FMNR practices, the families now have a balanced diet and a steady income hence translating to better life. Currently, Saidi's Tamutamu Semfuru group is the leading producer of pure and quality honey in Tanzania, and intends to market its honey outside the country.

"Honey here was used for brewing local alcohol. But after we received training on commercialising it, WV Tanzania gave us 172 modern bee hives which in addition to our own hives made it a total of 377," he told this interview.

In the middle of a land that once was grassless, Chamkama village of Nakasongore village in Uganda, Stephen Tumhaire, holds a rake made of stick points as his cows graze beneath the tree sheds. Tumhaire told IPS that the forest cover was destroyed and now the cows rarely provide 5 litres of milk per cow. WV then came in and trained us on the importance of letting trees regrow.

Florence Namembwa, a mother of two, also a resident of Chamkama village, has earned a living from engaging in FMNR activities. She has helped a couple of women embrace this initiative. The Australian government injected some USD \$1.5 million to FMNR initiative in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda, leveraging a further USD \$4.1 million from the Australian community more broadly.

"The Australian government is delighted to be working with WV in this area. It is one of our most trusted NGO across the globe," says John Feakes, Australian High Commissioner to Kenya in an interview.

Feakes elaborated that the programme in East Africa has supported some 160,000 farmers, of which 60,000 are women. The time spent by women and children in foraging for firewood has been reduced.

Tony Reunando, WVAustralia's natural resource advisor and the man behind the FMNR initiative, told this writer in an interview that in a low input-agricultural situation like in East Africa, where farmers cannot afford fertilisers, trees complement this. As a perfect tool to combat climate change, Reunando called for practical action bringing together government's agents and other stakeholders.

## GLOBAL

### **U.S. to Africa's Leaders - 'Embrace Life After the Presidency!' (All Africa)**

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201603250577.html>

This is a crucial year for democracy in Africa. Six countries have already held presidential elections in 2016, and 11 more are preparing for elections.

African leaders have the opportunity to advance democracy and cement their legacies by establishing the conditions for peaceful transitions of power. Their actions will determine democracy's trajectory across the continent and around the world.

Already, some leaders have set the right tone through free, fair, and timely elections. Others, however, are not listening to the will of their people or the requirements of their constitutions.

In March last year, Nigerians, against all odds, went to the polls and in an unexpectedly free, and credible election voted in an opposition candidate for the first time in their history.

In December, I was honored to represent the United States at the inauguration of President Roch Marc Kabore in Burkina Faso. The election process - widely judged to be free and fair - was a tremendous success and reflected the desire of the Burkinabe people for change. Former President Compaore had been in power for 27 years until a 2014 peaceful uprising when the people said, "No more!"

Last month, the people of the Central African Republic, a country emerging from a devastating civil war, embraced democratic change and voted in a peaceful presidential election. The interim president paved the way for the transition, the losing candidate respected the results, and the winning candidate pledged to unify the country.

In several countries, however, we've seen leaders self-servingly attempt to disregard or amend their constitutions in order to stay in power. It is precisely this resistance to change and reluctance to play by the rules that leads to resentment and instability.

Take Burundi, for example. President Pierre Nkurunziza ignored the objections of many Burundians, including many in his own party, and decided last year to run for a third term, in violation of the Arusha peace and reconciliation agreement that had been the foundation for stability for over a decade. Since then, the country has been racked by violence, which has led to hundreds of deaths and displaced more than a quarter of a million people, and its economy has crumbled due to the resulting instability.

I must make it clear that the United States respects the right of a country's citizens to amend their constitutions through legal means. But we do not support those in power changing constitutions or ignoring peace agreements purely as a means of extending their own tenure: this undermines the institutions of democracy and the democratic process.

As President Barack Obama said in his historic address to the African Union last year, "sometimes you'll hear leaders say, well, I'm the only person who can hold this nation together. If that's true, then that leader has failed to truly build their nation." Successful leaders work to foster the development of a strong civil society and institutions that can support the peaceful transitions of power; that is the way to long-term stability.

Let me also be clear about where we stand: we promote peaceful and regular leadership transitions globally, not just in Africa. In fact, we have grappled with leadership transitions right here in the United States. Our first president, George Washington, started an informal tradition of presidential term limits by refusing to run for a third term. The only American president to serve more than two full terms in office was Franklin D. Roosevelt before and during World War II. That length of service, however, prompted debate about the wisdom of presidents remaining in power beyond two terms, and we amended our Constitution in 1951 to limit presidents to two terms.

Similarly, the election of Thomas Jefferson, our third president, marked the first transfer of power to the opposition - and that was a bitterly contested election. Yet, at the end of the day, the party in power accepted the results and President Jefferson peacefully took over to become one of our most successful and productive presidents.

Throughout our history, regular leadership transitions have brought in new ideas, new voices, and new policies that have helped us create a stronger, more inclusive democracy. My experiences in Africa convince me that Africans feel the same way about democracy. At its core, democracy is about the will of the people, and the people believe in transitions. Just last year, Afrobarometer reported that an overwhelming 75 percent of African citizens surveyed favored executive term limits.

We hope that more African leaders will embrace life after the presidency. I recently visited the Carter Center in Atlanta in the U.S., where I marveled at what former President Jimmy Carter has accomplished in the 35 years since he left office, working tirelessly around the world to advance human rights, promote democracy, build peace, eradicate disease and reduce conflict.

Some former African presidents have set excellent examples. Former President Festus Mogae of Botswana stepped down in 2008 following two terms in office and received the Mo Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership. He launched and chairs the Champions for an AIDS-Free Generation, a group of former presidents and influential African leaders who are working to end the AIDS epidemic, and is leading efforts to end the violence in South Sudan.

Former Ghanaian President John Kufuor also relinquished power in 2008 after two terms. He founded the John Kufuor Foundation, which is working to advance effective leadership, good governance and socioeconomic development in Africa.

There are other examples that former presidents can lead a long, productive life. That's the type of leadership we admire, and the type of leaders the people of Africa deserve.

The United States will continue to promote peaceful, democratic transitions of power in Africa. We will do this because we believe they provide opportunities for Africans to enjoy democracy, peace and prosperity, and bring stability across the continent. Transitions in power have served the United States well, and they will do the same for Africa.

### **Officials: Zika-infected Couples Should Postpone Pregnancy (VoA)**

<http://www.voanews.com/content/officials-zika-infected-couples-postpone-pregnancy/3255862.html>

NEW YORK — Federal health officials on Friday issued first-time guidance for couples planning a pregnancy if either partner may have been exposed to Zika, the tropical disease linked to birth defects.

The disease is mainly spread through mosquito bites, but authorities have come to realize that it also can be transmitted sexually. That Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had previously said that when a woman is pregnant, a couple should abstain from sex or use condoms during the entire pregnancy if the man may have been infected with Zika.

Now the CDC says a couple who is trying to conceive should use condoms every time or abstain for six months if the man had confirmed illness or Zika symptoms and was in an outbreak area.

If the male partner was in a Zika outbreak area but didn't get sick, the couple should abstain or use condoms for eight weeks, the new guidance says.

If the woman has Zika or Zika symptoms, the couple should wait at least eight weeks after the symptoms before trying to conceive, according to the CDC.

The guidelines come from taking the current understanding of how long Zika persists in blood or semen, and then tripling the time for safe measure, said the CDC's Dr. Denise Jamieson.

"This is our best attempt at this time, knowing what we know," she said.

Some countries where Zika has spread have suggested that all their women postpone pregnancies. El Salvador, for example, has suggested that women not become pregnant until 2018.

#### Birth control in Puerto Rico

In another report issued Friday, CDC officials said tens of thousands of IUDs and other forms of birth control are badly needed in Puerto Rico to help prevent unintended pregnancies during an outbreak of Zika there.

An estimated 138,000 young Puerto Rican women — one in five women of child-bearing age there — do not want to get pregnant but are not using effective birth control. Often the reason is they can't afford it, their clinics don't stock it, or their doctors aren't trained in providing it, CDC officials said.

Experts say some of the problems facing Puerto Rico now may be repeated later this year in Florida, Texas and other Southern states where officials think mosquito-borne outbreaks of Zika may occur.

“That's one of the reasons” the CDC is highlighting the needs in Puerto Rico, Jamieson said.

Two-thirds of pregnancies in Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory, are unintended. In the U.S. mainland, roughly half of pregnancies are unintended.

About 260 lab-confirmed cases have been reported in Puerto Rico during the current outbreak. CDC officials on Friday did not say how many are pregnant women, but previous reports suggest there are at least two dozen.

The territory last month issued an administrative order freezing the price of condoms, fearing sellers might take advantage of Zika fears to raise prices.

Medical investigators are trying to better understand how long the Zika virus can linger in the body. Some reports indicate it can be found in semen for up to two months. Given the indefinite length of time a man may be contagious, and the potential for outbreaks in the continental U.S., health officials are promoting longer-lasting forms of birth control like intrauterine devices and contraceptive implants.

In Puerto Rico, 68,000 IUDs, 33,000 implants, and many more other birth control products will be needed over a year, CDC officials said in the new report.

The Obama administration has asked Congress for nearly \$2 billion in emergency funding for Zika-fighting work. Federal agencies are exploring other ways to get birth control supplies for Puerto Rico, expand public education efforts, and improve reimbursement and training for doctors in use of IUDs and other birth control methods, Jamieson said.