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## ETHIOPIA ANNOUNCES END OF MILITARY OPERATION IN TIGRAY

- Situation remains volatile as rebellion Tigray People's Liberation Front vows to continue fighting

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 Ruele Ramoeng  
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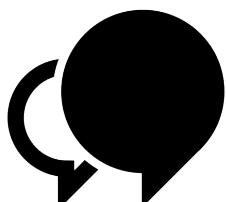
**Editor**  
 Bright Kholi  
 kholib@ymhp.co.bw

**Head of Design**  
 Ame Kolobetso  
 ame.kolobetso@ymhp.co.bw

**Distribution & Circulation**  
 Mogapi Ketletseng  
 ketletsengm@echo.co.bw

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 Gaborone,  
 Botswana  
 Telephone: (267) 3933 805/6.  
 E-mail: info@echo.co.bw  
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# Ethiopia announces end of military operation in Tigray

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has said that military operations in the restive region of Tigray are complete and federal troops control the regional capital. This is being viewed as a major development in a three-week-old war that has shaken the Horn of Africa.

Abiy's government has been trying to quell a rebellion by a powerful ethnic faction that dominated the central government for decades before he came to power in 2018. Thousands of people are believed to have been killed, and nearly 44,000 have fled to Sudan, in a conflict that has called into question whether Abiy can hold together fractious ethnic groups in Ethiopia, Africa's second most populous country.

"I am pleased to share that we have completed and ceased the military operations in the Tigray region," the prime minister said. Less than an hour earlier, he said in a statement, "The federal government is now fully in control of the city of Mekelle".

However, the leader of Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), whose forces have been fighting Ethiopian troops, said the group was not giving up.

"Their brutality can only add (to) our resolve to fight these invaders to the last," TPLF leader Debretsion Gebremichael told Reuters. Asked by Reuters if that meant his forces would continue fighting, he replied: "Certainly."

This is about defending our right to self determination."

In his statement, Abiy said federal police would continue searching for and detaining TPLF "criminals" and would bring them to court. The prime minister has called the offensive a law and order operation.

It was not clear if any TPLF leaders had surrendered. Debretsion said in another text message that their forces were withdrawing from around Mekelle.

Claims from all sides are difficult to verify since phone and internet links to Tigray have been down and access tightly controlled since the fighting began on Nov. 4.

Authorities had said earlier on Saturday that government forces were in the final stages of an offensive in the region and would take care to protect civilians in Mekelle, a city of 500,000 people.

Abiy said the army had secured the release of thousands of troops from the army's Northern Command, which is based in Tigray, who he said had been held hostage by the TPLF.

Federal troops had also taken control of the airport, the regional administration office and other key facilities, Abiy said.

The government had given the TPLF an ultimatum that expired on Wednesday to lay down arms or face an assault on the city.

It was not clear if federal forces

had seized weapons stocks on Saturday. The government said in the first week of the conflict that a target of its airstrikes was military hardware seized by Tigrayan forces.

Regional diplomats and experts have said that a rapid military victory might not signal the end of the conflict.

The TPLF has a history of guerrilla resistance and used Tigray's highland terrain and foreign borders to its advantage through years of armed struggle in the 1980s against a Marxist government.

The prime minister has so far rebuffed attempts at mediation. Abiy accuses Tigrayan leaders of starting the war by attacking federal troops at a base in Tigray. The TPLF says the attack was a

Abiy did not mention in his statements whether there had been casualties in the offensive to capture Mekelle.

Rights groups have been concerned that an assault on the city could lead to significant civilian casualties.

The prime minister's spokeswoman, Billene Seyoum, had said earlier on Saturday: "The safety of Ethiopians in Mekelle and Tigray region continues as priority for the federal government".

TPLF leader Debretsion told Reuters in text messages earlier on Saturday that Mekelle was under "heavy bombardment".

Billene said: "The Ethiopian

National Defense Forces do not have a mission to bombard its own city and people. Mekelle remains one of Ethiopia's key cities and the efforts to bring to justice the criminal clique will not entail discriminatory 'bombardment' as alluded by TPLF and their propagandists."

United Nations refugee agency chief Filippo Grandi said on Saturday that he was deeply concerned about the 100,000 Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia, and what he called unconfirmed reports of violence against them.

The TPLF and Eritrea are archenemies: the TPLF was in charge in Addis Ababa when Ethiopia and Eritrea fought a war from 1998-2000. But Eritrea and Abiy have warm relations. The Ethiopian government has denied TPLF accusations that Eritrean troops are operating on Ethiopian soil.

Eritrea is one of the world's most repressive nations and around 10% of the population has fled.

Tigrayans, who make up about 6% of the Ethiopian population of 115 million, dominated the government until Abiy took power two years ago. He pledged to unite Ethiopians and introduce freedoms after years of state repression that filled jails with tens of thousands of political prisoners.

(Reuters.)



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## SADC Organ Troika Summit deliberates on security situation in the region

\*Mokgweetsi Masisi

We have come to a successful conclusion of our very important Extraordinary SADC Organ Troika Summit, plus the Force Intervention Brigade Troop Contributing Countries, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Mozambique.

I am pleased to note that the outcome of our meeting is filled with promise and optimism. In this regard, I wish to thank you, once again, for your demonstrated spirit of unity and resolve to ensure that our

region remains peaceful, stable, secure and prosperous.

That you have all come here in person, speaks to the importance you attach to the SADC ideals. I am therefore confident that this expression of commitment towards finding solutions to the problems afflicting our region, will go a long way in ensuring that SADC continues to lead in terms of regional integration and socioeconomic development.

I hope you will all agree with me that this meeting was opportune as it provided a platform for us

to interact and reflect on the prevailing security situation in our region. We also benefitted from the excellent work done by the State Security Sub Committee and the Report they produced on the Threats of Terrorism and Violent Extremism.

It emerged from our deliberations that in order for the Organ to fulfil its core mandate of sustaining peace and security and promoting democracy in the region, it has to play a central role in addressing the structural causes of conflict. These include the

socio-economic threats, as well as the root-causes of terrorism and violent extremism.

Our discussions, therefore, also focused on the numerous challenges that our countries are facing and the measures that must be undertaken to address them. Of particular importance was the realization that incidents of terrorism are increasing in our region. To this end, the Summit came up with a number of recommendations on how Member States could deal with this eminent threat,

## Overcoming water challenges in agriculture

More than three billion people live in agricultural areas with high to very high levels of water shortages and scarcity, and almost half of them face severe constraints.

Furthermore, available freshwater resources per person have declined by more than 20% over the past two decades globally, underscoring the importance of producing more with less, especially in the agriculture sector, the world's largest user of water.

Improved water management, supported by effective governance and strong institutions - including secure water tenure and rights, underpinned by sound water accounting and auditing - will be essential to ensure global food security and nutrition, and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), according to The State of Food and Agriculture (Sofa) 2020 - a flagship report published today by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

"With this report, FAO is sending a strong message: water shortages and scarcity in agriculture must be addressed immediately and boldly if our pledge to achieve the SDGs is to be taken seriously," QU Dongyu, FAO director-general emphasised in the foreword of the report.

Paths for action range from investing in water-harvesting and conservation in rainfed areas to rehabilitating and modernizing sustainable irrigation systems in irrigated areas.

These must be combined with best agronomic practices, such as adopting drought-tolerant crop varieties, and improved water management tools - including effective water pricing and allocation tools, such as water rights and quotas - to ensure equitable and sustainable access. Water accounting and auditing must be, however, the starting point for any effective management strategy.

Achieving the internationally agreed SDG pledges, including the Zero Hunger target (SDG 2), "is still achievable," the Sofa emphasises - but only by ensuring more productive and sustainable use of freshwater and rainwater in agriculture, which accounts for more than 70% of global water withdrawals.

FAO's Sofa report in 1993 also focused on water issues, and today it is striking how the findings presented then remain valid and relevant today. While the previous report focused on irrigation, the new edition broadens its scope to cover water-related challenges in rainfed agriculture, which represents more than 80%

of land under cultivation and 60% of global crop production.

### Mapping the moisture

FAO is the custodian of SDG Indicator 6.4.2, which measures the pressure of human activities on natural freshwater resources, and Soda offers the first spatially disaggregated representation of how things stand today - which, when meshed with historical drought frequency data, allows for a more holistic assessment of water constraints in food production.

About 1.2 billion people - 44% of them in rural areas and the remainder in small urban centres in the countryside - live in places where severe water shortages and scarcity challenge agriculture. Around 40% of them live in Eastern and South-eastern Asia, and a slightly higher share in Southern Asia. Central Asia and Northern Africa and Western Asia are also severely affected - about one of every five people live in agricultural areas with very high water shortages and scarcity, compared to less than 4% in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Northern America and Oceania.

About 5% of people living in sub-Saharan Africa live in similar conditions, meaning that about 50 million people live in areas where

severe drought has catastrophic impacts on cropland and pastureland once every three years.

About 11% of the world's rainfed cropland, or 128 million hectares, face frequent drought, as does about 14% of pastureland, or 656 million hectares. Meanwhile, more than 60% (or 171 million hectares) of irrigated cropland is highly water-stressed. 11 countries, all in Northern Africa and Asia, face both challenges, making it urgent and necessary to adopt sound water accounting, clear allocation, modern technologies and to shift to less thirsty crops.

### Mathematics of water

"The inherent characteristics of water make it difficult to manage," the Sofa report notes.

"Water should be recognised as an economic good that has a value and a price," it says, noting that customary practices leading it to be treated as a free commodity often create market failures. A price that reflects the true value of water, by contrast, sends a clear signal to users to use water wisely. At the same time, policy and governance support to ensure efficient, equitable and sustainable access for all is essential.

"Water management plans need to be problem-focused and dynamic," the report recommends. Sofa notes that the rural poor can benefit substantially from irrigation and endorses its cautious expansion. Between 2010 and 2050, harvested irrigated areas are projected to grow in most regions of the world and to

including our commitment to the SADC Mutual Defence Pact.

Other practical and incremental steps that we agreed on include expediting the establishment of the SADC Regional Counter Terrorism Centre (SADC-RCTC); as well as enhancing dedicated national counter-terrorism coordination structures. These include our cyber-security response capacity and improving multilateral cooperation to detect, investigate, identify and combat radicalism and violent extremism.

The Summit also deliberated on the Strategy on the Progressive and Phased Drawdown of United Nations Stabilisation Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO). We agreed to maintain our full support to the DRC, even post the United Nations withdrawal from the country. This is because the ultimate objective of SADC's involvement in the DRC is to assist the country to achieve sustainable peace and security, as well as to create an environment conducive for regional integration and socioeconomic development.

In the overall, I can confidently say that the Summit reinvigorated our conviction to rid our region of conflict and terrorism, so as to ensure that the years ahead are better, brighter and more prosperous for all our peoples.

\*President Mokgweetsi Masisi of Botswana, gave the closing remarks at the SADC Organ Troika SADC Summit, plus the Force Intervention Brigade Troop Contributing Countries, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Mozambique held in Gaborone on Friday.

more than double in sub-Saharan Africa, potentially benefiting hundreds of millions of rural people.

The report notes that, in some cases, small-scale and farmer-led irrigation systems can be more efficient than large-scale projects.

That's a promising path for sub-Saharan Africa, where surface and underground water resources are comparatively undeveloped and only 3% of cropland is equipped for irrigation - and where expanding small-scale irrigation can be profitable and benefit millions of rural people. However, many factors impede adoption, including lack of secure water tenure and access to finance and credit.

In Asia, declining large-scale state-funded surface irrigation has led to farmers tapping directly into groundwater, placing excessive pressure on the resource. Addressing these issues will require investing in modernizing old irrigation schemes, as well as effective policies.

Full-fledged water markets involving the sale of water rights are relatively rare. However, when water accounting and auditing is well performed, water tenure and rights are well established, and the active participation of beneficiaries and managing institutions are promoted; regulated water markets can induce efficient and equitable allocation of water while promoting its conservation.



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# LEA continues to Accelerate SMME Growth



Makgovango Luxury Inn is a LEA assisted enterprise based in Gumare. Directed by Mr. and Mrs. Mfakosi Boikanyo, the Hotel offers accommodation, conference facilities, restaurant,

and catering services.

Mr and Mrs Boikanyo registered with LEA in 2015, and have since been assisted with targeted interventions to advance their business. Through the LEA

business advisory services, the client was assisted to develop a business plan, which was used to access funding and establish a commercial guest house with nine (9) rooms. Furthermore, LEA continued to offer support services to Makgovango Luxury Inn, including business coaching and mentoring. As a result, the business expanded into a Hotel that currently operates 20 air-conditioned rooms, a conference facility, restaurant and an entertainment area. Employment rate also increased to 18 full time staff members.

In addition the business also benefitted from the LEA training and capacity development initiatives such as Records Keeping, Intellectual



Property, Branding and Labelling Awareness. Through LEA business development and support services, the business has grown and offers services to various markets that include Government, private sector and Tourists.

"LEA opened our eyes in all aspects of running a business. From drawing the business plan, starting operations and expansion. We are really grateful for their mentoring as we couldn't have made it without them." said Mrs. Boikanyo.



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# Family farmers struggle to keep up with fast-warming world

Young African farmers Mavis Gofa and Andrew Goodman had a vastly different upbringing – Gofa grew up on a one-hectare (2.5-acre) farm and could not afford to finish high school, while Goodman's family cultivated 275 hectares and educated him in Britain. Both want a better life for the families who run the world's half a billion small farms, many of whom remain steeped in poverty despite producing about 80% of food consumed in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, according to the United Nations.

It is a tough ask as climate change makes life even harder for millions of small-scale farmers – with scientists predicting more frequent and intense floods, droughts and storms.

A recent study led by University College London (UCL) showed such experiences could become widespread as the planet warms, with significant implications for hunger and inequality.

It looked at 18 crops – including those grown mainly in developing nations such as cassava, groundnut and rapeseed – representing 70% of the world's crop area and about 65% of its calorific intake. The study found that harvests of key crops – such as pulses in West Africa, rice in India and Pakistan, and wheat in Sudan – would fall if temperatures rose 1 degree Celsius above today's levels, even without other impacts such as floods. Globally, the average temperature has so far risen a little more than 1C since pre-industrial times, although the change varies in different parts of the world – and projections are for warming to increase further to 3C or more this century.

The study also said countries where increasing temperatures cause the most negative impacts already have lower-than-average yields and are struggling to feed their citizens, denting their resilience and ability to adapt to additional heating.

Poor nations face a triple whammy with food production pummelled, higher levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide reducing nutrients in crops, and a resulting spike in hunger and malnutrition, warned Paolo Agnolucci, the study's lead author.

About 690 million people, or one in 11, went without enough to eat in 2019, and the United Nations has warned the COVID-19 pandemic could add another 132 million to that number in 2020.

The social implications of even 1C of additional warming could

be “massive”, added Agnolucci, associate professor at UCL. With global climate action moving at a slow pace, many small farmers in Africa are diversifying crops, to adapt to worsening weather extremes and shifting climate patterns. Millions of small farmers have “woefully low access” to mobile networks and the Internet, putting digital technologies that could help them out of reach, said a study this month. Less than 40% of farms smaller

than a hectare have 3G or 4G cellular services and the cost of data remains prohibitive in many parts of Africa, said the International Center for Tropical Agriculture. The UCL-led study said expansion of irrigation and increased use of fertilisers and pesticides could protect yields, but would come with environmental costs, from growing water scarcity to nitrous oxide emissions from fertilisers.



The only long-lasting solution is cooperation to help transfer technology from rich to poor countries, said UCL's Agnolucci.

Without this, the number of farmers quitting their land and migrating north could grow, he warned. (Reuters.)

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**BOTSWANA TRAVEL & TOURISM VIRTUAL EXPO (BTTVE) 2020**

Botswana Tourism Organisation (BTO) will host its Botswana Travel and Tourism Virtual Expo (BTTVE) from the 2nd – 4th December 2020 themed **“Let’s Explore”**. Held annually since 2013, the Botswana Travel and Tourism Expo (BTTE) is a business-to-business forum where global wholesalers and retailers meet with local tourism operators.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, BTO has refocused its approach to promote travel to Botswana through virtual platforms. We are exploring technological advancements in support of the tourism industry now and beyond COVID -19.

**HOW WILL IT WORK?**

The locally developed platform is web based and has a number of features that support private meetings, information exchange, high-level panel discussions and video presentation. The platform will allow the International and Local participants to interact virtually. Only registered participants will have full access to the platform while general public will have limited access.

**Date: 02 - 04 December 2020**

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# Rebuilding your Business after COVID-19

By Emmanuel Allotey

The year 2020 has been dominated by COVID-19. The global economic devastation caused by the coronavirus has been unprecedented. Businesses were not prepared to deal with national lockdowns, social distancing, amongst others and consequently suffered heavy losses. With the discovery of vaccines that can possibly

treat the virus, lockdowns and restrictions are gradually being eased. The wheels of the global economy are starting to move again, although at a slow pace giving businesses hope of recovery.

According to reports more than 92 percent of small businesses experienced a negative impact from COVID-19. As the economy rebounds businesses need to assess their current operations and adjust to post-COVID

environment. The following steps will assist in the rebuilding process.

**Assessing the Damage** – the first step is to perform a financial assessment of the business. Quantifying the reduction in sales, operational losses, overdue payments, collections outstanding, will give a better perspective on the profitability of the business. Some businesses received COVID grants and other relief support, this should also

be factored in when assessing the total impact on the business.

**Damage control** – after completing a thorough assessment, business momentum recovery strategies can be introduced. It is important to tackle the challenge that give the biggest delta when solved. Some options may involve exploring funding options to prop the business finances and reduce debts. Lending standards are

being reviewed as Financial institution re-examine their risk appetite aligned to the economic outlook. Engaging financial intuitions for a debt facility restructuring may prove to be a viable option to lead the business back to profitability.

Readiness for growth – although it remains unclear when the coronavirus will fully diffuse, businesses must start exploring a path to growth. Business continuity planning and other scenario readiness strategies will prove effective in determining the actions to take should another wave of COVID return. Other options involve securing business funding, extending credit line with suppliers, rehiring employees, increasing stock held in anticipation for growth.

Go digital – the advantages of digital as a cost-efficient solution to service delivery has been demonstrated during this pandemic. All businesses need to develop a digital strategy that allows for a ubiquitous sales presence and a seamless logistics arrangement to fulfil digital orders.

The pandemic has engraved an important lesson in business agility. Businesses should always create room to adapt to the dynamic business environment. Rebuilding a business post-COVID may prove challenging, but not impossible. There are resources and organisations available to support the business return to profitability.



## Botswana Stock Exchange CEO elected deputy President of African Security Exchanges Association

The Botswana Stock Exchange has announced that Thapelo Tsheole, its Chief Executive Officer has been elected as the

Deputy President of the African Securities Exchanges Association (ASEA) effective immediately. Thapelo Tsheole was elected

at 24th ASEA Annual General Meeting (AGM) held last week. Edoh Kossi Amenounve, Chief Executive Officer of Bourse

Regionale des Valeures Mobiliers (BRVM) was elected President of ASEA.

In responding to his election

as Deputy President, Thapelo Tsheole said 'I would like to thank my colleagues in the continent for entrusting me with this role and I accept the task ahead which is to work with a team of experts to transform capital markets in Africa.' He further said 'as an association, ASEA has performed tremendously well in promoting Africa as a viable investment destination and we look forward to building on that to attract issuer and investment participation, as well as develop securities exchanges to adopt international best practice. The BSE has been pursuing a strategy to expand its African and global presence and this is an important milestone in that regard'.

Established in 1993, ASEA is the premier association of 27 securities exchanges serving thirty-two (32) economies in Africa. ASEA aims to develop member exchanges and provide a platform for networking and cooperation on areas of mutual importance. The association also aims to unlock the potential of African capital markets and enhance the development and global competitiveness of member exchanges. In November 2019, the BSE hosted the ASEA conference for the first time in Botswana.



# Kenyan central bank cuts 2020 Growth outlook as coronavirus hits home

Kenya's central bank cut its forecast for 2020 economic growth by more than half on Friday, joining the Treasury in realising that the coronavirus had inflicted more damage to the economy than previously thought.

Finance Minister Ukur Yatani said on Wednesday he expected expansion of only 0.6% for this year, down from an earlier forecast of 2.5%. That's still more optimistic than the World Bank's outlook, which forecasts a contraction of 1% to 1.5%.

Like other economies around the world, Kenya's tourism, education and other key sectors have been pummelled by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The central bank now expects growth of 1.3%, down from its September forecast of 3.1%, bank governor Patrick Njoroge told an online news conference.

The bank's prediction was derived from updated information on output in sectors like farming and manufacturing that it expects the statistics office will eventually reflect, he said.

Njoroge, who led policymakers in holding the benchmark lending rate unchanged for the fifth time in a row on Thursday, said a benign outlook for the current account deficit, driven by a rebound in exports, will support the exchange rate. The shilling weakened to a record low of 110.00/30 in early trading on Friday.

Kenya is in discussions with the International Monetary Fund for a budget lending programme, which the Treasury put at \$2.3 billion on Monday.

Njoroge said they were still assessing the potential impact of seeking suspension of debt payments under the G20's Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI), aimed at helping poor countries weather the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We need to look at it in the context of what is good for the country and look at the various risks and benefits and weigh them as we go into this," he said.

Kenya's total debt jumped to 65.6% of gross domestic product in June this year from 62.4% a year earlier, the World Bank said on Wednesday.

"It is currently sustainable, but we need to move away from the dangerous sort of margins, closer to the edge of the table, and more to the middle where we should be," Njoroge said.

## Career Opportunity

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  - Team building and leadership capability.
  - Understanding of socio-economic trends and implications on business.
  - Sound negotiating and business acumen.



## MTV Africa Music Awards returns with virtual format in 2021

The MTV Africa Music Awards (MAMA) is set to make

a comeback in 2021, when it will be held virtually, in partnership

with Uganda, on 20 February 2021.

The ultimate celebration of local African and international talent and achievement, MAMA 2021 recognises and rewards musicians, trailblazers and those who are shining a light on the continent's diverse talent and creativity by instilling positive impact on African music and youth culture over the previous year. The awards ceremony will feature performances from leading African and international artists and will also showcase some of the biggest cross-genre and cross-border collaborations. 20 Award categories

The event will celebrate African talent across 20 award categories, including Best Male, Best Female, Best Song, and Best Collaboration. The contribution of artists from Portuguese- and French-speaking Africa will also be recognised in the Best Lusophone and Best Francophone categories. Additional new categories included are the MAMA Generation Change Award, Best Fan Base, Alone Together Best Lockdown Performance and Personality of the Year. These new categories seek to demonstrate MTV Base's commitment to supporting the youth of Africa.

The news was revealed today via a virtual press conference broadcast from Johannesburg and Kampala by Monde Twala and Craig Paterson, senior vice presidents and general managers at ViacomCBS Networks Africa (VCNA), the State Minister for Tourism Godfrey Kiwanda at

Ugandan Ministry of Tourism and the CEO for the Ugandan Tourism Board, Lilly Ajarova. The engaging Q&A discussion included accomplished Ugandan artist Bebe Cool, highly skilled songstress Sheebah Karungi together with talented South African rapper Nasty C.

### Road to MAMA

Always celebrating the pan-African scope of the MAMA, the awards will encompass three pulsating Road to MAMA broadcasts featuring MAMA nominees from across the continent. The MAMA Kampala 2021 brings the much-anticipated music industry workshops in a virtual format for the continent's aspiring musicians, youth upskilling and development.

First staged in 2008, the MTV Africa Music Awards has recognised the talent of musicians, achievers and personalities from across Africa, rewarding iconic artists and game-changers such as 2Face Idibia, AKA, Anselmo Ralph, Big Nuz, Cassper Nyovest, Clarence Peters, Cabo Snoop, Davido, D'Banj, Diamond Platnumz, Flavour, Gangs of Ballet, HHP, Fally Ipupa, Liquideep, Lira, Lupita Nyong'o, Mafikizolo Nameless, P-Square, Sarkodie, Tiwa Savage, Toofan, Trevor Noah, Uhuru, Wahu, Wizkid, Yemi Alade, Zebra & Giraffe and many more.

(Bizcommunity.)



## Katrina Meyner – “A Landlocked Islander”

Katrina Meyner is a Trinidadian painter. She is scheduled to have her first exhibition in Botswana at Sanitas Tea Garden on the 5th of December. The exhibition will be entitled “A Landlocked Islander” in reference to her Caribbean origins.

Meyner described her inspiration to paint as arising from a young age, influenced by Trinidad and Tobago's rich and diverse culture. She went on to become a teacher after art school. The colors of the

Caribbean have influenced her, and she describes color as being a major part of her work.

Speaking of her process, Meyner mentions that she generally starts with her own photographs to guide her painting. She advises to artists not to use other people's photographs and to train their eyes and brain to capture the initial moment. After sketching she likes to add a watercolor wash, even though I use acrylics. She then adds the details and

values and emphasizes the colors.

Doing close up of objects is one of her favorite themes, although she paints a bit of everything. She enjoys blending vivid Caribbean colors with Botswana's wide and open landscapes and the blue skies. Commenting on Botswana's art scene, Meyner says that Botswana's art scene seems to be a bit more focused on certain topics and is a bit smaller than that of Trinidad and Tobago.

Meyner says “I am also new to



the Art scene here and would like to learn and see more, so it is a bit hard to compare. Although I have been here two years, having a baby and Covid-19, has kept me indoors a bit more than usual.”

Meyner was a secondary school teacher for 15 years and in that period taught in India for 2 years. She says that teaching constantly exposes artists to new impressions, different techniques, media, approaches and point of views adding, “Over the years, I would from time to time, change my style to try different experiments. Many times, you become a student yourself, while being a teacher.”

Meyner says that like most industries, Covid-19 has had an impact on art with fewer events and thus less exposure for artists. Meyner acknowledges the introduction of the virtual art exhibition popularized in the time of Lockdowns. Speaking on the business side of art Meyner say, “Generally,

artists have to be creative and find a way to show their work to the public. It does become a bit more challenging for sales. Unfortunately, Covid-19 has impacted on all walks of life and we all have to slowly adjust.”

Meyner's art is constantly evolving and she says about her art “I have to admit I am not always consistent and probably most artists will agree. It is very difficult to produce pieces that reach a certain standard every time, but you will see as time goes on. Consistency for me is the drive to evolve. My advice to upcoming artists would be, to not to think that your style or technique has completely evolved yet, keep experimenting.”



# TRAVEL

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# Elephant Havens – Preserving and Protecting the African elephant

There is usually little thought given to what happens to the young elephants or any other species that are abandoned or orphaned through poaching or natural deaths of their mothers. Little is known as to what becomes

or happens to them as they wonder in the wilderness and ultimately becoming easy prey or predators.

An elephant sanctuary – Elephant Havens, founded by Boago Poloko, and located just outside Shorobe on the edges

of the Okavango Delta exists specifically to address conservation concern. The orphanage rescues these young animals and put into their care facility, hand rearing them until they are in a position to be re-introduced into the wild.

Besides the care facility, the orphanage also works on habitat protection and engagements with community on the importance of co-existence with elephants.

Echo Travel recently visited the orphanage to appreciate its work and during the visit we spoke to its founder Poloko, aged 33 who is a conservationist at heart, who has cared for elephants and the environment his entire life.

Coming from a family of conservationists and having grown up in the Okavango Delta's panhandle, Poloko is not your ordinary animal caregiver, having as an elephant handler at very young age.

According to Poloko, he has always known that there is a need for an elephant orphanage in the area, an idea which was actualized in 2017, when they their foundation registered. After a year, the government processes and permits had been completed.

"Our mission is to preserve and protect the African elephant, through habitat protection, community outreach, research and information sharing, and through the orphanage rescue and rehabilitate orphaned elephants

with the view to re-introduce them into the wild," he said.

His other strongly held view is that of community empowerment in the areas of conservation and tourism. He wants the communities in the area to derive benefits from the natural resources they are endowed with. And as part of the community outreach programme, they have assisted communities with the drilling of boreholes aimed at reducing elephants and human conflicts. Some of the pilots project already in place in this regard were geared towards reducing the damage caused by elephants on farmers' crops.

According to Poloko, the baby elephants at the orphanage are like ambassadors for those in the wild.

"As people come here and interact with them, they learn and see them from a different perspective and not problems animals. We also work with schools, to engage school kids for educational tours," he noted.

The orphanage is in the process of acquiring a school bus for students who school at Shorobe Primary school, and living far from school, and traversing elephants' corridors daily for easy access to school.

Poloko emphasised that the donations made to the orphanage for the care of the young elephants, are also used to empower the

communities towards incident free co-existence with elephants.

"Our future plans are to touch base with the entire district of Ngamiland to come up with ideas that will work for farmers in reducing conflicts and the children in the area on the issues of conservation," he said.

Meanwhile, Poloko has indicated that the solution to the contentious issues of human wildlife conflict lies in public education. He said farmers and communities equipped with the right knowledge abouts wildlife, would be in a position to live peacefully alongside these animals.

"We should get together as conservationists and the tourism industry and make sure we bring our communities on board, and work with them closely. There are a lot of projects that works in alleviating human wildlife conflicts that farmers need to be educated on." he said.

Poloko said some of the initiatives he has since implemented for the communities around the orphanage is that of drilling boreholes for communities, which has since reduced incidents of conflict as there is less interaction between farmers and elephants at water sources.

There is an invaluable amount of lessons about elephants that can be learnt from orphanage, and members of the public are encouraged to visit this remarkable conservation initiative. The orphanage can be accessed from Maun, turning off the tarred road before reaching Shorobe and drive a further 6 kilometers on the earth road.





# Eto'o: Qatar 2022 will be a special experience for football fans

Samuel Eto'o believes the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 will offer many unique and memorable experiences for fans when the next edition of football's showpiece event heads to the Middle East and Arab world in two years' time.

In an interview with qatar2022.qa, the former Cameroon international – who serves as a Global Ambassador for the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC) – highlighted some of his favourite places to visit in the country.

"I enjoy visiting lots of different places when I'm in Qatar," said Eto'o, a four-time African Player of the Year. "Sometimes, I like to go to the Villaggio Mall and on other occasions I enjoy visiting the Katara Cultural Village, which has many shops and restaurants. I also love Banana Island, which is a brilliant holiday destination if you want to get away from it all."

"I'm sure fans will find many interesting places to visit when they arrive in this magnificent country in 2022."

Eto'o's initial experiences of Qatar were shaped during a brief playing spell with Qatar Sports Club during the 2018/19 season. He believes fans will be amazed by the friendliness of the people and the safety of the country. Qatar is consistently ranked as one of the safest countries in the world.

"I like the people in Qatar,

they are open and sincere," said Eto'o. "I also like the fact you always feel safe and secure in Doha and throughout the country."

"These things should offer football fans a level of reassurance when they come to Qatar for the World Cup. I believe they will be able to have a great time visiting the country and watching the best players in action during the tournament."

Having appeared in four World Cups for Cameroon, Eto'o is aware of the logistical challenges that players have faced in previous tournaments.

With Qatar 2022 set to be one of the most compact World Cups ever staged, it will not just be the fans that will benefit. Players will never be more than about an hour from any of the eight stadiums and will have the luxury of staying in the same place throughout the tournament.

"The players will not be so tired because they won't have to travel to games by plane," Eto'o said. "They will be based in the same city and have the optimum time to train and prepare. That will be good because they will be fresher when they take to the pitch

and compete.

"The players will have the chance to use the best facilities in the world, whether it is the spectacular new stadiums that will host matches or the world-class training facilities. One thing is for sure, what the players will experience in Qatar will be a reward for their efforts in qualifying for this World Cup."

Eto'o's time in the Qatar Stars League also allowed him to assess the quality of the players that will represent the host nation in 2022. Qatar will head into the tournament as the champions of Asia – and

Eto'o believes the Maroons have the quality to shine on a global stage.

"I expect them to be competitive because they have built a winning mentality by becoming Asian champions," he said. "What is important now for Qatar is that they take advantage of every opportunity to play the best national teams in the world and learn from those experiences. They have some good players, including Akram Afif, who I rate highly. I wish them all the best."

(Fifa.com.)





# Race to run Africa's football confederation has just heated up

The president of CAF has immense powers, which include representing the continent at the highest committees for global football decision making at the International Federation of Football Associations (FIFA). He or she serves on the FIFA Council and as an Executive Vice President of FIFA. CAF presidents set the direction for football on the continent. They serve a four-year term and the highly coveted position often attracts support based on regional coalitions and language alignments.

At present there are three contestants besides Ahmad and Motsepe. They are the Ivorian Jacques Anouma, a former member FIFA's executive committee; Augustin Senghor of Senegal; and Mauritania's Ahmed Yahya. Two others have withdrawn: Tunisia's Tarek Bouchamoui, was reportedly blocked by Tunisia's Football Federation, and Nigeria's Pinnick Amaju, who is backing Motsepe.

The drama has only begun. More can be expected before the election on March 12. Political alignments and coalitions can be expected to change quickly as the election draws close. The changes may also be influenced by alleged horse trading of positions and favours.

This particular election is clouded by the fact that there are investigations into Ahmad. In addition, the organisation is at a crossroads after losing the primary sponsor for its

premier competitions.

The president elected in March will face several major tasks. The most important will be to sign a respectable media contract for its continental competitions and to restore confidence in the organisation.

Ahmad became president after a late coalition against the prolonged leadership of former president Issa Hayatou of Cameroon. Ahmad, elected as president in March 2017, has been in office for four years. He has been a member of CAF's Executive Committee since 2013. But he has run into problems during his tenure. These include accusations of impropriety in a CAF equipment supplying contract awarded to a company owned by a friend of his. PricewaterhouseCoopers also reportedly found unreceipted expenditure of \$24 million.

There have also been reported sexual harassment complaints. Ahmad has denied these accusations.

In the boardroom, there were bungled decisions following an ill-tempered African Champions League final between Morocco's Wydad and Tunisia's Esperance, and a decision to pull out of a marketing contract with Largadere Sports and Entertainment without a substitute marketer in place.

FIFA has investigated some of these issues and results are awaited. FIFA also sent its secretary-general, Fatma Samoura, to straighten out

the finances.

These missteps make it clear that Ahmad Ahmad will have challengers as he seeks a second term in office. A previous ally, Amaju has publicly announced support for Motsepe.

Ahmad is not a novice to politics. He is vice-president of his country's senate and at CAF he has dealt with adversaries summarily and co-opted supporters. To gauge support from within CAF's executive, he recently demanded and received written support from 46 of the continent's 54 associations for his second run for office.

Yet he's not sure to return as president of CAF. FIFA's investigation results are pending and could have severe consequences. This includes long term or life banishment.

What's more, his tenure has rubbed up some members the wrong way. For instance, in July 2019, Ahmad engineered the removal of Nigeria's Amaju Pinnick from the CAF vice-presidency position. Nigeria has now joined four other countries – Sierra Leone, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Botswana – to declare support for Motsepe.

The other contenders

Ivory Coast and some of the French speaking countries are likely to rally behind Anouma. It is not his first attempt to get this job. He tried in 2012, but was politically out-maneuvered by Hayatou. Hayatou introduced a rule that barred non-voting members of the CAF board from

running for the presidency. It prevented Anouma from contesting.

The rule was eliminated under Ahmad, opening the door for Anouma to put his name forward.

Motsepe appears in a much stronger position than Anouma – at least at this early stage. Anouma is considered part of the old guard that held sway during the long years of Hayatou's rule. Nevertheless, Motsepe still faces major obstacles. While his club, Mamelodi Sundowns, is an example of successful club ownership, it hasn't proved his football administration skills.

As a mining executive he clearly has the business background. But the CAF job requires political rather than business manoeuvring. The question is: would he be able to combine his business skills with politics?

Ahmad Yahya is an intriguing option. At 44, he is a shipping magnate and heads the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. Under his leadership, Mauritania

has played in the African Nations' Championship as well as the more prestigious Africa Cup of Nations. These two achievements were quite unexpected for the country.

Beyond the field, he has built a modern headquarters for his federation and an academy, received a CAF award for leadership excellence, and received accolades from FIFA as an exemplar for African football.

Yet his candidacy may be considered early and his ability to navigate the thorny landscape of African football politics could be challenged.

Ahmad must still be considered the front runner. To pass him will require his opponents working together to support a single opposition candidate and canvass around the continent within a short period to have a chance of having a new CAF leader in March. The Conversation.

(The Conversation.)



*What's more, his tenure has rubbed up some members the wrong way. For instance, in July 2019, Ahmad engineered the removal of Nigeria's Amaju Pinnick from the CAF vice-presidency position.*



## Ahly Wins Record Extending Ninth Champions League Crown

Mohamed Madgy Afsha scored a beauty of a goal with four minutes left on the clock as Al Ahly beat Zamalek 2-1 at the Cairo International Stadium on Friday to clinch a record extending ninth Total CAF Champions League title.

The Cairo Derby, the first time a final was being decided by teams from the same country, looked to be headed for a draw before Magdy scored a beauty to hand the Red Devils the coveted piece of silverware.

Head coach Pitso Mosimane

who joined the team less than three months ago won his second Champions League title, coincidentally against the same side he beat to clinch his first crown in 2016 when he was at Mamelodi Sundowns. Ahly also kept their track of not being beaten by their eternal rivals in the CAF Champions League, picking their sixth win in nine matches.

Ahly had the perfect start, Elsoulia breaking the deadlock after six minutes. The midfielder sneaked in behind the defence

to nod in a header from Ali Maaloul's corner to give The Red Devils the lead.

The record champions were rewarded for a bright start and the corner had been borne after Hussein Elshahat had forced the keeper to a save from his near post on the right. But despite going down, Zamalek forced Ahly to play in their half as they sought an equalizer to get back into contention.

They had the chances, with Shikabala having a shot from range saved while Achraf

Bencharki had a grass cutter go just wide. But they went level terms in the most sublime of fashions, Shikabala taking on a superb solo effort. The experienced striker picked the ball from a throw-in on the right, drifted to his favourite left foot before unleashing a belter that left Mohamed Elshenawy dazed.

The White Knights kept the pressure but could not convert their possession to any additional goal as the two Egyptian giants went to the

break on level terms. In the second half, the stakes were raised as each team increased the tempo.

Ahly had the best chance of the opening minutes of the second period but top scorer Elshahat missed a sitter, hitting the upright from five yards out after a beautiful cutback from Maaloul found him with a gaping goalmouth

On the other end in the 65th minute, Zamalek also struck the upright with Ahmed 'Zizo' Mostafa seeing his effort go cracking on the woodwork after setting himself up with a beautiful first touch and launching a rocket with the second.

The see-saw continued to swing in both ways as possession was balanced, but Ahly tilted the scales to their favour in the last quarter of an hour. The pressure was rewarding as Magdy scored the winner with four minutes left, another world from range.

The forward controlled the ball with his thigh to get off his marker before rolling a volley that landed on the keeper's left.

Pitso Mosimane, Al Ahly coach

"It's an unbelievable and an amazing feeling. Not everyone can win the Champions League. It was a difficult match. We played a very good team. Beautiful goals from the three scorers of the game. I must thank everyone who took part in this success; the players, the technical team, the president of the club, everyone."

The new season starts this weekend, we do not even have a time for a break. Of course, we enjoy the moment, but we have to start preparing CAF Super Cup and Egyptian Cup.

(Cafonline.)



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