

Business and Politics in the Muslim World
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Details of the News

1. China-African Relations:

- **South Africa, China sign deal worth \$315.3 million**

South Africa and China signed 2.3 billion-rand (\$315.3 million) worth of deals that will result in South Africa supplying mohair, fish and abalone to its biggest trading partner, Business Day reported.

A total of 26 companies were involved in yesterday's accords, including producers of wine, copper, manganese, granite blocks, ferrochrome and lobster, the Johannesburg-based newspaper said, citing Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies.

Chinese trade with South Africa totaled \$16 billion last year, the newspaper said, citing Jia Qinglin, chairman of the national committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

- **Chinese entrepreneurs vital to South African economy**

"At the time, life was hard but still very interesting," said Zhao Baopei, 63-year-old chairman of the South African Baoli case and bag factory, referring to his

experience as a street vendor in Johannesburg 20 years ago. In 1990, Zhao was one of the first mainland nationals to immigrate to South Africa. He started his import business as street vendor, but now he is planning to create his own products to establish a famous local brand.

Many of the Chinese businessmen, who were once street vendors like Zhao, have become bosses. Over the course of the last 20 years, a large number of Chinese businessmen emerged in South Africa. According to the data from the Chinese Consulate General, 10 percent of Chinese businessmen operate factories, mines and companies with the assets over billion rands. Around 30 percent to 40 percent operate wholesale trade, and about 50 percent own restaurants or manage shops.

"South Africans, especially the lower classes, depend greatly on the Chinese businessmen," said Fangli, the Consul General of China in Johannesburg. The business activities of Chinese businessmen are a useful supplement for the economic development of China and South Africa. They fulfill a need that cannot be met by the government or large companies.

In the Baoli case and bag processing plant located in southwest of Johannesburg, the reporter saw dozens of local workers working on the production line. Zhao Baopei said that the factory employed up to 120 workers and some of the 80 current workers had been working here for 10 years. The Chinese factories have provided a lot of employment opportunities for locals.

"According to the laws of South Africa, if workers resign from factories where they have worked for two weeks, the employer must pay one year's salary. However, no local workers resign deliberately. Because of this I was deeply moved," said Zhao. Zhao is very familiar with the laws of South Africa. All the workers are treated in accordance with the local labor laws, and his factory also provides technical training for the local workers.

- **Chinese Investors to assemble farming equipment**

GNA - Two Ghanaian companies, Unik Dezines Ltd and SpeedGold Ghana Limited have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a group of Chinese Investors to assemble farming equipment and other manufacturing ventures.

The Chinese investors were in Ghana for a presentation and to sign a Memorandum of Understanding for the construction of 10 multi-million dollar factories by the end of the year.

The factories would assemble farming equipment, including tricycles and Tarpaulins and also go into the production of salt and sugar as well as socks and towel manufacturing.

Mr Dennis Anderson, Chief Executive Officer of Unik Dezines and Peng Ye Zhen, Chairman of Haige Industries, China, signed the agreement in the presence of officials

from the Chinese Embassy in Ghana. Mr Anderson said an initial investment of over 300 million dollars had been earmarked for the projects, which would employ about 1,000 Ghanaians. He said the factories would be sited across the country, especially where the firms could reach out easily to the West African markets. Mr Kofi Attor, a government official, who chaired the function, asked agencies responsible for facilitating the work to help speed up the process to ensure the project got underway by the close of the year.

2. Pan-African issues:

- **Africa Groans Under Foreign Shipping Domination**

THE PHRASE, 'He who controls transport, controls the trade' has remained a truism. Especially in Africa, where there is a near total dependence on foreigners to provide shipping services without identifiable measures to develop indigenous capacity.

Issues' bordering on capacity building was the focus of an international capacity building workshop for media/public relation executives in the maritime industry, which held at the Regional Maritime University (RMU) in Tema, Ghana.

The importance of the human element in shipping cannot be over emphasised. The need for a robust human capital as a necessary growth pillar for sector is quite appreciable now than ever before.

The workshop, organised by Balm of Gilead Communications with the support of RMU emphasised among others, the need for Africans to brace up and control shipping trade in Africa, which is currently under the firm grip of foreigners, who use the clause of lack of capacity to keep Africans down.

This stems from their knowledge of the huge market in Africa and use all sorts of subtle blackmail to enable them continue dominance of shipping. Ship arrest, it was observed, was one of the measures used by foreigners to manipulate the system to discourage African nations from owning ships.

Africa's attention is diverted to some basic issues like health, housing etc, thereby overlooking the huge economic potentials of sea trade.

The world economy is highly interconnected. Over the past four decades, total seaborne trade has more than quadrupled. It is also common knowledge that over 90 per cent of the world trade is transported by sea.

In Nigeria, the maritime sector is responsible for facilitating over 90 per cent of trading prospects including oil and gas. Nigeria accounts for over 60 per cent of total seaborne

traffic in volume and value in the West African sub-region with a GDP accounting for over 60 per cent of the total GDP of the 16 countries that make up the Economic Community of West African states (ECOWAS). The successes or otherwise of the Nigerian maritime sector therefore has a reverberating impact on the sub-region.

One of the major shortfalls of Nigeria's national trade policy, particularly as it relates to the oil and gas sector, is the terms of trade, which allow its crude exports and products import to be sold on F.O.B terms.

It is clear that without the vessels to move this black gold from areas of surplus to areas of need, value is not created. If we assume that the country earns over \$100 billion annually from oil exports and 10 per cent of that represents the freight element, which translate to over \$10 billion earned by foreign vessels under Nigeria's trade policy.

This trend is worrisome and government's attention must be drawn to the negative consequences of this policy on the Nigerian maritime Sector and its impact on the overall economy. The strategic vision in this regard is to propose a phased review of the terms of trade whilst building relevant competencies locally, in order to avert dislocations to the supply chain.

In January 2008, the world trade fleet consisted of 50,525 ships with a combined tonnage of 728,225,000GRT.

Nigeria has a sizeable cargo potential on account of its oil reserves of over 30 billion barrels, gas reserves of 187 Trillion Cubic Feet (TCF) and of course a population of about 160 million people and the attendant demand profile.

The annual average import within the last six (6) years is 32,244,042 MTS while annual freight cost is between \$ 2.6 billion to \$3.5 billion. A very negligible portion of this income presently resides in Nigeria. An important poser in this regard is that with all of these demands pull factors, what is the size of Nigeria's fleet that can take advantage of these opportunities?

Pioneer president of Ghana, the late Dr. Kwame Nkrumah thought of maritime transport very early hence he established a nautical college, which metamorphosed to the Regional Maritime University and built the Tema port to serve the interest of Ghana.

His idea was to set up national shipping line, control transport as well as trade.

Other African nations also established national shipping lines. While Ghana operated the Black Star Line, Nigeria had the Nigerian National Shipping Line (NNSL). CITRAM was the national line of Ivory Coast, East African Line and CAMSHIP of Cameroon.

These all came up during the postcolonial era but have all collapsed. These are what the early nationalist leaders invested so much money in establishing.

One of the resource persons at the international capacity building workshop, Aaron Turkson, who is a former rector of RMU and winner of best administrator in West and Central Africa, explained to Daily Independent that management of the liners may not be totally blamed for the collapse, saying that liner business changed considerably in the early 1980's.

This made running of Liner Company become very expensive and capital intensive and most government did not have that money to continue. But he noted that the Chinese, Malaysia and others survived and are still operating national lines.

He also noted that Ethiopian shipping line is still operating and is the only surviving sub-Saharan shipping line and are currently building eight ships.

Although shipping lines in Africa may have collapsed under poor management and other factors, Turkson believes that Africa has capacity to handle most jobs in the maritime sector.

While decrying the lack of regulation of shipping, he said "I believe we have capacity even for rigs operation," adding that "You find few African crews onboard ships today. Asians take advantage of manning to create jobs for its people but Africans have not taken the advantage to create employment."

He pointed out that in Nigeria offshore, there are so many Philippines doing jobs that are supposed to be done by Nigerians, even as he said, there is huge potential locally, the jobs are there.

A maritime expert, who expressed concern about high shipping charges on goods coming into the sub-region, advised the Maritime Organisation of West and Central Africa (MOWCA) to have firm control of shipping trade and reduce charges.

According to the expert, Alock Asamoah, who is the rector of the Regional Maritime University, Ghana, foreign ship owners, had dominated trade and solely deciding shipping charges because shipping trade were not controlled in the sub-region.

Asamoah, who was addressing participants of a three-day international capacity building workshop for media executives and public relations officers in the maritime industry at the RMU noted that shipping rates from China to West Africa, Europe to West Africa are becoming more expensive per nautical mile and tonnes than anywhere else in the world.

Maritime nations, he said, should also be able to have control of cargo allocation to the ship owners. But foreign shipping firms have explained that the cause of high charges had to do with piracy in the Somali waters.

Asamoah recalled that between the 1950s and the early 1980s, the maritime industry boomed, ports, nautical colleges and shipyards were established while the fishing industry was also booming.

He however expressed regret that most of these were no more functional as nations struggled in their bid to industrialise very fast and gain economic independence.

Today, shipping lines belonging to countries and individuals in the sub-region have all collapsed with the maritime industry in the sub-region now controlled by foreigners.

"It is the responsibility of the media in the sub-region to present the facts and awake the shipping practitioners about the big loss," Asamoah said.

Registrar of the RMU, Julius Atikpu said recently, oil was discovered in Ghana, adding that the university had because of this, acquired the capacity to run oil and gas short time courses according to International Standards Organisation (ISO) regulations.

He said the courses are ISO-certified and had received national accreditation of nations like Ghana, Gambia, Sierra-Leone and Liberia. Owner nations of the university are, Gambia, Sierra-Leone, Liberia, Ghana and Cameroon.

- **Ecowas to Partner EU to Curb Small Arms.**

ECOWAS has launched an appeal to its European Union partners to help limit the influx into West Africa of small arms and light weapons which has contributed to more than a decade of instability in the region and has the potential to undermine ECOWAS efforts to promote democracy and good governance.

"We believe the governments of the European Union are also in a position to influence trade in such arms which should not be left to the dictates of market forces, particularly the clandestine trade in small arms and light weapons," the President of the ECOWAS Commission, Ambassador James Victor Gheho told the Belgian Ambassador to Nigeria.

A statement from ECOWAS commission added that in order to regulate the flow of such arms into the region, Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS Member States in 2006 signed a regional instrument to control its proliferation in the region. The ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms, Light Weapons, their ammunition and other related materials with enhanced mechanisms to check the influx of arms into the region replaced the regional Moratorium on the Exportation, Importation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons prepared with the support of the UNDP.

"The President told the ambassador that developing and developed countries share a responsibility for the control of such arms as they could not only be used for insurgency as experienced in Liberia and Sierra Leone but could also become a tool for terrorism.

He described the proliferation of such arms as a legacy of the end of the cold war especially in Afghanistan, and reassured Ambassador Michel Dewez that the region was committed to regulating and ultimately eliminating the influx of such arms into the region.

He also spoke about the recent Coup in Niger and admitted that the region was "embarrassed" by the incident which forced it to temporarily suspend its mediation efforts in that country through the former Nigerian Head of State, General Abdulsalami Abubakar.

Such "errant" development, the President said, did not diminish the "remarkable progress achieved by West Africa with democratization and good governance in the last decade" after a period of instability occasioned mostly by military interventions.

On the issue of the signing of an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between ECOWAS and the European Union, Ambassador Gheho said it was the "wish" of the region to sign the agreement which is being negotiated by officials of both sides but said that it should not be restricted to a trade relationship only but should be linked to development in order to enable the region avail itself of the full benefits of the arrangement.

- **Africa: United Nations Addresses Urbanization and Ways to Implement Programs.**

Following the Fifth World Urban Forum held in Rio de Janeiro on 22 to 26 March, UN HABITAT recently released the "State of the World's Cities" report, which highlighted new findings and also programs to be launched in 2010.

The UN HABITAT report builds on the Population Division 2009 World Urbanization Prospects report issued last week, with a strong focus on developing countries and finding ways to bridge the urban divide. According to the report, "urban divide is the face of injustice and a symptom of systematic dysfunction." If a large number of the urban population is not getting their basic needs met, multiple problems arise. The growing population and urbanization trends ultimately impact climate change, social justice, and economic development.

Gora Mboup is the head of the UN HABITAT's Global Urban Observatory in Nairobi, Kenya and one of the main authors of the report. He explains that the UN HABITAT report on urban trends has both good and bad news. Mboup told MediaGlobal, "More than 200 million slum dwellers now have access to water sanitation and better housing; however, in developing countries the number [of slum dwellers] has increased from 700 million in 2000 to more than 800 million people in 2010."

The urban trends in the report help organizations better understand where the attention needs to be directed. UN HABITAT is urging city planners to focus on increasing infrastructure and housing projects towards the urban slums in developing countries. In addition, a large focus is being directed towards the urban youth, increasing opportunities in education and promoting equality.

- **UN May Finally Create Agency to Address Women's Issues Globally**

A long-awaited United Nations agency to deal exclusively with woman's issues is on its way to becoming a reality. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has provided an official proposal for the new entity, which would combine the major groups within the UN that currently deal with women's issues.

This proposal came after a resolution made by the General Assembly in September 2009 supporting the establishment of a new women's agency. The resolution represented an important victory for women's rights groups who have long been vocal advocates of a new agency for women.

"The agency would not replace what is already there but support and improve what is happening now and add to it, especially strengthening the effectiveness on the ground," Rachel Harris of the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) told MediaGlobal. "A new women's agency would have the capacity to address many of the issues that are not able to be addressed in the current fragmented state of the existing agencies that work on women's empowerment and gender equality."

The Secretary-General's plan must be reviewed by member states and adopted in the General Assembly through a resolution before it can be founded officially. Four entities currently deal specifically with women's issues within the UN system: United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DAW), and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). According to Margot Baruch, Program Coordinator for the Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University (CWGL) these four UN agencies lack the size, power, and autonomy, as well as the funding, to provide adequate assistance to the world's women.

"For example, UNIFEM, the only unit with a (limited) field presence, is a fund, not an independent operational agency, that reports to the UNDP administrator, which means that it doesn't have a seat at high-level decision making tables," Baruch told MediaGlobal in an e-mail. "Gender units - from OSAGI to those in the specialized agencies - have limited ability to provide critical feedback or speak out on gender equality performance; too often these special advisor or gender focal points in the UN are used to defend the status quo rather than change it."

The new entity for women, as outlined by the Secretary-General in his January 2010 proposal, would unite the four agencies that deal with women's issues into a single, more powerful entity. The new entity would have its own Under-Secretary General and either

its own executive board or its own section of the existing United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) executive board. The women's group, like other major UN agencies such as the UNDP and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), would be a subsidiary body to the General Assembly and report to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

WEDO and CWGL are both members of a 300-organization-strong coalition called the Gender Equality Architecture Reform campaign (GEAR) that has vocally advocated restructuring of UN agencies to better serve women. In light of plans to create the new women's entity GEAR has articulated certain criteria for the entity's effectiveness. These include country-level operations for the new agency, a transparent recruitment process for a qualified and visionary Under-Secretary General, and the inclusion of civil society and NGOs in decision-making and governing processes at all levels of the new agency. GEAR is also concerned with the funding of the agency, and would like to see the agency's budget grow from the initial \$500 million the Secretary-General suggested in his proposal to over \$1 billion over time.

Currently, the choice to officially establish the entity is in the hands of member states, which must adopt a founding resolution in the General Assembly in order to make the new entity official. "The Secretary-General has been urging Member States to expedite matters and to take this up in the General Assembly as a priority for the current GA [General Assembly] session; and, he looks forward to a swift decision by the General Assembly and stands ready to appoint the senior official who will head the new entity once established," Ari Gaitanis of the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General told MediaGlobal in an e-mail.

- **Shea Production Vital to Women's Incomes**

Bamako — Across the semi-arid Sahel region of West Africa, the shea tree prized by women, who produce a butter from its nuts that is a key ingredient in food and cosmetics. However, drought and diseases threaten this source of income.

"Shea represents 80 percent of rural women's income," says Fatoumata Coulibaly, explaining how women go out to collect the nuts and later process them to make shea butter. Coulibaly is a member of La Maison du karité ("the House of Shea"), a women's group in Siby, a village in southern Mali. IPS spoke to the young woman during Global Shea, an international forum on shea trade that took place in mid-March in Bamako, the Malian capital.

Shea trees grow wild in West Africa. According to experts, they take 25 years to reach maturity and their lifetime can span two centuries. In the rainy season, women pick the trees' fruit - a sweet pulp wrapped around an oily kernel. In the dry season, they sell a portion of their nuts to international companies and process the rest themselves for sale on the local market.

In West Africa, shea butter is used in cooking by nearly 80 percent of the rural population. Its also used in traditional medicine, and the wood from the tree is prized as fuel.

The trees many uses have assured its protection for centuries by local populations, some of whom even consider it sacred.

"We treat shea with respect. That is why we organise ceremonies when shea trees reach maturity," said Nayouma Coulibaly, a woman from Tioribougou, a village in southern Mali.

But now, according to the Albert Schweitzer Ecological Centre, a Swiss-based nongovernmental organization (NGO), shea trees face many threats such as drought, diseases and over-use as a source of firewood.

Not all observers agree that there is a problem.

"I don't think there's cause to worry. Actually, the number of shea trees is on the rise, because people have now started planting them. I've done so myself," said Seydou Kone.

Kone is a trade technician with AMEPROC, Mali's association of exporters of agricultural products, headquartered in Bamako. AMEPROC is combatting shea tree disappearance and disease by conducting public education in rural areas where shea trees are threatened, training local populations on shea planting and protection.

Among the roughly 16 countries where shea grows, Burkina Faso, Mali, Benin and Nigeria represent the bulk of world production. Mali occupies an important position in the market.

"With nearly 150 million shea trees, Mali is ranked second largest producer after Burkina Faso with an output of about 60,000 tonnes per year," Kadidiatou Lah told IPS. Lah is a shea butter exporter based in Bamako. She's also the president of Mali's National Federation of Shea Exporters, which trains rural women in shea tree planting.

The growth of international demand for shea outside Africa is explained in part by its expanded use by the food industry in some developed countries. In 2000, a decree came into effect in Europe allowing chocolate manufacturers to use a limited amount of fat other than cocoa butter in their products, up to five percent.

This change in regulations, which had previously been the case in Japan, the United States and Eastern Europe, has opened up new opportunities for shea. "Today countries from all continents import shea butter or shea nuts to extract butter," confirmed Lah.

Local shea producers have no influence over the price fetched by shea nuts and butter internationally. "The prices change frequently on the international market, but at the

moment a kilogramme of shea nuts costs between 500 and 600 CFA francs (just over one U.S. dollar)," said Kone.

Large companies prefer to buy their shea nuts from villages through local buyers who roam the countryside. However, these intermediaries make far more profit from the trade than rural women producers.

"The local market is different," Kone told IPS. "In Mali, the current price of a kilogramme of shea nuts is 75 CFA francs (15 cents U.S.)."

Large firms are reluctant to buy shea butter produced by local rural women due to its strong smell. Industry professionals, explain that this smell can be avoided by following certain procedures during processing.

But the extraction method used by most Malian women is not very efficient, extracting roughly 27 percent of the oils from the nuts, compared to 40 to 50 percent achieved with industrial technology, experts say.

However, locally produced butter has seen improvements. In addition to serving the local market, fair trade schemes have allowed women to export valuable finished product to large markets in developed countries.

- **United Nations Addresses Urbanization and Ways to Implement Programs**

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infrastructure and housing projects towards the urban slums in developing countries. In addition, a large focus is being directed towards the urban youth, increasing opportunities in education and promoting equality.

- **Watch Out - Newest Threat is Now Fish Grabbing**

Addis Ababa — Africa has failed to protect its water territory not only along the Somalia Coast but also in west and south.

This failure has caused massive exploitation and fish grabbing from Africa by the Western and Asian nations and companies, a pan-African maritime security gathering in the continent has revealed.

The two-day continental conference organised by the African Union in Addis Ababa was also attended by representatives from the United Nations and European Union.

And, top on the agenda of the continental forum was piracy and illegal fishing.

The African Union lamented that after decades after attaining independence, African countries were still losing sea resources, namely fish, to western nations.

Fish is the cheapest source of protein for millions of African poor communities.

AU peace and security director Mr El Ghassim Wane told says Africa has failed to enforce measures to defend its water territories. Poor information sharing experience among African nations also aggravates the situation.

According to United Nation Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Africa is losing billions of dollars a year from illegal fish grabbing. FAO cited a recently a growing trend of illegal fishing in eastern, western, and south western Africa.

Guinea from West Africa is the most affected from illegal fishing. The country loses about \$100 million annually. Senegal and Liberia also severely affected while Angola from the SADC region loses \$50 million.

In the eastern Africa region, Tanzania was listed as the most invaded.

Mr Alhaji Jallow, a senior fisheries expert of FAO in an interview with the Nation said illegal incursion in prohibited water areas and misuse of authorisation are now growing trends. He declined to name the invaders but hinted they are mainly from the West and Asia.

According to FAO, some 80 per cent of global fish stock was consumed in the last one decade. Currently 50 per cent of global fishing is illegal.

In July 2009, African Union leaders decided to devise a mechanism to defend Africa's water territory. The union is undertaking a strategy to develop a common position.

Somali Deputy Prime Minister Abdulrahman Aden Ibrahim Ibbi said besides the country being plagued by piracy, it is also suffering from illegal fishing and toxic chemical dumping since 1990's.

Somali piracy was also on the agenda and AU once again expressed its disappointment on the western nations approach to deal with it. Mr Wane said piracy should be dealt with in a comprehensive manner. "Pirates are emerging from the land not from the sea," he added.

And, Somalia's deputy PM, Mr Ibbi urged the international community to support the transitional government which is vital to dry the source of piracy.

According to the Somali government's report to the AU, the European Union requires \$150 million annually to fight pirates but the ransom for the same period is cheaper \$ 30 million.

The number of armed pirates was only 300 in 2005 but now it has multiplied to nearly 1700.

According to the Aden Ibrahim, Somalia Islamist group al Shabaab is benefiting from the ransom money and at least 20 per cent of the money ends with Al -Shabaab officials.

Ransom provides an opportunity to pirates to sustain and own sophisticated weapons and high speed boats.

"You can't stop pirates by deploying naval ships or patrolling the airspace unless you support peace effort inside Somalia" Aden Ibrahim said.

"The ransom money comes by helicopter and is dropped in to the sea by balloon, how do you believe that it's not the idea of 16-year-old Somali boys?" He asked the gathering.

- **Fiber Optics in Sub-Saharan Region Improve Infrastructure**

As of 6 April, 9800 km of the East African Submarine Cable System (known as EASSy) have been deployed to nine countries along the East African coast, offering more advanced internet and better connectivity to Europe, the Americas, the Middle East, and Asia.

Fiber optics transmits information by sending pulses of light through an optical fiber cable. Since the 1990s, the developed world has used fiber optics to deliver fast and more accessible Internet, thus revolutionizing the telecommunications industry.

Companies like Kenya Data Networks (KDN) and Telecom are the major players in financing fiber optic initiatives like The East African Marine Systems (TEAMS), SEACOM, and EASSy.

According to the Minister of Information and Communication Samuel Poghiso, "We witnessed the landing of both TEAMS and SEACOM cables and though both are operational stakeholders, the public is yet to experience any remarkable changes in the pricing of bandwidth as had been expected. As a government, we expect that when operational, EASSy will create a competitive environment where bandwidth prices will fall, so that service providers can pass this benefit to customers."

Until recently, the least developed countries in Africa have been left out of technological advancements involving fiber optics. However, due to investments and projects launched in 2007, Africa has not only been included in these initiatives, but fiber optics are now actually being implemented in these areas.

Brian Herlihy is the CEO of SEACOM, a privately funded broadband Internet provider using fiber optics. Herlihy told MediaGlobal, "SEACOM is very pleased to see that extra capacity is slowly reaching the East African seaboard with additional fiber optic cables including EASSy and TEAMS." The aim is to connect the major urban areas of Kenya, Mozambique, Madagascar, South Africa, and Tanzania ultimately decreasing the price of Internet for consumers.

After the addition of Madagascar, the EASSy cable was installed in the Kenyan port of Mombasa on 29 March. Testing of the system will begin in April and the entire system is projected to be complete by the end of June. Herlihy told MediaGlobal, "KDN's extensive inland infrastructure in East Africa will link our landing station in Mombasa to Nairobi, and onward to Kampala and Kigali. Connecting Ethiopia is based on the same principle, and we will continue to connect additional landlocked countries."

While the long-term impact of fiber optics is presently unknown, broadband Internet is having positive effects on short-term profitability in Africa. The FIFA World Cup to be held for the first time in South Africa uses SEACOM cables to deliver optimum communication to the rest of the world. Herlihy told MediaGlobal, "SEACOM is providing the highest degree of backup to meet the stringent service levels of FIFA and to ensure that South Africa is able to deliver world class quality and meet the heavy data requirements expected during an event of this magnitude."

While it remains to be seen whether EASSy and other fiber optic networks will provide faster and cheaper Internet, the fact that the projects have successfully been implemented is an accomplishment in and of itself. It is encouraging that foreign investors and especially African-based companies are taking a particular interest in infrastructure projects they believe will improve the economic development of East Africa.

Ghana:

1. Political News:

- **Let's Stop The Public Indiscipline**

Appearance of Former President Kufuor in Court - Improper and Liable to Incite Riot Against Due Process

By: Dr. Kwaku A. Danso

I want to make my opinions known and recorded on the appearance in court as reported in the media, by former President Kufuor in support of the former Ministers of his administration charged with crimes. This appearance was wrong and even though one cannot say there is any law against it, it is more likely to incite indiscipline. The former President is advised to stay away from any of these criminal trials to maintain his dignity and to avoid any association with any of these acts of criminality.

It is quite clear that the Ghana Attorney General's office is stressed and overburdened due to most possibly understaffing and factors relating to leakage of information from the AG offices by supporters of the former NPP in the work force. The staffing shortage for a government department that is supposed to be the guardian of our laws and for protecting the nation's financial and ethical integrity and adherence to laws, is unfortunate. It reflects poor planning on the part of the financial managers of Ghana, i.e., the Minister of Finance and the head of state himself, the President. Nobody gets a job done that needs to be done without hiring the best latent. If need be, Ghana has to pay these prosecuting lawyers and staff more than average. According to a report released some few weeks ago, the Attorney General, Honorable Betty Mould Idrissu herself has confessed that she is "poor", and did not even encourage her own children and family members to enter the legal professions. This is very unfortunate.

This is very unfortunate indeed, and in as much as we should not make this personal, how do societies move forward and develop under a democracy without a strong legal enforcement of laws and regulations and paying the lawyers who work on convicting crimes good money! How do you catch thieves who have stolen huge sums of money, and not pay the officers a decent money for their work? How do you pay police men so poorly and asks them to catch thieves and criminals involving drug barons and lots of money! Simple logic and human resource management suggest a better pay and incentive, and once we can collect the billions of dollars in grants and loans missing, we should reward workers who help the state achieve set goals towards a better and safer society!

Ghana is bleeding profusely to the tune of some \$4 Billion or more in the last 8 years under the Kufuor administration. At the beginning of 2001 the accumulated debt of Ghana stood at \$6.2 Billion. After the HIPC and then the forgiveness or debts or write-off

by the G8 nations during the Gleneagles conference, Ghana was able to write off an estimated \$3.8 billion. On the other hand after the new government took over in January 2009, the accumulated debt of Ghana was reported as \$8.1 billion! How did this increase in debts occur? Something is missing! Grants and loans for water of about \$603 million in 2005/2006 have never been fully accounted for! In 2008 alone only \$30,000 of the \$295 million in foreign grants could be accounted for in the Auditor General's report! The \$700 million for electricity production has not been fully accounted for, and according to a former British Diplomat, there has been massive malfeasance to our detriment. Ghana is now undergoing huge losses due to poor erratic and unreliable delivery of electricity. The Ghana@50 and Jubilee House construction has seen more than \$100 million that seems to be missing due to poor accounting, poor management, or deliberate acts of corruption or malfeasance! Ghana Airways was bleeding in the hundreds of millions while the planes were full most of the time. Ghana Telecom was losing money when in fact the revenues are enough to make a profit. Most persons, educated and the not well educated in Ghana know there is huge public theft, and as such it is incumbent on members of both parties to quell the emotions and let the law take its course. The disgrace is simply too much! Ghanaians have had enough and we expect due process to take place!

This writer strongly advises the Minister of Finance to evaluate the financial support given to the offices of the Attorney General and the State prosecution, and propose to parliament to seriously increase the funding for experienced staff, even professionals with overseas experience who can help Ghana retrieve the billions of dollars being lost every year! There is no point imposing huge duties and taxes in the 45% to 200% range on vehicles and goods imported to raise revenue, and there is no point in taking all these billions in loans only for some demented members of our government to siphon the moneys into private accounts! We need to be serious and support the state machinery for law enforcement! And that is the AG office, the State prosecutors, and the police departments! Once again I advice decentralization - a needed relinquishing of some of the powers of the president, and allow districts and towns to elect their own mayors or Chief executives who will learn to hire competent staff and impose their own property and other taxes, design their own budgets for police, security, and even for the financing of their own schools, water and roads. This is what is done overseas where our President and most of our government leaders have studied or lived!

Let the politicians sit aside and let the law take its course! Let us do the right thing! It's been half a century after independence! Yes, we can!

- **Can Mills Cage Rawlings?**

This is what Rawlings told the youth forum a

"Former President Rawlings said the NDC is a very special phenomenon that came out of the PNDC and AFRC and questioned how many of the youth of the party will report to the President on the negative happenings on the ground. "How many of you will for

instance report the poor performance of District Chief Executives. Forty percent of them are under-performing. Some of them are outright incompetent. "If you the youth see things and do not say it and I say it then I become an easy target all the time. But the reality of what I say is out there and you have to voice it out," the former President said."

The solipsism of Rawlings took center stage when the vindictive, self-serving raving lunatic former head of state met the youth in a forum organised by the Youth Wing of the NDC party at Ho last Saturday. I know there is enormous panorama of opinion as to where the hecklers of the day and armed robbers of the night who call themselves the youth wing of this party get their moral support from. Listening to the statement blivate from Rawlings, one is left with no choice but to believe Rawlings is the brain behind the lawlessness going on in Ghana by using the youth wing of NDC to create chaos and havoc and make ruling of the country too hard for the hugger-mugger Mills administration.

Folks, don't get me wrong, when one live with rats, the possibility of growing whiskers to adapt to the living environment of rats cannot be avoided. Mills is the beneficiary of Rawlings hypocrisy and I have no sympathy for him for tasting the other side of Rawlings sword, good for him. Now Rawlings is urging his drug addict zombies to defy laid down rules of his own Party and take the law into their hands without any regard to authority.

Rawlings has realised that, coup d'tat is not going to be entertained in Ghana even if he can find some fools in the Army to help him carry one out so as cunning as a fox that he is, he has found another avenue to make himself relevant in an administration that has shunned every move of his to control it by turning to the mostly unemployed 'korbolors' who make their living robbing innocent Ghanaians to carry water for him. Can you blame Rawlings for taking advantage of a slow and coward President who is afraid to act due to his need to be liked by everybody? This is a President who is afraid to take a position on any issue and instead resorted to setting up committees to even decide when he should take his prescribed nose bleed medicine.

The day this President lost the respect of the country was when he acceded to the armed robbers who call themselves NDC Youth wing and fired that thief called Carl Wilson who was stealing cars for the Castle Mafia. Remember this Carl Wilson stealing endeavour came out a few months ago and we were made to believe that, this guy who might not even be Ghanaian was on his way out of that job but immediately after the furor has died down, he was allowed to keep his job and continue to steal cars. He was only dismissed because he started seizing cars belonging to NDC sympathizers which did not sit well with some people in NDC including the Party chairman, Dr Kwabena Adjei. Does the President need the NDC Youth wing to tell him to fire a car thief operating under his nose from the Castle?

A couple of weeks ago, the Minister of Upper East Region and the Police Commander of that region refused to grant the Mamprussis a permit to hold a festival at Bawku due to the security situation of that town but the Mamprussi youth who doubles as the NDC

youth wing of Bawku told the authorities they will go ahead and hold their festival, permit or not. What is amazing is that, the Mamprussis went ahead and had their festival despite being denied the right to hold this festival, thank God, there were few minor incidents during the celebration of this Mamprussi festival. What all these incidents by the NDC various youth wing portray is that, they are above the laws of the land as the Commander of the Yendi Police attested to: that, he is not prepared to arrest these hooligans from NDC because he is not ready to lose his job by taking such a formidable force on.

“But the reality of what I say is out there and you have to voice it out,” the former President said.”

Is this not inciting the youth to take the laws into their hands? Is Rawlings not committing the same crime Nana Darkwa is charged for making statements that can cause disturbances in the country? Why is Rawlings not arrested? Does he has more rights as a citizen than Nana Darkwa?

"AGYA ATTA, OPEN YOUR EYES OOOO"

What is Rawlings telling the Youth of this lawless NDC Party to do? Take the law into their own hands and start seizing NHIS, NYEP offices and resort to mob rule? That is exactly what they did when immediately after his speech, the Yendi wing of the NDC youth wing appropriated to itself the administration of that district by running the DCE of Yendi away by threatening his life if he dares come back to Yendi.

Our beloved country has a vacuum at the Presidency since the man elected to rule has an aversion of making decisions and will rather allow the NDC hooligans being encouraged by the narcissistic schadenfreude Rawlings to rule under proxy through the NDC Youth bandits.

Justice Sarpong

- **NUGS Condemns Violence amongst Youth and Cautions Government**

The National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS) has observed with very keen interest the recent spate of violence and lawlessness exhibited by some youth purported to be the NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS (NDC) youth and its consequent implications for the peace of our dear country.

Very pertinent to us is the disturbing news of:

- 1) Seizure of government properties especially office keys seizures
- 2) Threat of life and property of government appointees

- 3) Some youth marching to court to support the cause of a political party
- 4) Libelous and unguided statements on media networks all over the country especially the case of NANA DARKWA
- 5) Hijacking of journalists
- 6) Car seizures and hijacking by some reckless youth
- 7) The growing level of insecurity and violence in the Northern parts of the country e.g. BAWKU, GUSHIEGU, CHEREPONI, BUNPURUGHU, ASHAIMAN etc.

The National Union of Ghana Students would want to state that, we are not enthused in anyway as to the gravity of violence mounting amongst the youth. We are therefore calling on the youth regardless of political, tribal and religious inclinations to exercise restraint and demonstrate civility in their quest to register their displeasure.

We also call on the Office of the President, the Ministry of Interior, National Commission for Civic Education, the Police Administration, the National Youth Council and the Ministry of Youth and Sports to show more commitment to issues affecting the youth.

Government should do more with respect to security for government institutions, clear and very pragmatic plans of job creation.

We also want to call on all Political parties seeking Political power to make Political promises with some level of circumspection and moderation, this we believe will though not in entity lessen the wild expectations of the youth.

NUGS will in entity support any move by government to stamp its authority in such matters and to bring to book such reckless and irate youth.

Should government renege on its core responsibility in securing the peace of this country, we the National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS) will hold them accountable!

- **Terrorism in Ghana**

Terrorism in Ghana – Joseph Boakye Danquah and his cohorts in UP were the first home grown terrorists.

The events of 11th September 2001 in United States and subsequent bombings in Europe have been acknowledged as a watershed in international concern with the issue of terrorism, however these events do not reflect a sudden new threat, but reaffirmation of a trend that had been evident for several years, especially in Ghana during Dr Kwame Nkrumah's Convention Peoples Party administration.

As most are aware, terrorism is an unlawful use of violence against individuals or property to coerce and intimidate governments or societies for political objectives. In most countries the physical targets for terrorist attack vary and normally take into consideration the relaxation of anti-terrorist measures related to potential targets – in the case of the chief instigator of terrorism in Ghana in the 1960s, Joseph Boakye Danquah and his bunch of UP terrorists/criminals, the target was Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah, founder and father of Ghana.

What made the criminal Boakye Danquah and his cohort's terrorism so fearsome in the 1960s is that attacks were directed at our President, Dr Kwame Nkrumah, and in the process those that did suffer injury and death were innocent bystanders including the law enforcement officers, women and children.

It is common knowledge that once an organisation has been defined as terrorist organisation, legislation provides for it to be banned or declared prohibited and that is precisely what the Ghanaian government did at the period by the passing of PDA.

It was not until towards the end of the last decade of the 20th century that United Nations under the leadership of Kofi Annan passed a resolution – UN General Assembly Resolution 54/110 of 9 December 1999 stating that terrorism comprises “criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes”.

Most contemporary writing on terrorism focuses on the international manifestations of terrorism; state terror has been a long-standing feature in Ghana – the UP terrorist activities under Boakye Danquah and the 1966 coup that overthrew a legitimate government by armed criminals in uniform under another terrorist – Akwasi Amakwa Afrifa and his cohort K.A Busia.

As events in Ghana in the 1960s and Kenya in 2000s attest to, terrorism in Africa is overwhelmingly of a domestic, sub-state nature that kills, maims and affects millions of people.

In the late 1990s terrorism experts warned then President Rawlings of a new breed of terrorists that would come and replace the earlier era of state-terrorism. The new threat came from loose groupings (associated with New Patriotic Party) resorted to terror – “killings of innocent women in Ghana prior to the 2000 elections” – as a way to strike against the National Democratic Convention. As is noted in Ghana, gone are the tightly knit group professional terrorists – Danquah and his cohorts, often in the pay of foreign powers and in their place are a larger amorphous groups within NPP. There is much evidence to indicate that the resurgence of armed robberies' and killings of journalists just the 2008 elections has its roots in the development of covert alliance between NPP killers and criminal elements in the security services sympathetic to NPP.

In retrospect it is clear that the terrorist threats to Dr Nkrumah's CPP government were a

preview of the events of the late 1990s when innocent women were murdered countrywide by criminals sympathetic to NPP. Although the killings came as surprise, danger signs had been evident before then, going back to the 1960s bombings by the criminal Joseph Boakye Danquah and his cohorts. The internet, cell phones and dirty money from narcotic trafficking provide a facilitating environment.

Afia Kuffuor

2. Economy:

- **GhIPPS introduces software to enhance settlement of transactions**

GNA - The Ghana Interbank Payment and Settlement Systems (GhIPSS) has introduced a utility software that makes it possible to settle the day's transaction on the e-zwich Point of Sales (POS) device and other functions without relying on a GPRS system which uses a mobile phone chip. Known as PCPAD, the software which runs on the Internet service, is installed on a computer and then connected to the POS using a USB cord. A statement by GhIPSS on Monday said PCPAD was available to the banks and could also be used by shops which had internet facilities.

"The introduction of the PCPAD is to provide an option to users of the POS any time the GSM network system are slow or down." The statement quoted the General Manager of GhIPSS in charge of Project and Business Development, Mr Archie Hesse, as saying that, with PCPAD interruptions in e-zwich services during settlement were now a thing of the past.

"This software comes in handy during settlements, profile upload and online services," he said. The other functions including making payment with the e-zwich card, could however be performed offline.

3. Energy:

- **Mining in Ghana**

Mining in Ghana

BRITISH colonialists called Ghana the Gold Coast. To this day it remains Africa's second-biggest producer of the metal, after South Africa, and the world's ninth-biggest. Five foreign mining firms are digging huge open pits to get at the gold, encouraged by recent record prices. But the country, once seen as one of Africa's most welcoming jurisdictions for mining firms, is now becoming more exacting.

Ghana's parliament has voted to increase royalties from 3% to 5%, although the president has yet to sign the bill. In February the country's environmental regulator suspended production at AngloGold Ashanti's Iduapriem mine because the mine's tailings dam,

which stores cyanide-laced waste, was almost full. Last year the agency prevented Golden Star Resources, a Canadian firm, from expanding a mine where it had failed to fill an abandoned pit. Most notably, earlier this year it fined Newmont, the world's second-biggest goldmining firm, \$4.9m over a cyanide spill at its Ahafo mine.

The immediate cause of the increase in royalties is a budget deficit of almost 10% of GDP. But underlying it and the increasingly strict enforcement of environmental rules is a sense that Ghana is not getting much benefit from its mineral wealth. Gold accounted for 40% of exports in 2008, with a value of \$2.2 billion. But the government received only \$116m in taxes and royalties from mining firms—less than 4% of the country's total tax take. "When you come here as an investor," says Sherry Ayittey, the minister of the environment, "don't come to mine and pollute the water bodies, repatriate your profits and leave our people suffering."

Mining firms, predictably, are unenthusiastic. They say a new royalty regime could deter future investment and, in some cases, violate existing agreements. The government, in turn, is trying to renegotiate those agreements. Billy Mawasha, who runs Iduapriem, says his firm is not dogmatic, but had hoped that "the investment agreement would stay in place as it is."

In rich and poor countries alike, taxes and royalties tend to gyrate with commodity prices, as governments seek to cream off a greater share of profits in good years and stimulate investment in lean ones. Several other African countries, including Tanzania and Zambia, have gone backwards and forwards on royalties in recent years. But Ghana's new tack is noteworthy since the country is in the midst of an oil boom. Several Western oil firms are developing fields off the country's coast. Production is likely to start next year, and to bring in far more money than mining. The government hopes to capture more than a third of the proceeds in one way or another. It is even arguing over a big investment by Exxon Mobil—a sure sign of resolve.

- **ABB wins \$13m power order in Ghana**

ABB, the leading power and automation technology group, has won an order worth over \$13 million from the Volta River Authority in Ghana, to supply equipment to improve the country's power transmission network.

Working with Ghana's electrical transmission provider, Ghana Grid Company, ABB will supply, deliver, install and commission a new SCADA/EMS (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition/Energy Management System) and communications system, which includes advanced functions for network analysis and optimisation, automatic generation control, energy interchange scheduling and transaction monitoring.

The project is a key component of the 330 kilovolt Coastal Transmission Backbone initiative, a program financed by the World Bank to improve the reliability of power supplies by encouraging efficient power trading between the coastal countries of West

Africa.

The communications equipment includes remote terminal units for around 50 substations, fiber optic terminal equipment and the power line carrier communication system to connect the control centre and the substations. Ancillary equipment such as uninterrupted power supply units, video surveillance systems and other telecom components will also be supplied.

Comprehensive training will be given to employees. The project is expected to be completed in 19 months.

“This solution will enable efficient management and control of the power network, helping to minimise transmission losses and support stable operation of the national grid,” stated Jens Birgersson, head of ABB’s Network Management business.

4. Environment:

5. Immigration/Refugee/Idps:

6. Health:

- **Ghanaians Undergo Malaria Vaccine Trial**

More than 1,500 Ghanaians, mainly from Kintampo, are participating in the third phase of a trial to determine the efficacy of the first vaccine for malaria.

About 16,000 children in two age groups — six to 10 weeks and five to 17 months are being selected from seven African countries, including Ghana, to take part in the three-year trial.

The vaccine RTS,S is currently the most clinically advanced malaria vaccine candidate in the world. The participants will be selected from Kintampo to be part of the study.

In an interview in Washington DC, Dr Ashley Birkett of the Malaria Vaccine Initiative (MVI) said results of studies had shown that RTS,S was safe and could reduce the risk of clinical episodes of malaria.

On the sidelines of the 58th annual meeting of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene taking place in Washington DC, USA, Dr Birkett told the Daily Graphic that the RTS,S vaccine could reduce the risk of clinical episodes of malaria in young children by 53 per cent over an eight-month follow-up period and decrease by 65 per cent the risk of infection in infants over a six-month follow-up period.

Malaria kills nearly 900,000 people a year, most of them children in sub-Saharan Africa. In Ghana, about 4,500 deaths traceable to malaria are recorded annually and 1,500

children under five die from malaria every year, while 60 pregnant women die every year from malaria.

The PATH Malaria Vaccine Initiative (MVI), a global health non-profit organisation working to accelerate the development of malaria vaccines and to ensure their available and accessible in the developing world.

He said findings indicate that RTS,S can be safely administered as part of the traditional Expanded Programme of Immunisation (EPI).

Depending on the final clinical profile of the vaccine and the regulatory review process, the first vaccine introduction could take place over the next three to five years.

Dr Birkett emphasised that eradicating of malaria would require that the vaccines being developed were used together with existing interventions such as indoor residual spraying, insecticide treated nets and drug therapy.

Another vaccine in the offing is being developed with the aim of blocking the cycle of malaria transmission among people in a community.

According to Dr Birkett, the transmission-blocking vaccines which was in the early clinical trial stage aimed to interrupt the life cycle of the malaria parasite by including antibodies in humans that prevented the parasite from maturing in the mosquito after it bites a vaccinated person.

The transmission-blocking vaccines would not prevent the person receiving the vaccine from getting malaria, but would significantly limit the spread of infection and disease to others.

For instance, the MVI is also working with Sanaria Incorporated to develop the malaria vaccine that uses the approach of a weakened form of *Plasmodium falciparum*, the parasite responsible for more than 95 per cent of malaria related illness and death worldwide; and the malarial parasite for which there is the most significant drug resistance.

The CEO of Sanaria, Dr Stephen Hoffman said the vaccine developed for blocking malaria transmission has been found to be safe and is currently being tested in adult volunteers in the United States.

7. Human rights/Gender/Social Issues:

• A Discourse: Aid and Sustainable Development in Africa

A possible reaction of a newcomer to the aid debate might be one of surprise at the number of experts in the field who appear to agree on the shortcomings of aid to Africa and yet place disproportionate focus on the formulation of possible solutions.

These concurrencies in thought often occur to the degree of individuals being able to independently but collectively pinpoint exact problematic areas. With all the arguments against aid and corresponding supporting evidence of its failure to alleviate the continent's perpetual predicament being quite ubiquitous, a justification for the continued toeing of the line, steadily in propagation of the status quo is in glaring absence.

In the light of its past and continuing failings perhaps the time has come to innovate and challenge the short-comings of the Aid to Africa vehicle. The theory of 'Dead Aid' propounded by Dr Dambisa Moyo (<http://dambisamoyo.com/>) conveys such a paradigm shift; she expresses the need to wean Africa and Africans off 'The Aid Drug'. An intriguing yet radical concept though it is, various speakers and experts in the field seem to inadvertently give credence, in varying extents to Dr Moyo's outwardly implausible ideas by creating a piecemeal mosaic of the ramifications and various failings of aid in Africa over the last half-century.

Attempting to lay out a framework for measuring the effectiveness of aid in Africa, makes clearer the phenomenon of the Aid Paradox. In so doing, the primary objective of aid to Africa is determined by mapping out major focus areas and destinations by country and economic sector. One notices from such an exercise that the claim that aid to Africa had failed might be amiss without a proper identification of its intended aim. From a thorough analysis, an observation is made that, the major drivers of development particular to the continent including agriculture, health and education had not been the primary focus of aid receipts in the last fifty years. Neither have the poorest or richest countries in Africa received a proportionally higher aid package relative their neighbours. From these insights, it becomes apparent that the purpose of aid to Africa has not been towards the development of the continent and its people, neither has it been purposed for the alleviation of the cycle of unending poverty nor as a reward or encouragement for progressive behavior on the continent. Hence to set these as a yardstick by which to determine aid's achievements in Africa would be less than apt. Aid in Africa, has been successful in getting African countries to adopt donor countries' recommendations of policy and to open up their respective markets.

A glimpse from another lens may be gleaned from the practical workings of aid through a Non-Governmental Organization's (NGO) standpoint. This discussion encompasses a great deal of insights from the interplay of such organizations with the governments of recipient countries to the social and moral impacts made in the lives of the people these NGO seek to reach. As a case in point: The Hunger Project in Ghana focuses on creating change through the structure of a community; the bottom-up approach strives to empower the people at the grassroots level as a vehicle towards ensuring accountability and progress at higher levels. It focuses on education, health and economic empowerment among others while also placing emphasis on the elevation of women's issues. THP seemed to have a sturdy mission and a sound methodology; However, despite the

laudable passion with which these outfits take on their roles, it becomes apparent the magnitude of obstacles that they face. Ultimately, dealing with issues of unpredictable and inadequate cash flows and especially a lack of understanding of existing local situations in donor preferences present quite the challenge to such organizations in their ongoing drive towards sustainability.

In considering aid in Africa, China cannot be overlooked as a strategic investor. In Ghana, the national theatre, a beautifully crafted architectural piece in the heart of the capital's business district stands in brilliant attestation to the presence of Chinese expertise. China's policy comprises of issuing to Africa asset-backed loans in an effective bid to ensure against default in repayments. The preference of the Chinese lies in offering aid in the form of infrastructural arrangements with recipient countries. In contrasting the pre-existing definitions and approaches to aid in Africa by the Eastern and Western developing and developed world respectively, the result proves neither side as having the better methodology. It is all but a foregone conclusion that China in dealings on the African continent has no other purpose than to further her country's interests. Like with the West, the onus lies on African nations in deciding how best to execute these relationships and ties to the best benefit of the citizenry.

The US President Barrack Obama in his maiden speech in Sub-Saharan Africa last year revisited a popular paradigm when he reiterated the call for "African solutions to African problems". To further hit on this wholesome ideology, an expounding on the workings of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) creates an agreeable motif. By virtue of its implementation directives, aid shifts accountability of African governments away from the people they govern to outside donors and in doing so disenfranchises citizens of African countries thereby undermining democracy. Several negative derivatives contrived from stringent conditionalities imposed on African countries play a large role in hindering the very framework of governance and obstructing the proliferation of a country's social structures and development. As a crude comparison, reference may be made to the many documented psychological publications that outline the negative effects of extrinsic incentives in subduing intrinsic incentives and leading to a situation of reduced performance; these effects can be especially pronounced when/if these external incentives are to be eventually removed altogether. As a rough draft, this behavioural phenomenon might help to explain the cases of reverse development seen in several 'aid-recipient' African countries; nations that are in reality worse off today than they were at the attainment of independence.

To effectively counteract the numerous vices propagating from aid to Africa, impactful events led to the founding of the APRM by a group of erudite Africans including ex-Presidents Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria. Underpinning the goals and objectives of the APRM are the establishment of a transparent and completely voluntary system of promoting good governance and sharing of best practices on the continent as a stepping stone towards forestalling some of the immense issues of governmental/leadership lapses spanning all of Africa's shores. Several success stories maybe cited in proving the sustainability of the APRM's model, including preliminary impacts in better management of ethnic diversity, corruption,

poverty and equality, youth empowerment and gender issues among others. Despite facing political, logistical and capacity impediments, the APRM seems to be proving its viability to critics in global arenas even to the extent of being used as a standard for decision-making pertaining to FDI in Africa.

In conclusion, a revisit of Dr Moyo's thesis seems to lend itself as an adequate vehicle for a possible direction that the debate for or against aid Africa might emanate from. Does aid currently do for Africa what aid should? What should aid do for Africa? Who decides what aid should do for Africa? Does Africa need aid and if so for how long? These are questions Dr Moyo tries to tackle in an attempt to see beyond the myriad of arguments on both sides of the divide to get the heart of the matter. It would appear that there is no cohesive leading school of thought on the direction that aid should take in Africa, this possibly stemming from there being no centralized alignment of how aid is dispersed, implemented or accounted for in Africa. Perhaps it behooves Africans to take the lead in deciding what part to play in the ongoing chronicle. Be it that Dr Moyo proposes a most drastic approach; the moral in this story could well be contained not in the extremism of her solution but in its virtue of possibly being one.

• **Ghana Muslim Mission holds conference in Accra**

GNA-Sheikh Dr. Amin Bonsu, Deputy Imam of the Ghana Muslim Mission has called on Ghanaians to adopt preventive measures that would keep them healthy at all times. He said the adoption of preventive measures would not only keep them healthy but would also cut down their huge medical bills and increase productivity.

Sheikh Bonsu made the call at the opening of a conference of the Greater Accra Regional branch of the Mission in Accra on Saturday. The conference under the theme: "Islam and Preventive Healthcare", was aimed at educating the members on the need to take preventive measures and also seek early medical treatment any time they fall sick. Sheikh Bonsu, who is also the Acting Ashanti Regional chairman of the Mission, advised them to eat more fruits and increase their daily water intake to replenish water lost through sweat. He urged them to desist from going into faith healers to seek medical treatment which he said sometimes lead to confusion and broken homes. "Some of these faith healers would tell you that your mother is a witch or your sister is having a hand in your sickness which in fact is not true ", he said Sheikh Bonsu appealed to Muslims to take interest in the annual hajj pilgrimage which he said was more exercise. Mr Ahmed Amartsen, Greater Accra Regional Chairman of the Mission urged Muslims to live by the tenets of Islam.

8. Geo-Strategic issues:

- **Togbe Afede calls for highways to link regional and district capitals**

Togbe Afede XIV, Agbogbomefia of Asogli State, on Saturday called on relevant authorities to plan and implement an inter-regional highway system that would link all regional and district capitals within a 10-year period.

Similarly, he called for programmes to ensure availability of uninterrupted power supply throughout the country, which he added, would help facilitate the cause of development.

Togbe Afede, also the President of Volta Regional House of Chiefs made this requests at the celebration of Lekoryi (Unity) festival of the Chiefs and People of Likpe Traditional Area in the Hohoe Municipality. The festival, which attracted citizens from far and near was on the theme: "Tourism for Sustainable Development and Wealth Creation". Togbe Afede said a new economic model that is christened on regional integration for accelerated development of Africa, which is still considered as the 'Dark Continent'.

He noted that colonial masters, who championed the division of the continent, have themselves found reason to unite as economic bloc. Togbe prayed Ghana takes up its leadership mantle again by renegotiating and concluding open-border agreement with its neighbours. "Starting a process that may lead to rapid integration of Africa would create one of the biggest markets in the world and benefits accruing to nations economically were enormous," he said.

On tourism, Togbe Afede said the Volta Region, a culturally diverse region, was highly ranked in the sector, endowed with attractions including caves, mountains, rivers and missionary architecture.

He called for public private approaches in harnessing and developing these potentials to international standards.

Nana Soglo Alloh IV, Paramount Chief of Likpe Traditional Area said this year's festival was to garner support for a project to electrically wire all basic schools in the traditional area, a prelude towards making all schools compliant for ICT and E-learning regimes.

He announced that Nexans Cable Metal Ghana Limited has made positive gestures by pledging 50,000 cedis to support the project, which is to cost 95,000 cedis.

Nana Alloh therefore entreated citizens both home and abroad to contribute their quota to the project, and urged corporate institutions and NGOs to support the course.

On Chieftaincy, he said the institution was still relevant in contemporary times, insisting that Chiefs eschew partisan politics as enshrined in the Constitution.

Nana Barima Owusu Afare, President of the Association of Ghana Industries (AGI) called on the Likpe Traditional Council to liaise with the Ministry of Tourism to repackage the tourism potentials in the area including the Likpe language to attract investment and patronage. He appealed to traditional areas without festivals to identify themselves with one, saying, it has become a rallying point for socio-economic

advancement.

Nana Afare urged the Traditional Council to institute an Education Committee to oversee the development of education in the area and appealed to parents to invest in their children's education. Mr Victor-Hermann Condobrey, Hohoe Municipal Chief Executive assured the people that the Likpe-Hohoe segment of road network has been awarded on contract.

He said government was aware of the potentials of the tourism sector and was working assiduously to partner with the private sector to develop the sites.

Nigeria:

1. Political News:

- **Perform or get out, Jonathan warns ministers**

Acting President Goodluck Jonathan yesterday warned the new ministers not to allow their personal interests override that of the nation. He said he will not tolerate any form of mediocrity and ministers who fail to measure up to expectation will be sacked.

Speaking at the inauguration of the new executive council of the federation which took place at the presidential villa Abuja, Mr Jonathan said the ministers must be alive to their responsibilities, "we owe this much to our people," he said. The new cabinet replaces one dissolved suddenly on March 17 by the acting president.

There are, however, still no substantial ministers for the ministries of Health, Water Resources and Power.

Dora Akunyili, who spoke against the conspiracy to keep the nature of ailing president Umaru Yar'Adua's illness a secret, made her way back to the ministry of information, while the former minister of state for petroleum, Odein Ajumogobia was moved to the foreign affairs ministry, with Aliyu Idi Hong as the minister of state.

The former Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Adetokunbo Kayode is the new defence minister, with Murtala Shehu Yar'Adua as the minister of state. Mohammed Bello Adoke now becomes the new Attorney General of the Federation.

Suleiman Bello from Zamfara State was appointed minister of state for health and Nuhu Wya becomes minister of state for power.

The new cabinet also saw the reassigning of Diezani Allison-Madueke as the new Petroleum minister; with Fidelia Njeze as aviation minister and John Odey retaining his place as minister of environment.

Jonathan in power

The acting president is to oversee the ministry of power for a certain period and will be working with the sub power committee of the presidential advisory council headed by Barth Nnaji.

Ebonyi and Taraba states are the only states yet to have ministerial nominees and the acting president is expected to forward four more names to the senate for screening and clearance.

Mr Jonathan told the new ministers that he will meet all of them in two week's time when they will agree on "ministerial milestones and targets" which they will sign and religiously follow.

Mr Jonathan orders the ministers to periodically update the public with progress reports of their performance and level of implementation of their ministries' targets.

He also urged them to "hit the ground running", adding that the administration will continue to pursue the implementation of the policies with which it came into office in May 2007.

He expressed his confidence in the team saying that the mission of the executive council is to deliver on the promise of good governance by showing competence, honesty of purpose, patriotism and selflessness in the business of governance.

Mr. Jonathan said he will be requesting a fortnightly briefing on the state of the economy from the economic team which shall be constituted very shortly.

The team, which he said will be under the chairmanship of the minister of finance, will help fast-track the process of development which he said is the most important task in the life of the nation.

He also warned the ministers to shun corruption, as the administration will not hesitate to take all necessary action to protect the bond of trust, which must always exist between the government and its people.

Ready for work

Most of the ministers resumed work immediately after the swearing in ceremony. Mr Ajumogobia was accompanied to the ministry by the permanent secretary, Martins Uhomoibhi, who had earlier witnessed the swearing in ceremony. Mrs Anenih, in a

meeting with the management-level staff in the women ministry, said she will ensure that the ministry increases female participation in politics by 100 per cent in 2011.

The newly appointed minister of the interior, Emmanuel Iheanacho,

Assumed office yesterday with a promise that his tenure will mark the end of large influx of foreigners entering the country unchecked. The minister, who was accompanied by the ministry's minister of state, Humprey Abbah, said despite having a limited time, the calibre of experienced staff they have met will be utilised to deliver on the federal government's agenda.

- **Barkindo's sack shocks industry**

The wind of change blowing across the country yesterday swept through the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), and took with it the group managing director, Mohammed Barkindo, who was removed from office with immediate effect, mildly shocking industry operators.

Mr. Barkindo, who succeeded Abubakar Yar'Adua, was appointed on January 12 last year, after serving previously as the Coordinator (Special Duties) of the corporation, where he presided over the execution of its major projects.

Transformation and controversy

Though he flew the banner of transformation of the NNPC into an independent national oil company with the capacity to compete for business with its contemporaries as the Petronas of Malaysia and Petrobras of Brazil, his tenure was, however, characterised by frequent disruptions in the supply of petroleum products.

The plank of the transformation was on the reform of the oil and gas sector anchored on the proposed Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB), designed to usher in a new order that would see the NNPC becoming a world class limited liability company, fully commercialised, profit-driven and subjected to the regulatory authorities in the country's oil and gas industry.

The process of pushing the proposed law through legislation was however trailed by controversies, particularly the role of the Barkindo administration in pushing a version of the bill different from that draft submitted by the Oil and Gas Implementation committee.

Not accountable

Besides, throughout the brief period of his tenure, observers say the NNPC was notorious for not being accountable in its operations. The corporation was indicted by the Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission for refusing to remit into the coffers of

the government oil revenue that accrued from its operations.

As at last month, the NNPC had, on three more occasions, failed to respond to the demand by the Federation Accounts Allocation Committee for it to come up with a plan to repay the N450billion outstanding indebtedness out of over N650billion the corporation claimed it incurred from subsidies on the importation of petroleum products.

The Senate committee of petroleum resources was on the verge of probing the Barkindo-led NNPC management for refusing to respond to several of its invitations to appear before it to answer questions relating to alleged illegal withholding of monies from the sale of crude oil.

There is also a pending \$55.3million consent judgement debt against the NNPC in favour of Lutin Investments Limited over alleged breach of a strategic storage reserve project, which Mr. Barkindo refused to honour, despite the intervention and approval of President Umaru Yar'adua.

- **Bakare faults clergy's visit to Yar'Adua**

Lagos Pastor and leader of the pro-democracy Save Nigeria Group, Tunde Bakare, has criticised the recent visits of Muslim and Christian clerics to President Umaru Yar'Adua as "the theatre of the absurd."

Mr. Bakare, who spoke in Lagos on Tuesday, on the heels of Monday's visit of Christian leaders to Mr. Yar'Adua, said: "It doesn't matter the number of clerics and 'babalawo' taken there. The simple truth is there is something to hide. You know those who operate in the light cannot be afraid to come out."

He said it is not a crime to be sick, but that Nigerians deserve to know the state of health of their president.

"My good wishes and prayers to the president, if he is truly recovering," he said. "If they are playing a dangerous political game with his health situation, then nobody should give support to the foolishness that is going on."

Citing the example of Fidel Castrol of Cuba, the clergyman said powerful world leaders had also found themselves in such situation before, but have been open about it. He said the cohorts taking care of the president should be asked: "what is wrong with allowing the acting president to see him at the Aso Villa?"

"I think you journalists should do a serious investigative journalism on this. To be honest with you, I think everything is just becoming the theatre of the absurd; that is all that I could say."

Last Thursday, some Islamic leaders have visited the ailing president. On Monday, it was

the turn of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), whose leadership claimed they sighted and prayed with Mr. Yar'Adua.

- **Ladan replaces Barkindo at NNPC**

Acting President Goodluck Jonathan yesterday announced Shehu Ladan as the new group managing director (GMD) for the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation. Mr. Ladan takes over the job from Mohammed Barkindo.

Spokesman of the acting president, Ima Niboro, who announced the change in the nation's oil company, said Mr. Ladan is expected to execute the administration's vision of transforming the NNPC into a global brand and player.

Mr. Jonathan thanked Mr. Barkindo for his stewardship and wished him well in his future endeavours.

Caught unawares

Mr. Barkindo was at the State House for the inauguration of the new cabinet and the sack obviously caught him unawares. Many sources have said he has been uncomfortable since Deziani Allison-Madueke was announced as the minister of petroleum. Mr. Ladan retired from the NNPC on April 6, 2009, as group executive director, commercial and investment.

He was also deputy managing director of the Nigeria LNG, executive director of NETCo as well as NPDC, both subsidiaries of NNPC.

There are also indications that the acting president will be overseeing the ministry of power. This explains why no substantive minister was announced for the ministry. It only has a minister of state, Nuhu Wya.

This will also not be the first time a president will be presiding over a ministry. The former president, Olusegun Obasanjo, also presided over ministry of petroleum for a short period.

Taking charge of power

While announcing the new order in the power ministry, which until the dissolution of the last cabinet in March 17, was presided over by Lanre Babalola, Mr. Niboro said the acting president will take charge of power for a certain period.

“The acting president will take charge of power for a certain period,” he said. “There is a new concept about power. It is going to run as a body that will be chaired by the acting president as chairman and he will take responsibility as minister for a certain period of time and the minister of state will be deputy chairman. This body will work in close

harmony with the power subcommittee of the presidential advisory council and Barth Nnaji heads this committee. He is an experienced power consultant.”

Mr. Niboro also added that the body to take charge of the new power initiative will be unveiled in a matter of days.

He further explained that the “new concept”, which is aimed at actualising government power generation target, is responsible for the vacant position of the substantive minister for the ministry of power.

- **Soyinka wants Orisa worshippers to visit Yar’Adua**

Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka has demanded audience with the ailing President Umaru Yar’Adua as a worshipper of Orisa, following recent visits to the presidency by leaders from the nation’s two main religions - Islam and Christianity.

Orisa is a generic name for traditional Yoruba religion.

Mr. Soyinka made this demand yesterday at the Civic Centre, where he delivered a lecture titled ‘Leadership and Followership as shared responsibility’ at an event organized by the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG).

Proper examination

Reacting to the reported visit of religious leaders to Mr. Yar’Adua over the weekend, Mr. Soyinka said “the clerics that have visited him have been very modest in their report. One said he couldn’t speak while another said he heard him grumble, but both agreed he could not use his hand. It is time a committee of Nigerian doctors actually sees Yar’Adua and examine that his hand was truly raised and as well examine if the hand can be used properly.”

Mr. Soyinka said there should be no limit to the group of people allowed to see the ailing president.

“There is a kind of insolence going on around the precincts of Aso Rock and, as privileged groups are now allowed to see him, I am going to send an application as a follower of Orisa demanding that Sango worshippers also want to see him now,” he said.

He then alleged that the president is a victim of spousal abuse and referred to him as President “Yar’Adua , I do or die”.

Leadership with a sign

In his lecture, Mr. Soyinka, defined the leadership in Nigeria in two ways: governmental leadership and civil leadership and he decried both level of leaderships in Nigeria, saying “government leadership in Nigeria is generally with a sigh.”

He also criticised the previously active civil society in the country. He said that, due to lack of leadership, “civil society became unbelievably comatose, and it took a lot too much of slapping just because each of them was looking for leadership.”

He therefore said Nigerians need to boost civil leadership so as to balance the zones of leadership; stating that “it is the civil leadership that has authority, what government leadership has is just power... and only the civil society can hold the government accountable. We need to make that power ludicrous.”

He commended renewed effort, as seen with the campaigns of the Save Nigeria Group (SNG) and Enough is Enough coalitions.

“The SNG is an ecumenical, non-partisan and very-very focused group, which is why I joined them,” he said. “This momentum must not be lost or else we return back to the treachery. People must develop the spirit of inconvenience and boycotting. NEPA would not have reached this deplorable state if the civil society was active. This kind of situation is intolerable. Nigerians are amazing people to have taken this much.”

He urged Nigerians to rally around the new movements, which seem to have found the required leadership. Using a Yoruba adage that says “debating if it is the man or woman that killed the snake is irrelevant, what wants matters is that the snake must be killed,” Mr. Soyinka said “that snake of corrupt or manipulative leadership must be killed.”

Iwu must go

The literary icon again reiterated his call for the removal of the chairperson of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Maurice Iwu, calling the INEC boss “a human obstacle to reforming the system.”

Then, reacting to a member of the audience who wondered about the point of voting if one knows that “in an election, my vote will not count”, Mr. Soyinka condemned the level of indolence of the Nigerian citizen, whom he described as “people always blaming the system.”

He called on Nigerians to come out of their shells and fight for the redemption of the country.

“Even when you know that your vote will not count, protecting that vote is part of the shared responsibility otherwise we get into the negative cycle where the other half makes sure you won’t have what you ever want,” he said. “If you rob me, I think it is my responsibility to go after you. It is a simple logical attitude.”

Sam Oluabunwa, the NESG's chairperson, affirmed that, with the small population of corrupt leaders, "the massive size of the civil society will swamp the government."

He identified the problem of civil society as a lack of civil leadership. According to Mr. Oluabunwa, "the challenge today is that the civil society needs to improve their leadership because the more vibrant the civil society, the more accountable the governmental leadership."

- **U.S. Supports Ex-EFCC Boss' Return**

Lagos — Washington has promised to protect former Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Chairman, Nuhu Ribadu, as he prepares to return to his country after two years of voluntary exile in Britain and the United States.

However, former Anambra State Governor, Chukwuemeka Ezeife, is unhappy about the lack of "moral high ground and principles" in public affairs, even under Acting President Goodluck Jonathan.

Ezeife expressed regret over the dropping of charges against Ribadu, who was standing trial before the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) for not declaring his assets and purchasing a N200 million home in Abuja.

"In our country, principles have no place, only naked political power," said Ezeife, whose house was pulled down in Abuja, reportedly as punishment for his criticism of the undemocratic nature of former President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration.

In his own reaction, constitutional lawyer Mike Ahamba expressed doubt over the validity of entering a nolle prosequere in a matter by an authority outside that of the Attorney General.

"No government is complete under our laws without the Attorney General. That position is statutory and as secure as that of the President. That is why there has been this argument that it should be separated from the Minister of Justice. You can sack the Minister of Justice but not the Attorney General. His position is guaranteed in our Constitution.

"So, if it is true that the nolle prosequere was entered by the Permanent Secretary instead of the Attorney General, I doubt its validity. But if it is done by the Attorney General, it cannot be questioned and he does not owe anybody an explanation," Ahamba said.

In any case, sources in Washington confirmed that the State Department has extracted a pledge from Nigerian officials to protect Ribadu. In return, the U.S. will provide more technical assistance to the EFCC and other government agencies.

Administration officials disclosed that pressure was put on Ribadu to go back and head the agency, but he declined.

"I would not return to the EFCC or the police because I was unfairly dismissed by both agencies. But I remain open to other job opportunities, especially those that would help to get Nigeria's anti-graft efforts back on track," he said in Washington.

The former anti-graft Czar may supervise part of an agreement that would be signed between Nigeria and the U.S, especially those dealing with corruption.

Ribadu said the circumstances that led to his fleeing the country have changed. "My life was threatened. The threat is now gone. I believe it is time for me to go back."

He has also reportedly received assurances of his safety from Jonathan; but it remains undecided in what capacity he would serve in the new administration.

The path to his return was cleared last week when Abuja dropped the legal case against him, a deal brokered by American officials who concluded that the war on graft has stalled since Ribadu left the EFCC.

A White House aide said Abuja's acceptance of his return paved the way for President Barack Obama's invitation to Jonathan to visit the U.S. next week.

"Agreeing to drop all charges and allow Ribadu return home is a good faith gesture by Jonathan that he supports good governance and the fight against graft, which has been the constant demand of Obama from African leaders," the aide stated.

He recalled that Ribadu won international praise for his arrests of suspects and seizures of assets as the first chief of the EFCC.

But Ribadu also made enemies for pursuing cases against powerful Governors. He was fired in late 2007 soon after President Umaru Yar'Adua took power.

He fled Nigeria for Britain and the U.S., saying his life was in danger.

Ribadu said he has not spoken directly with Jonathan and has not been offered a specific government post.

He dismissed the effort of current EFCC Chairman, Farida Waziri.

"Nothing took place in the last two years in the fight against corruption. The respect we gained with the rest of the world has been eroded. It will take time to rebuild it," he added.

He promised he could be back in Nigeria within weeks as his fellowship at the Center for Global Development, a Washington-based think tank, is winding down.

The European Union (EU) has welcomed the decision by Aso Rock.

Officials said the removal of Ribadu and lack of progress in prosecuting politically sensitive cases have done little to boost confidence, after donors poured \$35 million into the EFCC.

An advanced party for Jonathan now in the U.S. did not confirm or deny speculation that he will meet with Ribadu during his visit to Washington next week.

- **What Happens If Yar'Adua Returns?**

The widely reported visit by religious clerics to ailing President Umar Yar'Adua has generated a fresh round of controversy over the status of his health. The Islamic clerics who went first confirmed that they met the President and told the nation that even though he could not talk, he prayed with them. They assured the nation that Yar'Adua would soon resume duty.

Already the visit of the clerics has been generating tension in political circles across the country. The question that has been asked in many quarters is: "Why is it that the Acting President and other political leaders who had expressed their desire to visit Yar'Adua had been disallowed from seeing him but clerics were invited to visit him".

Media reports early in the week indicated that many members of the National Assembly were not happy over the recent the visits. It was also reported that Senators belonging to the National Interest group (NIG) are already agitating that the leadership of the National Assembly should also be allowed to visit Yar'Adua.

Observers of the political situation in the country have opined that if the leadership of the federal legislature formally demands to see the President and they are allowed access to him, it may be the end of the controversy if they confirm that he is fit to continue in office. However, if the leadership of the National Assembly is not allowed to see the ailing President, this could be considered as a slight on the law-makers by Yar'Adua's handlers. It has been pointed out that such a development would not augur well for the ailing president's kitchen cabinet as it could make the legislators angry that their importance is not being recognized.

Analysts have argued that if this happens, the National Assembly may decide to wield its big stick and exercise its oversight powers over the Presidency. Indeed, the 1999 Constitution empowers the President of the Senate to set up a medical panel that will examine the health of the President or that of the Vice-President.

Section 144 of the constitution which deals with declaration of the President or Vice-President as incapacitated states in subsection 4 " The Medical Panel to which this section relates shall be appointed by the President of the Senate and shall comprise five medical practitioners in Nigeria- (a) one of whom shall be the personal physician of the holder of the office concerned; (b) four other medical practitioners who have in the

opinion of the President of the Senate attained a high degree of eminence in the field of medicine relative to the nature of the examination to be conducted in accordance with the fore-going provisions.

However, the same section of the constitution provides a role for the Executive Council of the Federation. In subsection (1) it states that : " The President or Vice-President shall cease to hold office if : (a)By a resolution passed by two-thirds majority of members of the Executive Council of the Federation, it is declared that the President or Vice-President is incapable of discharging the functions of his office; and the declaration is verified as may be necessary by a medical panel established under sub-section (4) of this section in its report to the Senate President and Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Indeed, the section gives the leadership of the National Assembly the ultimate power to declare the President or Vice-President incapacitated.

Section (2) of the same section further stipulates that: "Where the Medical Panel states in the report that in its opinion, the President or Vice-President is suffering from such infirmity of body or mind as renders him permanently incapable of discharging the functions of his office, a notice thereof signed by the President of Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives shall be published in the official gazette of the Government of the Federation.

In sub-section (3) it states that: "The President or Vice-President shall cease to hold office as from the date of publication of the notice of the medical report pursuant to sub-section (2) of this section."

This notwithstanding, the stage seemed to have been set for the exercise which would bring Yar'Adua's era in office to a close. An Abuja High presided over by Justice Anwuri Chikere last Tuesday ruled that the Borno State Governorship aspirant of the Democratic Peoples party (DPP) Alhaji Bukar Al-Amin and one Max Ozoaka could commence moves of declaring Yar'Adua incapacitated in line with constitutional provisions through the EXCOF.

The Judge specifically gave leave for the two applicants to apply an order of mandamus for Yar'Adua's removal on the grounds that he is incapable of discharging the functions of his office. Their prayer is for the court to compel the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice Mohammed Bello Adoke (SAN) to convene a meeting of the EXCOF for the purpose of considering and passing a resolution declaring Yar'Adua incapable of discharging the functions of his office. The applicants had earlier prayed the court for an order of injunction compelling the respondents to carry out and discharge the duty imposed on them by provisions of section 144 of the constitution.

Nevertheless, Yar'Adua may spring a surprise after all. There are rumours that he might recover soon and resume duties as President of the nation. This was the view of the Muslim clerics who visited him last week. They expressed the belief that his health had improved tremendously.

Chairman of Conference of Nigeria Political Parties (CNPP) and former Governor of Kaduna State Alhaji Balarabe Musa told Vanguard in a telephone interview last Wednesday that Yar'Adua could just return to his office and resume duty without anybody stopping him adding that he did not even need to grant an interview or address a press conference before doing so. However, he observed that this would constitute another breach of the constitution since the law provides that he should write a letter informing the Senate President of his resumption of duty.

Said he: "Legally President Yar'Adua could come back and resume duty at anytime without any formalities; even without informing the National Assembly as he did when he traveled to Saudi Arabia for medical treatment. But the implication of this is that the National Assembly would have additional reason for impeaching him on the ground of gross misconduct."

However, the President of Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) Mr. Rotimi Akeredolu does not share Musa's views. He maintained that it would be insufficient for Yar'Adua to simply write the National assembly or grant another interview to indicate he had recovered and was ready to resume duty. He insisted that he must appear in the public and be seen before he could resume duty.

Another Lagos lawyer Mr Tayo Oyetibo, dismissed the idea of a rejuvenated Yar'Adua resuming duty after merely granting another BBC-type of interview. He maintained that the nation had gone beyond that stage. He stated that the National Security Adviser Gen. Aliyu Gusau (rtd), ought to have determined the true health status of Yar'Adua by now instead of allowing a tiny clique to continue to undermine the security of the nation.

- **Mutallab - U.s. Homeland Security Secretary Due in Abuja Sunday**

U.S. Secretary for Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, is due in Abuja today on the invitation of the federal government to assess steps taken so far to strengthen aviation security at the nation's international airports.

Her invitation, it was learnt, may be connected with efforts by the Nigerian government to convince its U.S. counterpart on the need to remove the country's name from its terror watch list.

Nigeria got on the list in the wake of last December's terror attempt on an American airliner by a Nigerian, Farouk Mutallab, in Detroit, Michigan.

The visit, Vanguard also gathered, is to enable her meet with officials in charge of security matters from other African countries who are converging on Abuja, alongside those of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), to review steps already taken by African governments to ward off threats to aviation security.

Confirming the visit in a statement, Press Secretary, Homeland Security Department, Steven Clark, said the visit, the fourth in the series, was part of efforts by the U.S. government to guide Nigeria to put in place all the infrastructure and facilities necessary to guarantee safety and security at the nation's airports.

The statement read: "Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano will travel to Abuja, Nigeria, on April 11 at the invitation of the Nigerian government to meet with her African counterparts and officials from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to discuss ways to bolster global aviation security.

"This will be the fourth in a series of major international meetings hosted by ICAO member states in which Secretary Napolitano will participate to build consensus on strengthening global aviation security and determining specific steps which nations can take individually and collectively to protect all passengers from threats of terrorism."

A source told Vanguard that the recent security breach at Margaret Ekpo International Airport in Calabar will form part of the agenda of discussions between Napolitano and Nigerian aviation and security officials.

- **I'll Run for 2011 Presidential Polls, Says Babangida**

Benin City — Former military President General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida (IBB) on Saturday declared his intention to run for the 2011 Presidential election.

IBB who spoke to newsmen at the Benin Airport while on his way to Asaba, Delta state, to attend the commissioning of Mariam Babangida dual carriage way and a lecture in honour of his late wife, said the persistent rumour by most Nigerians including his political associates and admirers about his intention to return to Aso Rock as a civilian President "is correct".

the former military President who was dressed in a white Babariga, landed at the Benin Airport in a chartered airline with registration number 5N-BLW at about 9:30am and was greeted by the Governor of Delta state, Dr Emmanuel Uduaghan and the deputy governor of Edo state, Dr Pius Odubu. The Governor of Niger state, Alhaji Aliu Babangida was also in the entourage of the former President. Other dignitaries at the airport included Senator Ehigie Uzamere, Chief of Staff to the Edo state government, Osarodion Ogie and John Mayaki.

It would be recalled that the former military president who ruled Nigeria from 1985 - 1993, had told Nigerians during the 54th birthday of Otunba Gbenga Daniels, Governor of Ogun State that he was still consulting with his friends and allies on whether he would contest the 2011 presidential election.

Only recently, former President Olusegun Obasanjo was reported to have held secret meeting with Babangida on the 2011 presidential election. Asked what he was going to do in Delta state, IBB asserted that "I am going to Delta State because of the special love I have for it and courtesy of the Delta State Governor, Dr. Emmanuel Uduaghan. I am looking forward to going to Delta state because that is my ancestral home. I think that is enough for today".

Governor Babangida, who also spoke to newsmen, stated that Nigerians look forward to the thorough implementation of the Justice Uwais report on the electoral reform in order to enthrone a transparent electoral process before the 2011 general elections.

He said the reform exercise was the only panacea for the emergence of credible leaders without questions about their character and ability to deliver on the dividends of democracy. "All of us are looking forward to it (electoral reform) because we want a legitimate election. We want an election everybody will accept. We want leaders that will emerge, that can say stop these things. We don't want people whom we will doubt whether they are actual leaders".

Other dignitaries with General Babangida included the former National Chairman of the United Nigeria Peoples Party, Alhaji Saleh Jumbo and the former Director of military Intelligence (DMI), Halilu Akilu and several others.

- **‘Recycling Leaders, Bane of Nigeria’s Politics’**

Director of Trade and Investment in the United Kingdom High Commission, Mr. Peter Stephenson, has said the calibre of leaders, being saddled with the task of moving the nation forward, has been the clog that has been stalling Nigeria’s wheel of progress.

Stephenson, while speaking at a networking reception held for Sterling Partnership, a commercial law firm to welcome its new partner in the oil and gas, Mr. Tunde Aribido, said: "I have always said the biggest problem here is more of repetition. We know there are difficulties in this country but it has got economic growth, we know it is not easy but I am quite pleased with the progress made by the Acting President, Goodluck Jonathan, in announcing the ministers."

Stephenson said though efforts have been made in the past to salvage the nation, the recycling of "tired brains" remained the greatest undoing in its quest to attain greatness.

On the political developments in the country, Stephenson said: "Well, it is not really for me as a British subject to make comments on the internal workings of the Nigerian constitution, but all I can say is that I am pleased things have leveled down here in terms of the Acting President Goodluck Jonathan and I wish President (Umaru Musa) Yar’Adua speedy recovery as well. I think there has been a tension in the country but I am pleased that this has come through."

Commending the Acting President for taking decisive steps to introduce "fresh bloods" into the Federal Executive Council of the Federation (EXCOF) Stephenson said though

the decisions came a bit late, the effect would continue to linger as Nigerians were eager for a new lease of life.

“I am pleased that decisions were eventually made but it took a very long time. I am pleased with the ministerial portfolios and let's hope this brings progress. Let's hope there would be some progress as you can see this is a great country because it is full of opportunities because of its people and its resources.

“There is nothing this country cannot achieve and I think a stable political democracy would make a little more difference. We are pleased that the situation in Nigeria is gradually resolving. You know we have a lot of concerns here with so many companies settling down which is why over 20 per cent foreign direct investment comes from the United Kingdom (UK).”

“I hope there is an increase in trade because there is a whole lot of imbalance in trade in Britain's favour. What we would like to do is buy more goods and services from Nigeria. What we have seen over the last couple of years is that we have seen more of Nigerian companies starting up in London, particularly the banks but we do envisage more products being sold from Nigeria particularly agricultural commodities or may be other commodities as well. We are not really seeing that at the moment. It's quite a tough environment at the moment and it is quite competitive at the moment,” he said.

2. Economy:

• Gowon, Okonjo-Iweala Harp On Sustainable Economic Devt

Lagos — Former head of state General Yakubu Gowon and former Finance Minister Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala have harped on the need for sustainable economic development of Nigeria.

Gowon, who was the Chairman during the Institute of Directors (IoD) Nigeria Conference 2010 held at Eko Hotel and Suite, Victoria Island, Lagos said as head of government, he was involved in completing part of the first Republic Development Plan between 1970 - 1975 as well as second and the third one between 1975 - 1980.

"The two development plans I was fully involved in were the second and third National Development Plans, 1970 - 1975 and 1975 - 1980 respectively, both building upon the first Development Plan of the First Republic government of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, " he said.

Gowon explained further that the second Development Plan was a post civil war plan channeled towards rehabilitation and reconstruction plan of especially the South -Eastern part of Nigeria, East of the Niger and South of the Benue.

According to him, the experience gained from this plan gave birth to a most ambitious plan, the Third National Development Plan that had the potential and possibility of laying the foundation of Nigeria's industrial take off. It was mainly agro-allied industry based.

"If only the succeeding governments had continued with it and carried it through and built upon it, we would not have had the problems we are now facing about infrastructure including power, energy, roads and transport and general economic growth and development," he said.

Unfortunately, it was totally abandoned and even the healthy foreign reserve was quickly squandered and soon the nation went a borrowing, " Gowon said.

While lauding the initiative of IoD Nigeria on its theme of the conference 'Laying the Foundation for Sustainable Economic Growth of Nigeria', advised the governments at all levels to adopt and return to formal economic development planning rather than the adhoc programme being employed.

Meanwhile, Okonjo-Iweala, presently the Managing Director of World Bank and who was the Guest Speaker, noted that Nigeria has the potentials and vision of becoming one of the top 20 economies in the world by year 2020 stressing that its economy is projected to grow from 4.3 per cent in 2009 to 4.8 percent in 2010.

She, again, explained that as at today, the country is the 8th most populated nation in the world and also ranks 41st in terms GDP and 161 out of 183 in terms of GDP per capita and added that Nigeria is the second largest economy in Sub-Saharan Africa and contributes to 10 per cent of the SSA GDP and 66 per cent of West Africa's GDP.

"To be part of the G-20, Nigeria needs to think differently, take advantage of the financial crisis to re -shape the economy, put in place new policies to transform and strengthen institutions to support multiple drivers of growth, " she said.

Okonjo-Iweala, however, averred that for decades now, the country has focused more on its vast oil resources, which have been the main engine of growth of the economy even as she added that the oil sector alone cannot help the country to develop rapidly as well as to achieve its Vision 2020 objective of becoming the a G-20 economy.

On how the country can become one of the best, she posited that it is time for Nigeria to focus on its youth for they are the untapped growth drivers of Nigeria so as to reap bountiful development benefits.

She further buttressed that Nigeria's demographic map, which she also described, as 'Demographic Dividend' is full of promise if only it can be directed and managed effectively.

According to her: If the demographic transition to smaller family sizes that is slowly gathering momentum on the continent and here in Nigeria continues, we will see a

prolonged period of several decades during which the youth will have a small number of dependents, less 'mouth to feed', a surge in labour force, and if the workforce is skilled and employed, this will lead to an increase in income, savings, investments and thus stimulate economic growth.

Okonjo-Iweala, pointed out that 'Demographic Dividend' occurs when a falling birth rate changes the age distribution so that fewer investments are needed to meet the needs of the youngest age groups and resources are released for investment in economic development and family welfare.

3. Energy:

- **Jonathan Takes Over Ministry of Power**

Abuja — No substantive minister of power would be named for the time being following the decision of the Acting President Goodluck Jonathan to take charge of that critical sector.

This comes as the Acting President hinted during the swearing-in ceremony of ministers yesterday that they would sign a performance agreement to help monitor their progress in office.

Also, two new ministries - Water Resources and Lands, Housing and Urban Development - have been created by Jonathan with substantive ministers to man them.

The Presidency disclosed that it has developed a new concept on the way and manner the power ministry would be run to ensure optimal efficiency.

This formula would see Jonathan taking the lead in the ministry, supported by the Minister of State for Power, Mr. Nuhu Wya.

Senior Special Assistant to the Acting President on Media and Publicity Mr. Ima Niboro made this known in a chat with State House correspondents at the Presidential Villa in Abuja.

"There is a new concept about power. It is going to run as a body that will be chaired by the Acting President as chairman and he will take responsibility as minister for a certain period of time and the minister of state will be deputy chairman," said Niboro.

"This body will work in close harmony with the power sub-committee of the Presidential Advisory Council and Barth Nnaji heads this committee. He is an experienced power consultant, that is why you see those positions are vacant," he explained.

During the swearing-in of 38 new ministers at the Council Chambers of the Presidential Villa, Jonathan stated that they will be expected to deliver on their jobs in addition to being made to sign a performance agreement.

The Acting President said as part of efforts to measure the performance of the ministers, he would in the next two weeks work with them to determine and agree on ministerial goals and targets, which would form the basis for measuring and assessing their performances.

Ministry and Ministers

Agriculture

Prof. Sheikh Ahmed Abdullah

Mr. Awodele Najeem Adewale (State)

Justice

Mohammed Bello Adoke, SAN

Education

Prof. (Mrs) Ruqayyatu A. Rufa'i

FCT

Sen. Bala Muhammed

Finance

Mr. Olusegun Olutoyin Aganga

Mr. Aderemi W. Babalola (State)

Foreign Affairs

Mr. Henry Odein Ajumogobia

Dr. Aliyu Idi Hong (State)

Information & Communication

Prof. Dora Akunyili

Mr. Labaran Maku (State)

Niger Delta Affairs

Elder Peter Godsdan Orubebe

Hon. Samuel Ode (State)

Petroleum Resources

Mrs. Deizani Alison-Madueke

Defence

Chief Adetokunbo Kayode

Murtala Shehu Yar'Adua (State)

Planning

Dr. Shamsudeen Usman

Works

Sen. Sanusi M. Dagash

Chris Ogiemwinyi (State)

Ministry Minister

Aviation

Mrs. Fidelia Njeze

Commerce & Industry

Sen. Jibril Martins Kuye

Ms. Josephine Tapgun (State)

Culture & Tourism

Abubakar Sadiq A. Mohammed

Environment

Mr. John Ogar Odey

Health

Alh. Suleiman Bello (State)

Interior

Emmanuel Iheanacho

Mr. Humphrey Abah (State)

Labour & Productivity

Mr. Chukwuemeka Wogu

Mines & Steel Devt

Musa Mohammed Sada

Power

Nuhu Somo Wya (State)

Police Affairs

Alh. Adamu Waziri

Science and Tech.

Prof. Muhammed K. Abubakar

Special Duties

Navy Capt. Earnest Olubolade (Rtd)

Transport

Yusuf Sulaiman

Youth Development

Sen. Akinlabi Olasunkanmi

Women Affairs

Iyom Josephine Anenih, mni

Sports

Hon. Ibrahim Isa Bio

Lands, Housing & Urban Development

Hon. Nduese Essien.

- **Power - Jonathan Rolls Out Emergency Measures**

Abuja — Acting President Goodluck Jonathan may have finally declared a "state of emergency" in the power sector without using those words as he has instituted measures to address the nagging problem of electricity supply in the country.

This is one of the major promises made by the present government when President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua was sworn in three years ago.

The Minister of State for Power, Mr. Nuhu Wya, who addressed journalists yesterday on the latest plan of government for the sector, said as part of the new initiative, the Acting President has constituted a multi-stakeholder committee chaired by him (Jonathan), with Wya as the vice chairman, to implement emergency power generation plan for the country.

Jonathan has already assumed headship of the Ministry of Power in order to address the power crisis.

The Rural Electrification Agency (REA) is to be scrapped and its role taken over by the 11 subsidiary distribution companies of the Power Holding Company of Nigerian (PHCN) as part of the reform and transformation programme.

"Our immediate objective plan is to improve the power supply to the generality of Nigerians, get sufficient gas, reinforce our transmission and distribution networks and ensure that whatever has been put on ground is improved and sustained, to create an enabling environment for the private sector to come in and invest, to make the power sector a very conducive environment for both present and new participants.

"We are going to explore in the medium term, other sources of energy. We have many dams that had been constructed by the water resources; they have huge hydro electric potential. We are going to tap into those resources so that we can give Nigerians more electricity delivered to the point of consumption," he said.

According to Wya, Federal Government's current move could be likened to that of a declaration of a state of emergency in the power sector, though no formal proclamation has been made.

"There is no declaration of state of emergency, but we are working in an emergency manner. We are getting all the stakeholders involved to participate in this committee because power is a chain of many stakeholders, from the fuel to the generation to the

transmission, to distribution, involved a lot of people. The oil companies are in charge of the fuel and water resource ministry are in-charge of the water. They are going to be involved.

"We are getting the CBN (Central Bank of Nigeria) involved to facilitate our transactions as most of our accounts are with the CBN the issues of LC (letters of credit), clearance of our goods, the issue of securitisation, to ensure that whoever is giving us power has some kind of security. And we have people from the private sector who are specialists in power that are coming to assist us," he said.

He said the power committee would ensure that all issues militating against prompt execution of power projects are concluded within the shortest possible time.

Wya said the current effort by government would be supervised directly by the Acting President, whom he said had shown a passion for a stable power supply in the country.

"He is very much concerned about the development of this nation and without power, we cannot develop. He has been leading the sector particularly the NIPP (National Integrated Power Project). He will do everything humanly possible to see that we unravel the mystery surrounding the power sector. This is the reaping point for us because we have planted, we have watered and tendered the plant and it is now reaping time. We shall achieve a magnificent improvement in power in the shortest possible time," he said.

The minister said government has engaged other stakeholders in making sure that the programme that the committee would come up with will be a one stop centre that will deliver power to Nigerians without any hitch.

Membership of the committee includes the CBN, Federal Ministries of Finance, Petroleum Resources, Defence, and Water Resources as well as the, Bureau for Public Procurement (BPP) and Bureau for Public Enterprises (BPE).

Wya explained that the involvement of these stakeholders is meant to ensure that all obstacles that may impede the effort to generate sufficient power are surmounted.

For instance, he said CBN would help out on the issue of LCs and that of securitisation and other issues which mitigate against the clearing of goods from the ports.

He said the Minister of Finance will be leading the financial sector on the project and he will fast-track whatever is needed in terms of budgetary needs, while BPP will process and ensure that procurements are done timely without waste of time.

"There is a need for a connection between the two lines that are not meeting and that is why the committee has included the petroleum ministry so that we will fast-track the linkage of the gas lines so that gas can now circulate in either of the plants to ensure that there is no shortage," he said.

On the issue of vandalism of the pipelines, he said the power sector is partnering with the Ministries of Defence and Niger Delta to ensure that the amnesty programme is going on well and to ensure that there is peace in the region.

On the state of project execution in the power sector, the Minister of State assured Nigerians that things are going on very well, and that all the projects are on course, adding that some of the units will deliver power within this year, while the bulk of them will deliver power next year.

"Everything is going according to plan. The NIPP is a well-established company, the steering council has now been converted to a governing board and they report directly to the board which the Ministry of Power is a member," he said.

He also said the committee will look into ways of resolving the National Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) imbroglio to enable the commission play the role of setting standards that would attract private investors into the power sector.

Speaking on the aspect of the plan that deals with reform of the power sector, the Minister of State said BPE has been given fresh mandate to fast-track the reform agenda which was started in 2005.

He said engineers and technical people ought not to be afraid, as all of them will find relevance within whatever comes out from the reform.

"Reform does not mean sacking people. It is only changing means of doing things, doing things more efficiently. There should be proper accountability and rule of law in whatever we do. We must try to pass the message down to the junior ones particularly the unions to embrace this new lease of life that the acting president is giving to the power sector," he said.

Also commenting on government decision to abolish the Rural Electrification Agency, Wya said there will be no need for such an agency at the centre since the issue of rural electrification can adequately be handled by each of the PHCN's 11 distribution companies.

"Nobody can tell you that there is no rural electrification, but it is the system of going about it that we are addressing. It is the agency, REA that we are addressing. We believe that rural electrification can be best addressed by the 11 distribution companies. These companies are the ones that connect people to the grid. What we had before was an agency that was sitting in Abuja and was awarding contracts to people to do rural electrification without a connection to the distribution companies that are in charge of delivering power to the people.

"We are saying that there should be a rethink. Who are the people giving the power to the people? They are engineers, even better engineers from the same PHCN. Is that assignment not better handled by the distribution companies who are nearer the people

and who are going to run the system and manage the infrastructure at the end of the day? What we are doing is dismantling REA and establishing a rural electrification bench in each of those 11 distribution companies to ensure that our people in the rural communities do enjoy electricity," he said.

4. Environment:

5. Immigration/Refugee/Idps:

6. Health:

7. Human rights/Gender/social issues:

8. Geo-Strategic issues:

- **We Want Nigeria to Succeed,' but Nigerians Have to Want That Too - U.S. Ambassador**

The failed attempt on December 25, 2009 by the young Nigerian, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, to detonate hidden explosives on a flight to Detroit created an additional layer of complexity for U.S. relations with Africa's most populous nation and leading oil producer.

Managing those ties day to day is the job of **Robin Renee Sanders**, the U.S. ambassador to Nigeria. Sanders a career foreign service officer who was appointed to the post by President George W. Bush in late 2007 and previously served as ambassador to the Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville).

The Abdulmutallab incident led the U.S. government to add Nigeria to the 'country of interest' list, which resulted in increased scrutiny of Nigerians flying to the United States and angered many Nigerians who felt their country was being unfairly punished.

This week, the U.S. administration took what Secretary of State Hilary Clinton called a "concrete step forward that will strengthen and deepen the partnership between our two nations" with the launch in Washington, DC of the U.S.-Nigeria Binational Commission. The high-level forum includes working groups on good governance, transparency and integrity; energy and investment; food security and agriculture; and Niger delta and regional security cooperation. Next week, Nigeria's acting president, Goodluck Jonathan, is scheduled to visit Washington to take part in the Nuclear Security Summit at the White House, where he is also expected to have talks with President Barack Obama.

Prior to departing for Washington to take part in the launch, Sanders, in her first interview since the December incident, spoke with **AllAfrica's Reed Kramer** about the current state of relations between the two nations. Excerpts follow:

Acting President Jonathan has asked President Obama for a reconsideration of the classification of Nigeria as a 'country of interest' with regard to terrorism. Has Nigeria taken steps that would assist in that regard?

The country-of-interest process is an ongoing inter-agency review here and in Washington. One of the things that Nigeria has done is sign an air marshal agreement with the United States. We see that as a step in the right direction. Also, Nigeria does not have counter-terrorism legislation. We've been in dialogue with them on that. They are in the process of installing body scanners around the various airports in Nigeria. We worked with them on body scanners, and even before the incident of December 25 we had installed five scanners at their international airports in partnership with them. They're installing additional scanners and training their personnel to use them.

How do you assess the security situation in Nigeria now?

The Nigerian government is realizing they are not immune to the global terrorist threat, and it is working hard with us in sharing information and having dialogue on these global threats. We have a good cooperative relationship.

How will the Bi-national Commission contribute to improved relations between the United States and Nigeria?

The secretary of state when she was here in August highlighted a new strategic framework. With the commission, we are moving that forward in a more formal manner where we have a working dialogue on issues ranging from democracy and good government to anti-corruption and credible elections.

What is your view of how the Nigerian government is functioning?

There's a general sense that Nigeria remains fragile. It is an uncertain environment right now, but there have been some indications over the last couple of weeks that give us hope that things might be moving in the right direction. We want Nigeria to have credible elections, put a framework in place to fight corruption, put a framework in place to strengthen its democracy. These are paramount issues moving forward. We hear that from Nigerians all across the country. They want to believe in elections; they want to have a transparent government; they want to have institutions that can propel the country's economy and political system forward. With a new cabinet in place, we are hoping that these issues can be addressed in a coherent and cohesive fashion with ministers that are capable, diligent and forthright in their efforts to be representative of the Nigerian people.

Has there been any progress in preparing for elections?

We noted that the unedited election reform committee report recently went forward to the national assembly. The committee report has been edited and presented in many forms, edited. We were delighted to hear that the acting president finally sent that report to the national assembly unedited. Action on election reform is now in the hands of the national legislature. The U.S. and the United Kingdom jointly funded an independent electoral assessment early this year at the request of the Nigerian government, and that's all part of this process of looking at election reforms and committing to credible elections.

In my conversation with the acting president, he's very clear that one of the things he wants to do is to make sure that the voices of the Nigerian people are heard and credible elections are held here in Nigeria. Moving the unedited report to the national assembly is certainly a step in the right direction. Of course, there are other needed steps. We would like to see an Independent National Electoral Commission that is really independent and really transparent, which is key to its ability to hold elections that people can believe in. This was not the case in 2007.

What has been the reaction to recent outbreaks of violence in the north and what additional action should the Nigerian government take to avoid future problems?

We've just had [a visit] by the U.S. Commission for International Religious Freedom [a U.S. government entity whose bipartisan members are appointed by congress and the president].

They were engaged with a cross-section of interlocutors. I attended those meetings, and it was interesting to see the seriousness with which elements of the government are responding. Arrests have been made, which is a departure from the past in terms of how quickly they've done that.

Interfaith leaders here are engaged in addressing the crosscutting issues that seem to encourage the cycle of violence in the Jos area every couple of months. There's a myriad of challenges which the interfaith leaders are trying to address – economic and land issues, religious, sectarian and ethnic issues. I know it often gets boiled down to one or two issues, but there is a broad spectrum of problems that can spark violence. We all want to see the fundamental issues that keep causing these cycles of violence addressed.

The international community, including the United States, has offered humanitarian assistance. If we receive an official response from the Nigerian government, we are prepared to do that, particularly with regard to shelter and the needs that have come out of the violence there. We are working with number of partners in the Jos area to address some of those issues. We are in dialogue constantly with faith leaders to be supportive of their actions to address the issues.

What is your assessment of the Nigerian economy at this time and how that is impacting the country?

Nigeria needs to address corruption issues in a more comprehensive fashion. We do see the ongoing banking reforms as a step in the right direction. We recognize that several of the banks' leadership took advantage of the shareholders, and we hope that those individuals are brought to justice. That should help to underscore that corruption will not be the order of the day.

Looking at the indicators for economic growth, Nigeria is not doing too badly, given the global economic situation. Part of that has to do with the banking sector reforms. There has been some growth outside the oil sector that has helped Nigeria as well, including a

slight increase in exports to the United States of products under the African Growth and Opportunities Act. So we see that the macroeconomic policy framework is in place and is making a difference even in this very difficult global financial environment. I'm not saying that it's perfect. I am saying that there are some reforms that are ongoing that we think are the right reforms to do, particularly in the banking sector.

What about situation in the Delta region – the oil-producing area in Nigeria?

The amnesty the ailing president put in place last year has pretty much held up until recently. We've been in dialogue with the Nigeria government about moving forward so that they don't have a roll-back on the amnesty dividends. The acting president has met with militant leaders, which we're hoping is an indication that efforts have been restarted to not only keep the amnesty but to try to broaden that to re-integration and rehabilitation of the young men and women that were active in militancy so that the Delta can have a future that is peaceful, stable, and create an environment for education and development.

Will Nigeria, which currently accounts for 15 percent of U.S. petroleum imports, continue to be a reliable supplier of oil to the United States?

Yes. Until there's a comprehensive peace environment in Nigeria that's longstanding, there will always be ups and downs on security challenges. But I think that Nigeria will remain a reliable partner in that area.

But I want to say something broader than that. There's tremendous potential for Nigeria, not just as a strategic oil partner with the United States. Eighty percent or more of its population is agriculture-based, and Nigeria has the potential to feed itself and to be an exporter of agricultural products. If you think of Nigeria as an emerging market, as I do, there are a number of other areas for potential growth - from infrastructure development to information science and technology, IT. I don't want us to lose sight of that.

Do you see increased interest on the part of American and other foreign investors in those potential areas of growth in the Nigerian economy?

Yes, particularly in IT and agriculture. My personal focus is on agriculture. I've traveled around and seen the potential in that sector. We have a food security program of about 25 million dollars. [One aspect] is a market program, which has helped with the rural-to-urban movement of agricultural products. [It] is reaching 10,000 or more farmers, increasing yields of key crops such as yams and cassava [and] providing jobs in the agro-business sector.

We have a strategic agriculture forum once a year in partnership with a number of private sector institutions to look at developing agriculture infrastructure and agro-business, so that the bulk of the population can change the paradigm of their lives by ensuring that they have income not only for their families but also to introduce entrepreneurship into their communities and into the agriculture sector.

We see more and more American investors moving into the agriculture sector and into the IT sector, and we're encouraged by that. But I would also like to say that we don't have enough Americans here. This is a dynamic and creative environment. The emerging market potential here for American investors is tremendous, and we need to encourage many more Americans to come here and look at these sectors as potential areas of growth for their own businesses.

Whatever the country's potential, would you agree that Nigeria's negative image discourages investment?

Clearly, the image issue is something that Nigerians grapple with all the time. We as partners can work with them on some of those issues, but we can't want more for Nigeria than Nigeria wants for itself. We want to see a stable and prosperous and democratic Nigeria with credible elections, but we can't want that more than Nigeria wants it for itself. We have heard from Nigerians that they want a stable environment, they want a prosperous nation, they want investment. But you're absolutely right; the framework has to be there to make that happen.

We consider Nigeria an extraordinary friend of the United States of America and the American people. We want to see Nigeria succeed.

Other West African States

Benin:

Burkina Faso:

Cameroon:

Cape Verde:

Chad:

Cote d'Ivoire:

Guinea- Conakry:

Guinea- Bissau:

- **Guinea-Bissau shrugs off latest coup attempt....H1**

On the pavement outside Bissau's central market, traders do a brisk business in tropical fruits, cigarettes and airmail envelopes, just a week after Guinea-Bissau's latest coup attempt.

It was no April's Fools joke when on 1 April, army officers captured the prime minister and the army chief of staff, throwing the country's already fragile political system further into turmoil.

Seven days later, women in bright outfits call out witty remarks to the steady stream of locals and foreign aid-workers who make their way through Bissau's pot-holed streets, in the hope of selling the colourful cashew fruits, which are one of the country's most important crops.

As evening falls and the traders noisily pack up their wares for the day, the atmosphere in this small city seems as jovial as ever.

Business as normal

On the streets of the capital Bissau, where people euphemistically refer to the situation as "the incident", life apparently goes on as normal.

"Last Thursday there was some panic and worry," says Thierno Amadou Ba, a young cigarette seller from neighbouring Guinea-Conakry.

"We heard what happened on the radio and I took my bags and went home.

"The next day I came back to the market to sell, though there wasn't a lot of business.

"The situation is a bit tense but now it's mostly calm. There's not a lot happening."

The soldiers entered the office of Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Junior and detained him along with the army chief of staff Gen Jose Zamora Induta.

Bissau residents say people came out onto the streets to protest, burning tyres and demanding that the soldiers release Mr Gomes.

The former head of the Guinea Bissau navy Rear Admiral Jose Americo Bubo Na Tchuto and Vice Chief of Staff Gen Antonio Indjai announced on the radio that people should go back to their homes or they would kill the prime minister and shoot civilians.

The soldiers later released Prime Minister Gomes but Gen Induta is still being held.

Spreading rumours

While life goes on as normal in Bissau, local analysts and journalists are reluctant to talk openly about the situation for fear of fuelling the rumours which are spreading around town.

Similarly, people on the streets appear nervous when asked about the events or what may happen next.

One of the traders at the central market, who gave only his first name, Alpha, said that while business in Bissau went on as normal he was worried about who would take over as the head of the army.

"Zamora is intelligent and well-trained," says Mr Ba, leaning on the wooden post of his stationary stand.

"The military does not know how to speak to the government in a democratic way - they only know how to use force.

"Zamora should come back, or anyone else who has an education and can open the dialogue with the government.

"We do not want to see a man in power who has no education and can only speak Creole," he says referring to the local language, a mix of Portuguese and African languages.

Unpredictable future

In Bissau's old town, where the crumbling Portuguese colonial buildings tell of decades of civil war and neglect, the streets bustle with people coming and going from ministries and small banks.

The narrow streets, with only a few patches of tarmac remaining, the rest covered with red mud and rocks, shudder with the noise of small electricity generators - Bissau has no grid electricity to speak of.

An army truck carrying soldiers drives by and a group of shoe-menders perched on low stools on the pavement looks up briefly before going back to work.

"The future is unpredictable," says Carlos Vamain, a local jurist and political analyst.

"The country has never known stability because of the relationship between the politicians and the military.

"People went out to protest against the military coup last week but they were dispersed by the military and everyone went home and back to their life.

"But it's not finished, the problem's not fixed.

"If there is no justice in a country, you can't say it's on the right path."

- **Guinea Bissau President Expects Angola's Support.....H8**

Luanda — The visiting president of Guinea-Bissau, Malam Bacai Sanhá, said Wednesday in Luanda, he hopes he will get all Angola's diplomatic, moral and economic support.

Malam Bacai Sanhá said so to the press on arrival at Luanda's "4 de Fevereiro" International Airport.

The Guinean president, who will stay two days in Luanda, said he has come to Angola to discuss with his local counterpart, José Eduardo dos Santos, issues of bilateral interest.

"I have come to visit your country and have a conversation with my elder brother José Eduardo, review the situation of cooperation between the two countries and talk about other matters", he stated.

Malam Bacai Sanha said the situation in his country has come to normality, and the soldiers have gone back into the barracks.

The former chief of Staff of Guinea Navy, José Américo Bubo Na Tchuto and the vice chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, maj-general António Indjai, Thursday last week staged a military action that led to the detention of the country's prime minister, Carlos Gomes Júnior and the chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, lieut-general, Zamora Induta.

Accompanied by Angolan ambassador to Guinea Bissau, Brito Sozinho, President Bacai Sanhá was welcomed at Luanda's airport by Foreign minister, Assunção Maria dos Anjos.

- **President Discusses Cooperation with Guinea Bissau Counterpart.....H8**

Angolan Head of State, José Eduardo dos Santos, Thursday in Luanda discussed bilateral cooperation with his counterpart of Guinea Bissau, Malam Bacai Sanhá.

Malam Bacai Sanhá, who is visiting Angola since Wednesday, spoke of the prevailing situation in Guinea Bissau, following the turmoil recorded last week in the West African country, which has returned to normalcy with return of militaries to barracks.

The former chief of navy staff of Guinea Bissau, José Américo Bubo Na Tchuto, and the current vice-chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces, major-general António Indjai, last Thursday waged a military intervention that led to the detention of the prime minister, Carlos Gomes Júnior, and of chief of staff of the armed forces, Lieutenant-general, Zamora Induta.

The two statesmen also discussed, during the audience, the international events.

Angola and Guinea Bissau are members of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) and African Portuguese-speaking Countries (PALOP).

Liberia:

- **Liberia: Hailing President Sirleaf's External Peace Initiative.....H1**

In recent intervention by President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf which calmed tensions between two of Africa's powerful countries has clearly re-established Liberia's true character and place in the comity of nations.

Before drifting into the state of being Africa's problem child in 1990s, Liberia towered in diplomatic prestige not only in Africa but in the world. As the first black republic on the continent, our country played a leading role representative of the African multiplex on the world stage, making its voice of peace and justice heard in vexing international issues, while it was at the same time leading African liberation and solidarity during the struggling days of the continent.

To ensure that Africa remained strong to resist external domination, Liberia was always on red alert to diffuse inter-country conflict on the continent, holding high the torch of camaraderie, peace and unity amongst African countries.

The military takeover and the subsequent militarization of the country by various belligerent factions, coupled with the naked display of savagery, arrogance to peace initiatives, amongst others, took away the crown of leadership by which our country was known and held in esteem. The erstwhile leading peace broker, as a result of the carnage and mayhem that was taking place as well as the marathon nature of its peace process, gave outsiders the impression that Liberia was actually a dungeon of brutes and a carefree problem child. Other countries and peoples struggled nearly vainly to salvage Liberia from its state of collapse and failure.

But following the cessation of hostility, Liberia's post-conflict leadership has prioritized the repair of the odd reputation and unsightly events which have caused the civilized world to nearly excommunicate our country.

Sirleaf was elected on the foremost credential of being internationalist or having the ability to re-establish Liberia's rightful place in the international community, reclaim the prestige and esteem for which it was widely held in veneration during "the good old days". Even before the administration of two years in office, the electoral premise for making Madam Sirleaf proved right with the visit of nearly the most important world leaders, including United States President and United Nation's Secretary Generals.

Nearly two years to go, President Sirleaf had broken another record: she has taken a central stage in international conflict resolution; another major fundamental drift the

country has experienced due to conflict and war. At her own volition, the Liberian President has eased tensions between Nigeria and Libya; two countries that were embroiled in diplomatic row that otherwise could have fractured African unity and peace, more so because the two countries are great giants in military, economic and political terms. Unresolved, the row could have had a spillover effect upon many other African countries that rely on the two great countries for direction.

The two countries got embroiled in heated row following statements by Libyan leader Muarmar Ghadafi that Nigeria should be broken in parts along religious or ethnic lines as remedy to the serial civil disturbances between Muslims and Christians in that country. Nigeria responded harshly and Ghadafi repeated his "verbal aggression" until the exchanges was resulting into the withdrawal of diplomatic representations.

Thank God Madam Sirleaf has tranquilized it all, and as a result of her intervention, the two countries have beaten their swords into ploughshares. Indeed, as the Acting President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria put it, President Sirleaf is "elevated among Good and Great leaders of modern day Africa". And to add, she has caused Liberia to once again assume its leading role as a peace-broker, an accomplished diplomatic nation and full-fledged member of the comity of nation.

- **Taylor's Officers on Britain's War Crimes Search List.....H7**

Officers from Mr. Charles Taylor's army are amongst others British Immigration and security services will be searching for in Britain for prosecution, according to a new law that has come into force, The Independent reports.

The US and some European countries have adopted new laws allowing the prosecution of war criminals from other countries who live in America or some European states.

Britain is taking serious steps to ensure that war criminals are not allowed in the UK, and amongst the caseload Immigration and security services now have is that regarding suspected Liberian war criminals, many still in the UK. The cut-off point for investigating and prosecuting war criminals in Britain is 1991, but critics say the date should be taken back as far as 1948.

There are also discussions to include non-British citizens for prosecution. The US is already ahead, with the law that war criminals on its soil will be prosecuted.

Mali:

Niger:

- **Agencies Call for \$190 Million to Stem Crisis.....H7**

Aid agencies are asking donors for US\$133 million to help the government feed millions of people at risk of going hungry, adding to \$57 million already received or committed.

The funds are needed to improve the food security of 3.2 million people and provide nutritional assistance to 1.54 million children and 35,000 pregnant and lactating women, the UN and NGOs in Niger say.

Some 7.8 million people, almost 60 percent of the population, risk not being able to access adequate food, according to the latest December 2009 survey.

Six UN agencies and nine NGOs are launching the appeal.

"We urge the international community to respond swiftly and ensure humanitarian agencies have the required financial resources to respond to Niger's urgent needs," Khardiata Lo N'diaye, head of the UN in Niger, said in a 7 April communiqué.

OCHA spokesperson Stephanie Bunker told IRIN: "The main focus of the UN and its partners is to save lives in Niger and help people escape food insecurity and malnutrition." Agencies also need support to address people's health and water and sanitation needs, she said. Over 1.5 million children risk becoming malnourished in the next twelve months if urgent action is not taken, Bunker warned.

Modibo Traoré who is with OCHA in Niger, told IRIN: "If sufficient funding is not found a significant increase in mortality and morbidity among children under five may occur; population movements from rural to urban areas and neighbouring countries will increase, and the abandonment of schools will intensify dramatically. More than one million head of cattle may die. It is extremely urgent to act now because these consequences are already visible on the ground."

Mass migration is already occurring, with people heading from where rural villages to towns in Agadez, Zinder, Maradi and the capital, Niamey, as well as to neighbouring countries.

Poor or erratic rainfall has caused serious food and fodder shortages in parts of the country, triggering a spike in grain prices and a fall in livestock prices.

The government has subsidized cereals in all of the affected areas. NGOs and UN agencies are scaling up to help the government respond to people's food security, nutrition, health and livestock support needs in Tahoua, Diffa, Maradi and Zinder.

Over coming months UNICEF, WFP, the government and national NGOs will do blanket food distributions for 500,000 children between six and 23 months to help prevention malnutrition. WFP will also distribute basic foods to 1.5 million people in affected areas.

The International Committee of the Red Cross plans to buy some 14,500 cattle from nomadic farmers in and around Agadez at pre-crisis prices. FAO will intervene to support the livestock sector but not until end of April, according to OCHA.

ICRC will also provide food, seeds and tools for 100,000 people in both Niger and in Kidal and Gao in northern Mali where a further 250,000 people are estimated to be food-insecure.

Aid agencies are still assessing the food and nutrition situation around the country, including in Diffa and Tahoua.

Senegal:

Sierra Leone:

Togo: