

Report # 105
BUSINESS AND POLITICS IN THE MUSLIM WORLD
Central Africa
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Summary

Political Developments

Rwanda genocide-row politician attacked

A Rwandan politician who stirred up controversy with comments on the genocide recently has been attacked by a group of men at a government office. Ms Ingabire, a Hutu, was criticized last month for highlighting crimes against Hutus during the 1994 genocide. Ms Ingabire, who recently returned to the country after 16 years in the Netherlands, has been an outspoken critic of the government.

Rwanda: Nation Elected to AU Security Council

Rwanda and nine other African countries have been elected as the new members of the African Union (AU)'s Peace and Security Council (PSC) at the just concluded AU summit in Addis Ababa. The 15-member committee will begin their new term on April 1, 2010. This is recognition for Rwanda which is contributing much to UN peacekeepers among other things and being part of the decision-makers is a big step. The main objective of PSC is to promote peace, security and stability on the continent.

Cameroon: MINATD - For Effective Decentralization Process

The road map of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization (MINATD) has for some time now centered on ensuring the effective implementation of the decentralization process and adequate governance in the decentralized State structures. The Ministry throughout 2009 concentrated much effort on ensuring the effective devolution of competence and resources from the central administration to City, Subdivision and Local Councils starting January 2010. In the domain of territorial administration, MINATD has been working to reform the country's civil status systems with the intention of putting in place a national structure responsible for managing the civil status.

Economic Developments

Rwanda: Government Slashes Expenditure on Power Generators

The government has moved to reduce its expenditure on power generators that use fossil fuels will phase out the full time use of generators when hydro and methane gas projects kick off. There were 26 hydro power plants under construction with 13 expected to be complete by June. According to the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) the energy sector targets to generate 135 MW by 2012.

Rwanda: Mobile Money Launched

MTN Rwanda has finally launched the much anticipated 'Mobile Money' product targeting 100,000 subscribers in 2010. The product of which MTN spent over \$2 million was launched. It will enable all customers on the MTN network sign up and begin transacting at will through the 120 agents that have been appointed. Benefits of MTN Mobile Money include sending and receiving money wherever from the convenience of one's mobile phone. Beneficiaries can also buy airtime for themselves.

Rwanda: MTN' Offers One Percent Profits to Social Responsibility

MTN Rwanda, the country's leading telecom by market share on Tuesday launched a foundation that is meant to give back to the society. The telecom will be injecting Rwf100 million representing 1 percent of its profits after tax in the foundation as it widens its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme. It was said by CEO said that the telecom company is passionate about the vision to positively impact lives in the Rwandan communities. This year they have injected Rwf100 million of which the amount is expected to increase as we are making profits.

Rwanda: WB Boss Hails Country on ICT Development

World Bank President Robert Zoellick has made good remarks about the Rwandan government for its continued efforts towards the development of ICT saying that the country has emerged as a continental model in using technologies for development. It was said by him during a video conference held in Addis Ababa Ethiopia where he was attending African Union Summit. President Paul Kagame, who is also in Addis, gave a keynote address at the Heads of State Summit titled "Information and Communication Technologies in Africa: Challenges and Prospects for Development.

Rwanda: Development Partners Meeting Kicks Off Today

The Sixth Annual Development Partners Retreat (DPR), a senior-level two days retreat aimed at bringing together players in Rwanda's development. The main object of this year's meeting will include reviewing the 2009 agreed donor actions in response to Paris Declaration and discussion on the proposed donor-Division of Labor. Anticipated outputs expected from the 2010 DPR include an agreement on the donor-division of labor and the identification of priority actions for aid effectiveness for the year 2010.

Rwanda: Financial Institutions Train in Records Management

A total of 16 financial institutions from the banking and insurance sectors are undergoing a 4-day training in records management that will focus on financial records as an important resource in business organizations

Rwanda Ecobank Signs Agreement with Bank of China

Ecobank Rwanda will benefit from the co-operation agreement signed between its parents. Currently the Chinese are extending their services in Africa; this agreement will make Chinese companies operating in Africa, bank with Ecobank which is a big opportunity.

Congo-Kinshasa: How to End Natural Resource-Fuelled Conflict?

IRIN

The international community should draw up a comprehensive strategy to tackle conflicts fuelled by natural resources especially in fragile African states, UK campaign group Global Witness says. "Taking the gun out of natural resource management is a prerequisite for taking the gun out of politics," the advocacy group said in a report entitled Lessons Unlearned: How the UN and member states must do more to end natural resource-fuelled conflict. Too often the political, ethnic or geographic aspects of war are considered to the exclusion of its economic.

Rwanda: Recognizing the Business Community is Imperative

Rwanda Development Board (RDB) last week recognized excellent performers, prosperous private enterprises and individual initiatives within the private sector, by awarding those that excelled in turning round their businesses in 2009. The awards are aimed at encouraging the private sector to transform their businesses into competitive enterprises that contribute to socio-economic transformation of this country. The awards are a fraction of broader incentives that seek to motivate our private sector in delivering its mandate of being the cornerstone for economic growth, as clearly spelt out in vision 2020.

Rwanda: Food Fortification to Boost Country's Nutrition - Sezibera

As part of the continuous effort to eliminate the country's nutritional problems, Health Minister Dr. Richard Sezibera called upon experts to advice on policy regarding use of food fortification as a way of increasing availability of micro nutrients. According to the minister, the idea of adding micronutrients to foodstuffs as a way of meeting dietary needs is one of the effective measures of addressing Rwanda's nutritional challenge - a major threat to public health.

Rwanda: U.S. Varsity Pledges to Support Health Institutes

Kigali — The University of Texas, South Western Medical Centre, has pledged to collaborate with local health institutes in facilitating research and conducting projects that benefit both Rwanda and the university.

Rwanda: New Rotary Club Launched

The Rotary club of Gasabo was unveiled over the weekend in a ceremony that was graced by the 9150 District Governor, Roland Rizet at Hotel des Mille Collines. The club which comes in as the 5th in the country has already started off with electing a committee which is steering its activities. Rotary comes to provide a platform for people, especially young professionals, to join hands in contributing to peace and development.

Congo-Kinshasa: Fish Wars and Displacement

Rival ethnic communities in northwestern Democratic Republic of Congo have clashed many times over the years, but most recently over fish, observers say. More than 200 people have died and another 150,000 have fled to the neighboring Republic of Congo (ROC) since October 2009, when fighting erupted between the Lobala and Boba clans in Dongou, Equateur Province. Many more remain displaced within the DRC itself, while CAR hosts about 17,000 refugees, settled temporarily in sites near the River Ubangi in the Lobaye region. At least 60 percent of the refugees are children, many having fled orphanages, according to UNHCR.

UNICEF Needs More than \$263 Million for West, Central Africa

The U.N. Children's Fund says it needs more than \$263 million for emergency funding in West and Central Africa this year. UNICEF's emergency funding needs for West and Central Africa have increased this year because of flooding, higher food prices, and outbreaks of disease including cholera, measles, yellow fever, and meningitis. There are also increased humanitarian needs in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Chad where UNICEF says it is taking urgent action to protect children from the worst forms of violence and abuse. There are 110,000 refugees in the Republic of Congo and around 20,000 refugees now in Central African Republic

Political Developments

Rwanda genocide-row politician attacked

Rwanda News Agency (RNA)

A Rwandan politician who stirred up controversy with comments on the genocide recently has been attacked by a group of men at a government office.

About 10 men set upon Victoire Ingabire and her driver as they waited for papers to register their party for next year's election.

She escaped unharmed but her driver was said to have serious injuries.

Ms Ingabire, a Hutu, was criticized last month for highlighting crimes against Hutus during the 1994 genocide.

Some 800,000 people were killed in 100 days of violence in Rwanda - most of them Tutsis, but many moderate Hutus were also massacred.

Police spokesman Supt Eric Kayiranga said Ms Ingabire had jumped the queue at the local government office in Kigali, Rwanda News Agency (RNA) reported.

He said a group of local men attacked her because they were angry that a person who "negates the genocide" could be served before them.

But she dismissed the police version of events, saying there had been no-one waiting at the office.

"When we arrived, I saw the men who attacked us seated near houses which neighbor Kinyinya Sector. I greeted them from afar," she told RNA.

"They followed me hurriedly inside the sector office, grabbed my bag and continued roughing up my driver as I fled to the car and drove off."

She says she will now write to President Paul Kagame asking for protection.

Ms Ingabire, who recently returned to the country after 16 years in the Netherlands, has been an outspoken critic of the government.

Mr Kagame's Tutsi-dominated former rebels took power to end the genocide.

Rwanda: Nation Elected to AU Security Council

The New Times

Kigali — Rwanda and nine other African countries have been elected as the new members of the African Union (AU)'s Peace and Security Council (PSC) at the just concluded AU summit in Addis Ababa.

The 15-member committee will begin their new term on April 1, 2010.

Ambassador Eugene Munyakayanza, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation said yesterday that the development was good for Rwanda.

Like the minister has already said, this is recognition for Rwanda which is contributing much to UN peacekeepers among other things and, being part of the decision-makers is a big step.

Other countries elected to the Council include Equatorial Guinea, Kenya, Libya, Zimbabwe, Burundi, Chad, Djibouti, Mauritania, Namibia, South Africa, Benin, Cote d'Ivoire and Mali.

The PSC is the organ of the AU in charge of enforcing decisions and it is patterned to some extent after the UN Security Council.

The Protocol relating to the establishment of the PSC notes that the objectives for which it was established include promoting peace, security and stability on the continent.

Cameroon: MINATD - For Effective Decentralization Process

Cameroon

tribune

The road map of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization (MINATD) has for some time now centered on ensuring the effective implementation of the decentralization process and adequate governance in the decentralized State structures. The Ministry throughout 2009 concentrated much effort on ensuring the effective devolution of competence and resources from the central administration to City, Subdivision and Local Councils starting January 2010.

During the cabinet meeting of last January 28, the Minister of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development, Louis Paul Motaze disclosed that FCFA 26 billion of Cameroon's 2010 State budget will be used to finance the investment component of the transfer of competence and resources to Councils.

The Minister of State, Minister of MINATD, Marafa Hamidou Yaya while receiving New Year wishes from the staff of the ministry in Yaounde, last January 29 said MINATD must in 2010 accompany, follow up and evaluate the first transfer of competence and resources to Councils. One of the key areas will be through building the capacities of all actors in the decentralisation process. Mr Marafa who is the chairman of the Inter-ministerial Committee for Local Services, one of the key structures in the decentralisation process said the ministry will work for the harmonious functioning of the committee with the intention of ensuring a more rational programming of the second generation of the transfer of competence and resources.

MINATD, the Secretary General of the ministry, Alphonse Ngbwa said, wants to continue contributing to improving the country's electoral system. The ministry's external services such as Governors', Divisional and Sub divisional Officers are expectedly handing over all electoral material in their possession to Elections Cameroon (ELECAM) field officers. Mr Ngbwa disclosed that collaboration between ELECAM and MINATD will continue through consultation meetings. MINATD, he further said is drawing up a draft text for the reform of the country's Electoral Code.

In the domain of territorial administration, MINATD has been working to reform the country's civil status systems with the intention of putting in place a national structure responsible for managing the civil status. The ministry has also been working to cleanse the private security companies sector as well as to reform traditional chieftaincy institution.

Economic Developments

Rwanda: Government Slashes Expenditure on Power Generators

New Times

The government has moved to reduce its expenditure on power generators that use fossil fuels will phase out the full time use of generators when hydro and methane gas projects kick off.

"These generators will be used as backup system once the ongoing methane gas and hydro-power projects are operational," Yussfu Uwamahoro, Energy coordinator in the Ministry of Infrastructure told The New Times.

He disclosed that currently the country spends more than Rwf 6bn every year on fuel for these generators."

Uwamahoro said that there were 26 hydro power plants under construction with 13 expected to be complete by June.

New districts targeted to be put on the grid include Kirehe, Gisagara, Ngororero, Bugesera, Gicumbi, Kamonyi, and Nyaruguru.

Last year, the government slashed expenditure on generators by Rwf560m (\$1m) monthly with the construction of a 20MW Jabana power plant.

According to the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) the energy sector targets to generate 135 MW by 2012.

Uwamahoro mentioned that a combination of Nyabarongo and Rukara hydro-power will generate 38MW.

Rwanda: Mobile Money Launched

The New Times

Kigali — MTN Rwanda has finally launched the much anticipated 'Mobile Money' product targeting 100,000 subscribers in 2010.

The product of which MTN spent over \$2 million to implement was launched yesterday at MTN Center in Nyarutarama. It will enable all customers on the MTN network sign up and begin transacting at will through the 120 agents that have been appointed.

The agents according to MTN officials are located across the country. Those who are not on the MTN network are also beneficiaries of this product as they can also receive money.

Benefits of MTN Mobile Money include sending and receiving money wherever from the convenience of one's mobile phone. Beneficiaries can also buy airtime for themselves.

Khaled Mikkawi the CEO MTN Rwanda described the launch as one of the most innovative initiatives that has been made available to Rwandans in recent times

"We have a network reaching over 90 percent of the population and it is only right that we leverage this coverage for a common good product that will go a long way in the financial deepening of the Rwandan economy," Mikkawa said.

MTN pioneered mobile banking in South Africa in 2005 partnering with Standard Bank and commercially launched in Uganda in March 2009. MTN Rwanda will work with Commercial Bank of Rwanda (BCR) as the partner bank for MTN Mobile Money.

The CEO expressed his gratitude to the Governor Francios Kanimba of Rwanda and the team at the Bank for their absolute support in launching the product.

Rwanda: MTN' Offers One Percent Profits to Social Responsibility

The New Times

Kigali — MTN Rwanda, the country's leading telecom by market share on Tuesday launched a foundation that is meant to give back to the society.

The telecom will be injecting Rwf100 million representing 1 percent of its profits after tax in the foundation as it widens its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme.

During the launch, the operator's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Khaled Mikkawi, said that the telecom company is passionate about the vision to positively impact lives in the Rwandan communities.

"This year we have injected Rwf100 million of which the amount is expected to increase as we are making profits.

The more profits we will be making in a year the more will be injected in the Foundation," Mikkawi added.

Mikkawi also explained that it is MTN Group's policy to create foundations in all countries where MTN operates.

"So far the foundation was created in 19 out of the 21 countries where MTN operates and it only allows to inject 1 percent of the net profits after-tax in the foundation," he added.

Rwanda: WB Boss Hails Country on ICT Development

The

New

Times

Kigali — World Bank President Robert Zoellick has commended the Rwandan government for its continued efforts towards the development of ICT saying that the country has emerged as a continental model in using technologies for development.

Zoellick said this during a video conference held in Addis Ababa Ethiopia where he was attending African Union Summit.

The video conference was linked to different African cities including Rwanda.

Rwanda has been one of the real leaders in ICT, as we discussed yesterday in a small lunch meetings, I think there is a lot that can be learnt through Rwandan experience," Zoellick hailed.

President Paul Kagame who is also in Addis, gave a keynote address at the Heads of State Summit titled "Information and Communication Technologies in Africa: Challenges and Prospects for Development".

Outlining some of the ways into which ICT can bolster development, the WB boss said that it can help farmers use mobile phones to get information on market prices so that they are not disadvantaged through using middlemen.

He said that Rwanda was also a model for ICT usage in boosting the leadership's accountability to the population through the implementation of e-government which he says closes loopholes for corruption and increase overall service delivery.

Some of the innovative applications that Rwanda was commended for include the TRACNet system that allows health workers in the field to track medical supplies to clinics, especially for HIV patients.

"Telecommunication should not be regarded as business but also service opportunity for governments," Zoellick said.

Last year, the World Bank invested \$3.6 billion in infrastructure in Sub-Saharan Africa that has created jobs and improved growth prospects for tomorrow.

Rwanda: Development Partners Meeting Kicks Off Today

Business

Times

Kigali — The Sixth Annual Development Partners Retreat (DPR), a senior-level two days retreat aimed at bringing together players in Rwanda's development to review and discuss progress in the coordination kicks off today in Rubavu, at the Kivu Serena Hotel.

The main object of this year's meeting will include reviewing the 2009 agreed donor actions in response to Paris Declaration and discussion on the proposed donor-Division of Labor.

Officials of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning told Business Times that, discussions on how Rwanda has been affected by the global financial crisis and measures taken to come out of the crisis will also be considered.

Anticipated outputs expected from the 2010 DPR include an agreement on the donor-division of labor and the identification of priority actions for aid effectiveness for the year 2010.

The DPR will be attended by representatives of the government of Rwanda, representatives of multilateral and bilateral development partners agencies and missions, the private sector, as well as international and national NGOs.

Attendance is expected to range between 70 and 80 participants.

The DPR is a forum for discussions over several issues ranging from progress in aid coordination, harmonization and alignment, planning of development coordination processes and governance issues

Rwanda: Financial Institutions Train in Records Management

The

New

Times

Kigali — A total of 16 financial institutions from the banking and insurance sectors are undergoing a 4-day training in records management that will focus on financial records as an important resource in business organizations.

Professor Justus Wamukoya, the facilitator of the training said that the idea is to create awareness on the importance of records and information in the financial institutions.

This initiative will help financial institutions in enhancing service delivery to their clients and to keep track of their expenditure as part of good corporate management," Wamukoya said.

The four day training that was organized by the Private Sector Federation (PSF), is designed to enable institutions make informed decisions, keep track on policy changes, support continuity and consistency as well as provide evidence of business transactions.

According to Wamukoya, since the banking industry is constantly plagued by operational, financial and legal risks, this new initiative would go a long way in mitigating the risks.

The training also incorporated the modern technologies in the industry and the type of electronic records that they generate and how they are managed.

Rwanda Ecobank Signs Agreement with Bank of China

The New Times

Kigali — Ecobank Rwanda will benefit from the co-operation agreement signed between its parent company, Ecobank Group, and the Bank of China.

Patrick Masumbuko, Head of Brand and Communication at Ecobank Rwanda said that in the agreement, Ecobank will cater for the African interests of Bank of China clients, thus broadening Ecobank's client base.

Currently the Chinese are extending their services in Africa," Masumbuko said. "This agreement will make Chinese companies operating in Africa, bank with Ecobank which is a big opportunity to us."

Following the signing of the agreement in Beijing on January 22, 2010, China desks, with Chinese staff will be set up at Ecobank branches to assist the Bank of China customers in Africa.

Congo-Kinshasa: How to End Natural Resource-Fuelled Conflict?

IRIN humanitarian news and analysis

The international community should draw up a comprehensive strategy to tackle conflicts fuelled by natural resources especially in fragile African states, UK campaign group Global Witness says.

"Taking the gun out of natural resource management is a prerequisite for taking the gun out of politics," the advocacy group said in a report entitled Lessons Unlearned: How the UN and member states must do more to end natural resource-fuelled conflict.

Too often the political, ethnic or geographic aspects of war are considered to the exclusion of its economic drivers ... In countries like the DRC [Democratic Republic of Congo], natural resources must be recognized not only as part of the problem but also as an essential part of the solution," said Mike Davis of Global Witness.

Among other recommendations, the report calls for UN peacekeepers to be mandated to deal with the economic dimensions of conflict. "The problem with natural resources is not so much the nature of resources themselves, their abundance or their scarcity, but how they are governed, who is able to access them and for what purposes," it says.

Rwanda: Recognizing the Business Community is Imperative

The New Times

Kigali — Rwanda Development Board (RDB) last week recognized excellent performers, prosperous private enterprises and individual initiatives within the private sector, by awarding those that excelled in turning round their businesses in 2009.

The awards are aimed at encouraging the private sector to transform their businesses into competitive enterprises that contribute to socio-economic transformation of this country.

They are an important forum for the business community to network, exchange experiences and possibly seal new deals that eventually profit their businesses.

The awards are a fraction of broader incentives that seek to motivate our private sector in delivering its mandate of being the cornerstone for economic growth, as clearly spelt out in vision 2020.

The stakes have been raised for Rwandan business community mainly due to favorable reforms introduced by government. For the past 16 years, government has disengaged from active business and instead concentrated on formulating policies and laws that facilitate growth of a vibrant private sector.

The idea behind this is to create an environment where the private sector plays a critical role in shaping the future of the country.

Therefore, for the private sector to meet this challenge, it can't be business as usual. The private sector needs to adopt a competitive and innovative approach, if we are to achieve this ambitious long-term vision.

The need to get down to real business becomes even more urgent given the competitive challenge posed by Rwanda's full accession to the East African Community.

On its part, government has done a commendable job. It's now up to the business community to take advantage of these reforms to expand their business operations.

Social Developments

Rwanda: Food Fortification to Boost Country's Nutrition - Sezibera

The New Times

Kigali — As part of the continuous effort to eliminate the country's nutritional problems, Health Minister Dr. Richard Sezibera yesterday called upon experts to advise on policy regarding use of food fortification as a way of increasing availability of micro nutrients.

Sezibera made the remarks at the opening ceremony of a technical conference dubbed, "Food Fortification and Nutrition Solutions for Community Health in Rwanda."

According to the minister, the idea of adding micronutrients to foodstuffs as a way of meeting dietary needs is one of the effective measures of addressing Rwanda's nutritional challenge - a major threat to public health.

"For the last two decades, protein energy malnutrition including micro nutrient deficiencies has remained significant public health problems in our country thus contributing to the high infant and maternal mortality rates that we are still grappling with."

"We are struggling with micro nutrient deficiency at all levels. Our national nutrition policy of 2007 however recognizes food fortification as one of the approaches to provide essential micro nutrients to a large population.

He therefore urged the experts who had gathered from various countries and organizations across the world to advise the regulatory development that will soon enable fortification of selected food items that are accessible to many Rwandans.

The US agriculture attaché in the US Embassy based in Kenya, Souleymane Diaby, also commended Rwanda for using the right approach towards managing the problem.

"Despite the prevalence of this problem, this government has the right approach of partnering with the private sector to eliminate the nutritional problem in the country.

It is without doubt that unbelievable results will begin to show in two to five years' time," he added.

According to Sezibera, 45 percent of children below five years are stunted while 27 percent of women in the reproductive age suffer from iron deficiency anemia.

"As you know a child mortality rate that is higher than 70 per 1000 live births is considered by many as an indicator of Vitamin A deficiency.

"In Rwanda, mortality rates for under-fives is now at 103 per 1000 live births, this is why government is committed to fight this problem," the minister added.

The two-day conference will focus on topics such as the overview of research capabilities of ISAR and its contribution to malnutrition and poverty eradication, soil suitable for soy bean production and high iron beans research, among others.

Rwanda: U.S. Varsity Pledges to Support Health Institutes

The New Times

Kigali — The University of Texas, South Western Medical Centre, has pledged to collaborate with local health institutes in facilitating research and conducting projects that benefit both Rwanda and the university.

The pledge was made by the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Medical School, Gregory J. Fitz, who led a delegation of staff from the University that visited the Kigali Health Institute (KHI) yesterday.

Speaking after touring the institute's campus, Fitz expressed satisfaction with the strides that the Institute has taken in equipping Rwanda's health sector with qualified personnel.

"Our visit aims at working with Rwanda's health sector through long and short term relationships aimed at improving medical care, medical training and research.

As far as research is concerned, the head of the delegation said that they were going to forge collaboration between the University of Texas and KHI so as facilitate researchers.

According to the rector of KHI, Desire Ndushabandi, the collaboration between the two institutions will enable KHI to introduce more vital programmes on their curricula.

"With collaboration between KHI and the University of Texas, we will be able to introduce some vital programs and capacity building courses such as Masters in Speech Pathology and strengthening research and consultancy."

KHI boasts of a state -of-the art dental clinic and it is one of the referral dental clinics in Rwanda.

Rwanda: New Rotary Club Launched

The New Times

Kigali — The Rotary club of Gasabo was unveiled over the weekend in a ceremony that was graced by the 9150 District Governor, Roland Rizet at Hotel des Mille Collines.

The club which comes in as the 5th in the country has already started off with electing a committee which is steering its activities.

Kalisa Tunga the president-elect of Rotary Club Gasabo said that that new club offers a reliable ground for people who want to promote friendship, peace and development in the world starting from where they are.

"Just like the philosophy of Rotary, Gasabo comes to provide a platform for people, especially young professionals, to join hands in contributing to peace and development," he noted.

In his address to the Rotarians of the five different clubs, Governor Rizet congratulated Gasabo and applauded all the clubs in Rwanda for the tremendous work they are doing to promote the welfare of the people.

"Its worthy commending that the Rwandan Rotary clubs have made outstanding achievements, new clubs coming up means rotary is growing and impacting," he remarked

A number of achievements by the different clubs were highlighted.

It included the construction of five spring wells by Rotary Club Virunga for the Rwandans returning from Tanzania and the ongoing construction of the Kigali Public Library.

Congo-Kinshasa: Fish Wars and Displacement

IRIN

Kinshasa — Rival ethnic communities in northwestern Democratic Republic of Congo have clashed many times over the years, but most recently over fish, observers say.

More than 200 people have died and another 150,000 have fled to the neighboring Republic of Congo (ROC) since October 2009, when fighting erupted between the Lobala and Boba clans in Dongou, Equateur Province.

The clash was triggered by two attacks against Boba villages, including one in July 2009, in which 200 homes were burnt down.

The clashes could have been prevented - or at least curbed - had there been more oversight of the distribution of resources at the Iwandi pool," said local analyst Polycarpe Nyalua.

Iwandi is one of the most prolific fishing spots along the River Ubangi which runs along the border between the two countries.

In February 1972, according to a Congolese army information officer, a pact was signed that would have shared fishing resources in Iwandi, putting an end to what he described as illegal fishing by the Boba.

A generation later, the Boba have revoked the pact and banned the Lobala from accessing the forest or the pools, the officer who preferred anonymity explained.

Lobala difficulties were compounded by the dramatic decline in the other mainstay of the local economy: agriculture. Coffee, cocoa and palm oil plantations across the Kungu region were virtually abandoned despite population increases.

Old quarrel

DRC government spokesman Lambert Mende said the fighting in Dongou represented a "contemporary resurgence of an inter-clan quarrel dating back to the 1940s".

"The Lobala planned and executed an ethnic attack, considering themselves to be above the law," said local deputy Jean-Faustin Mokoma.

With the two main pools around 71km from Dongou, more accessible seasonal pools have been stretched to capacity, leading to skirmishes over who has the rights to the fish, which are sold in markets locally, in ROC and the Central African Republic (CAR).

Government spokesman Mende said: "The Dongou attackers had but one objective - to remove [other communities from] a strip of land that they consider belongs to them".

Nyalua, the analyst, suggested persistent aggression by the Boba had left the Lobala with few options.

Powder keg

A military source from the UN peacekeeping operation in DRC (MONUC), who preferred anonymity, told IRIN: "The Kinshasa authorities played down the seriousness of the situation, allowing it to degenerate before reacting ... The conflict in Dongou is a powder keg that no one knows how to manage."

In Kinshasa, they dragged their feet before sending in qualified police," said local nurse Jude Liengo from the Boba ethnic group.

The government in Kinshasa said a Lobala militia group, made up in part of demobilized soldiers, staged an attack on Dongou in late October, targeting police and security forces. Government forces, however, recaptured the town in mid-December.

But local residents continued to flee. By mid-January, more than 107,000 reached the Likoula region (ROC), according to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). Most were crammed into 70 sites along a 250km stretch of the River Ubangi.

Many more remain displaced within the DRC itself, while CAR hosts about 17,000 refugees, settled temporarily in sites near the River Ubangi in the Lobaye region. At least 60 percent of the refugees are children, many having fled orphanages, according to UNHCR.

A month has passed since the Congolese armed forces arrived to restore peace to Dongou, but the town remains deserted.

"The government has every interest in resolving the conflict through mediation, before pressing the populations to return to their villages, but they have to instill confidence and restore a climate of security," a MONUC source told IRIN, adding: "We cannot have a zone of instability and turbulence in the west of the country while we are trying to pacify the east."

UNICEF Needs More than \$263 Million for West, Central Africa

VOA

The U.N. Children's Fund says it needs more than \$263 million for emergency funding in West and Central Africa this year.

UNICEF's emergency funding needs for West and Central Africa have increased this year because of flooding, higher food prices, and outbreaks of disease including cholera, measles, yellow fever, and meningitis. There are also increased humanitarian needs in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Chad where UNICEF says it is taking urgent action to protect children from the worst forms of violence and abuse.

Grant Leaity, UNICEF's regional advisory for emergencies in West and Central Africa, says Congo's problems are made worse by Uganda's rebel Lord's Resistance Army.

"There are a number of what we would say are early-warning signals or alerts which are again coming up in the eastern Kivu. There is also the situation with the LRA in the northeast. There is a conflict once again in the Equatorial Province, and that has caused a level of internal displacement to nearly 100,000 people. There are 110,000 refugees in the Republic of Congo and around 20,000 refugees now in Central African Republic," he said.

Leaity says Chad is facing both below-average harvests and the potential insecurity of the government asking the United Nations not to renew the mandate of its peacekeeping force in the

eastern border region with Sudan.

"In Chad we have a combination. It is one of the Sahel countries, so first and foremost we are concerned about the food security and the nutrition situation. There is also the discussion of the end of the mandate of the peacekeeping forces, MINURCAT, and that could have a lot of implications," he said.

In Chad and the Democratic Republic of Congo, Leaity says ensuring access to water and sanitation, health care, nutrition, and education is complicated by conflict.

"Countries which have an armed-conflict situation have a particular difficulty in terms of delivering humanitarian aid, because as a consequence of the conflict the basic infrastructure and services are no longer really functional," he said. "At the same time if you then have a flood, an epidemic or any other form of environmentally-driven crisis, the capacity to react in terms of all of the local structures is very low."

UNICEF says it needs funding to fight malnutrition and flooding in Niger, Guinea, and Mauritania. There are smaller-scale emergencies or post-conflict transitions in Benin, Cameroon, the Republic of Congo, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali and Togo.