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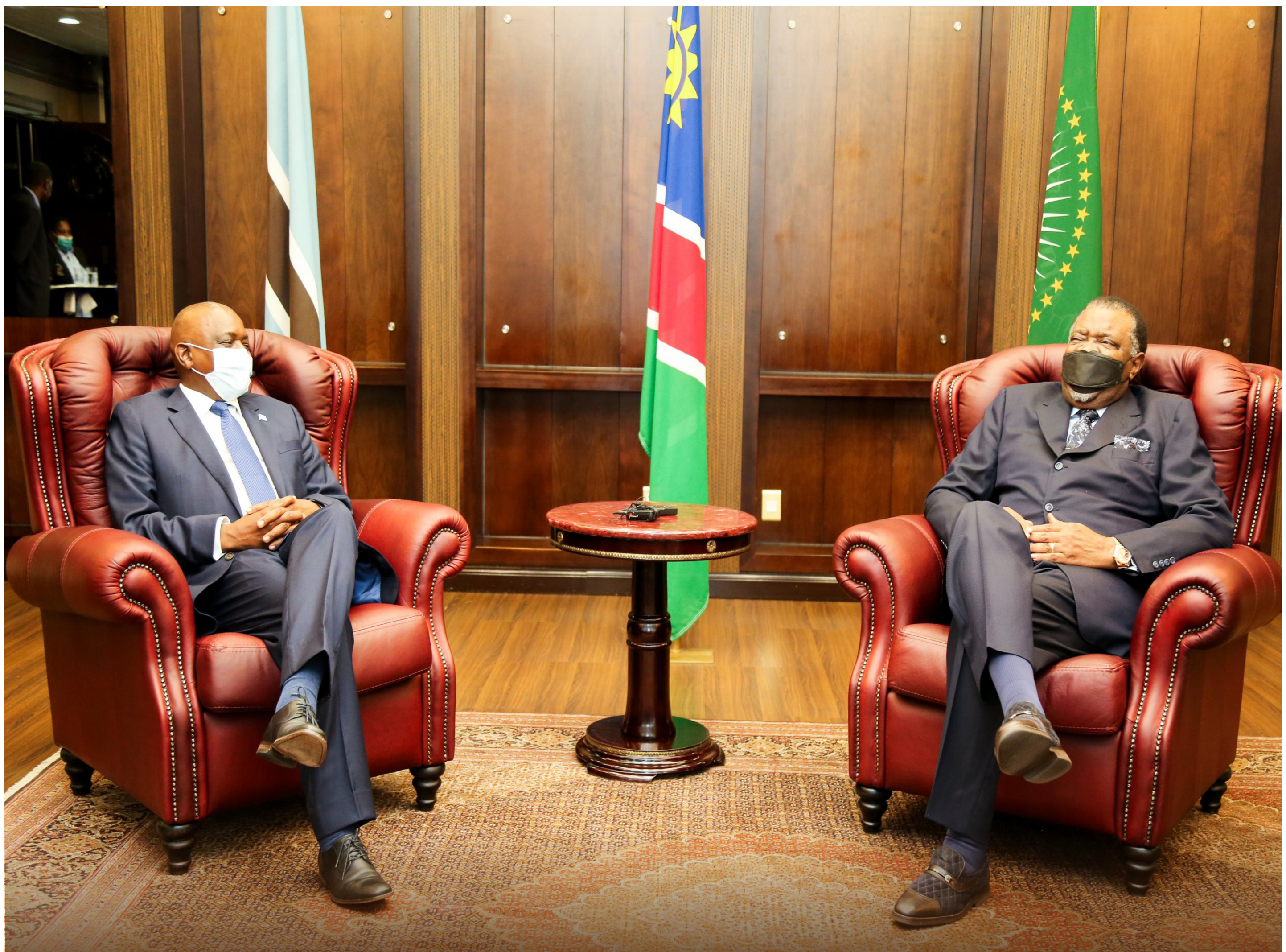

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News, Finance, Travel and Sport
Telephone: (267) 3933 805/6.
E-mail: newsdesk@echo.co.bw

Advertising
Telephone: (267) 3933 805/6
E-mail: sales@echo.co.bw

Sales & Marketing Manager
Ruele Ramoeng
ruele@ymhp.co.bw

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

Echo is published by YMH Publishing
YMH Publishing,
Unit 3, Kgale Court, Plot 128,
GIFP, Gaborone
Postal address:
P O BOX 840,
Gaborone,
Botswana
Telephone: (267) 3933 805/6.
E-mail: info@echo.co.bw
www.echo.co.bw

Botswana-Namibia in ambitious ocean water desalination project talks

The two Southern African neighbours - Botswana and Namibia have revealed that they are jointly considering a water development project, which would see the two-desalinating water from the Atlantic Ocean for supply to both countries.

The details of the meetings that have been taking place in Windhoek, twice in a month were revealed by the Botswana government-first by its President Mokgweetsi Masisi, and later by the government media following a visit by a government delegation he led to Namibia on Thursday.

According to Botswana, President Hage Geingob invited Botswana to meet a potential investor in Windhoek for the envisaged project, which would possibly be implemented in partnership between the two countries.

Interestingly, it was Geingob who first posted that he was to host Masisi on Thursday while his counterpart had kept the visit under wraps, only for Botswana's foreign affairs. In his statement the day before the meeting, Geingob said during the visit they were to discuss within the framework of a win-win partnership matters of mutual concern for the two countries in the areas of water infrastructure and sustainable development.

Following the meeting, it was the Botswana leader who took to social media that they discussed and explored the possibility of partnering in a water project. Namibia had started talks with an investor who is offering to desalinate water from the Atlantic Ocean.

"Being a good neighbour and alive to our water challenges, President Geingob invited us to come and meet the investor and share thoughts on the project," Masisi said.

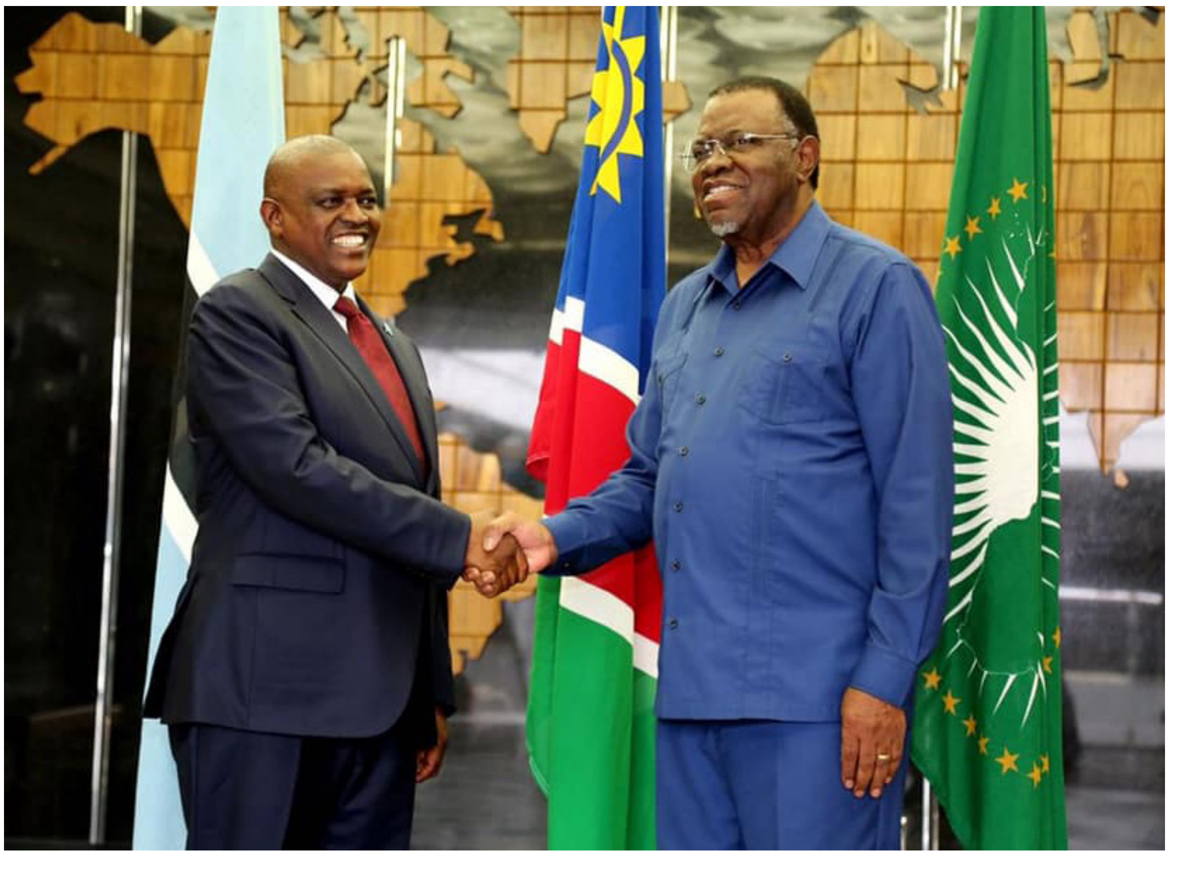
Masisi further said they are elated at the prospects, adding that the success of the project will be determined by their governance procedures. In an interview with government media, Masisi further revealed that the investor had cited a new technology that is cheaper in desalinating water from the ocean.

Meanwhile the media in Namibia has raised issues with the silence of their government on the matter, and that the identity of the potential investor is still unknown.

According to The Namibian, State House press secretary Alfredo Hengari refused to reveal the details of Thursday's meeting, but only sad the two presidents held talks bordering on common challenges and opportunities the two countries share, "with the view of cooperating, especially in the areas of water infrastructure and sustainable development".

Hengari is reported to have said the water scarcity situation the two drought-stricken countries facto have e and plans to partner on a desalination project were central to the meeting.

"Following presentations on opportunities to scale up water provision, the two presidents directed technical experts to work out further modalities and to report back on the feasibility of such common projects," Hengari said.



Zambia Copper production increases in 2020

Zambia has recorded an increase in copper production in 2020 with eight of the ten large scale mining companies recording an increase despite the covid -19 outbreak.

Minister of Mines Richard Musukwa who announced the development at a media briefing last week said the mining sector performed better than anticipated as copper production increased to over 882,000.00 tonnes in 2020 compared to over 796,400.00 tonnes recorded in 2019 representing an increase of 9.71 percent.

He said copper production by large scale mines increased to over 868,000.00 in 2020 compared to a production of over 787,600.00 in 2019 representing an increase of 9.32 percent while copper production by small scale mines increased to 13,391 tonnes in 2020 from 8,732 tonnes recorded in 2019 representing an increase of 34.8 percent.

The minister attributed the increase in copper production by large scale mines mainly to the increase in production by Kalumbila minerals and Kansanshi mine plc while the increase in copper production by small scale mines was due to increased processing capacities by small scale mines in 2020 as compared to 2019 as well as the stabilized power supply to plants.

Meanwhile the production of, manganese, coal and nickel increased while that of gold, gemstones and cobalt reduced.

And the mines minister has projected to produce a total of 900,000 tonnes of copper in 2021 and that this should be boosted by the commodity prices increase on the international market which will encourage the mining companies to further increase their production.

(Phoenix News)

Women inch towards equal legal rights despite Covid-19 risks-Report

The World Bank has said governments must do more to ease the disproportionate burden shouldered by women during the pandemic. The World Bank said as it released a report which showed that women gained legal rights in nearly 30 countries last year despite disruption due to Covid-19.

The Bank said Nations should prioritise gender equality in economic recovery efforts, warning that progress on equal rights was threatened by heavier job losses in female-dominated sectors, increased childcare and a surge in domestic violence.

"This pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities that disadvantage girls and women," David Malpass, World Bank Group president, said in a statement accompanying the annual Women, Business and the Law report.

"Women should have the same access to finance and the same rights to inheritance as men and must be at the centre of our efforts toward an inclusive and resilient recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic."

A total of 27 countries reformed laws or regulations to give women more economic equality with men in 2019-20, said the report, which grades 190 nations on laws and regulations that affect women's economic opportunities.

While countries in all of the world's regions made improvements in the new index - with most reforms addressing pay and parenthood, women on average still have only about three quarters of the rights granted to men, the report found.

Notably, nearly 40 countries brought in extra benefit or leave policies to help employees balance their jobs with the extra childcare needs created by coronavirus restrictions.

But such measures were "few and far between" worldwide and will probably not go far enough to tackle the "motherhood penalty" many women face in the workplace, it said.

The report also noted separate data from a United Nations tool tracking gender-sensitive pandemic responses which found 70% of such measures addressed violence, with just 10% targeting women's economic security.

The pandemic could result in "a backslide on various hard-won advances in women's rights achieved in recent years", said Antonia Kirkland, the global lead on legal equality at women's rights organisation Equality Now.

"This disruption is a unique opportunity for countries to rebuild more resilient, inclusive and prosperous economies," she told Reuters.

"But this can only be achieved alongside the removal of sex discriminatory laws that prevent women from participating fully and equally in economic, social and family life."

Oil set for steady gains as economies shake off pandemic blues

Oil prices will stage a steady recovery this year as vaccines reach more people and speed an economic revival, with further impetus coming from stimulus and output discipline by top crude producers, a Reuters poll showed on Friday.

The survey of 55 participants forecast Brent crude would average $59.07 per barrel in 2021, up from last month's $54.47 forecast.

This is the biggest month-on-month upward revision for the yearly forecast in Reuters polls going back until at least 2016.

Brent has averaged around $58.80 so far this year.

"Travel and leisure activity look set to catch up to buoyant manufacturing activity due to the mix of stimulus, confidence, vaccines, and more targeted pandemic measures," said Norbert Ruecker of Julius Baer.

"Against these demand dynamics, the supply side is unlikely to catch up on time, leaving the oil market in tightening mode for months to come."

Of the 41 respondents who participated in both the February and January polls, 32 raised their forecasts.

Most analysts said the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies (OPEC+) may ease current output curbs when they meet on March 4, but would still agree to maintain supply discipline.

"With OPEC+ endeavouring to keep global oil production below demand, inventories should continue falling this year and allow prices to rise further," said UBS analyst Giovanni Staunovo.

Oil demand was seen growing by 5-7 million barrels per day in 2021, as per the poll.

However, experts said any deterioration in the COVID-19 situation and the possible lifting of U.S. sanctions on Iran could hold back oil's recovery.

The poll forecast U.S. crude to average $55.93 per barrel in 2021 versus January's $51.42 consensus.

Analysts expect U.S. production to rise moderately this year, although new measures from U.S. President Joe Biden to tame the oil sector could curb output in the long run.

"A structural shift away from fossil fuels" may prevent oil from returning to the highs of previous decades, said Economist Intelligence Unit analyst Cailin Birch.

(Reuters.)

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Smmes Benefits From LEA's Business Development And Support Services

Nodo Investment (Pty) Ltd is a LEA assisted enterprise found in Tsabong and Middlepits. Directed by Mr. & Mrs. Letsholo, a service provider that operates retail outlets that comprise of two general dealers, butchery & fresh produce as well as a liquor store. Butchery & fresh produce and general dealer are based in Tsabong while the other general dealer and liquor store are in Middlepits

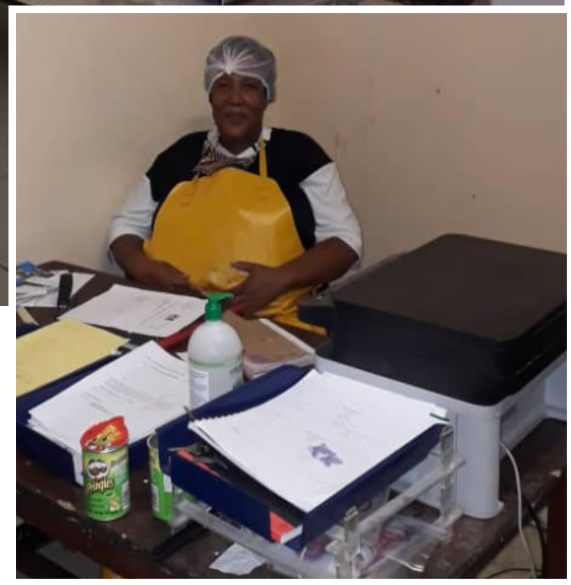
Nodo Investment registered with LEA in 2015, and have since been assisted with targeted interventions to advance their businesses and has now shown growth despite their large retail competitors in the Kgalagadi South region as such managed to establish supportive clientele and a stable market.

Through the LEA business advisory services, the enterprise was able to prosper and diversify their product offerings in all the outlets which include other services such as general supply, construction and sales of poultry products to increase its revenue. LEA has assisted the business to acquire construction codes to meet local tendering and procurement processes. In addition, the business was able to subscribe for the Smart Switch program, and the outlets are now supplying social protection grant beneficiaries with groceries on monthly basis. The business has also been assisted to be awarded a tender on contract basis to supply groceries and meat products to BDF, Prisons and Brigades in Tsabong.

Over and above LEA business development and support services, the business has grown and offers services to various markets that include Government, private sector and individuals in the area.

Nodo Investments is currently being assisted to develop a business plan to purchase a shopping complex in in one of the villages in Kgalagadi South. The financial move is geared towards expansion of the business to include manufacturing. As a long term solution, securing this property will eliminate high rental costs for Nodo Investments.

The business has also benefitted from the LEA training and capacity development initiatives such as Business Planning, Records Keeping and Entrepreneurship Development training, branding, Financial Viability Tool and Monitoring. The business also receives business coaching and mentoring.



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Nigeria seeks asset managers for $2.6 billion new infrastructure firm

Nigeria's central bank is seeking asset managers for a new $2.6 bln infrastructure investment company set up to develop the country's crumbling transport networks and boost economic growth.

The asset managers will originate and manage infrastructure projects, generating return from investments, the bank said on Saturday. The deadline for submission of proposals is March 16.

Nigeria emerged out of economic recession in the fourth quarter of 2020, despite a contraction in the year as a whole. But growth is fragile as poor infrastructure have stymied the economy for decades, holding back the distribution of wealth in Africa's biggest economy.

President Muhammadu Buhari approved the creation of Infrastructure Corporation of Nigeria in February to focus on infrastructure development, with a seed capital of 1 trillion naira ($2.6 billion).

Initial capital will come from the central bank, the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA), and the Africa Finance Corporation, the central bank has said.

Economists say the poor state of Nigeria's infrastructure has put at risk the Buhari government's ambitions for turning the country into a manufacturing hub and growing the agriculture sector.

In 2017, the government set up the Development Bank of Nigeria to boost credit to small-scale businesses that make up almost of half of the economy.

Now the government wants to fix its crumbling roads and rail network that have made it hard to move agricultural and finished goods to markets.

Buhari has pledged to strengthen the agricultural sector, to reduce Nigeria's costly food imports and diversify the economy away from an over-reliance on oil. But access to long-term funds in local currency has been a major hurdle.

InfraCorp's board will be chaired by the central bank governor, the managing director Nigeria's sovereign wealth fund, the president of the Africa Finance Corporation, and three independent directors from the private sector.

The aim is for the entity to grow to 15 trillion naira in assets and capital, the central bank said.

(Reuters.)

Breaking the norm - the rise of Female African leaders in Business

By Emmanuel Allottey

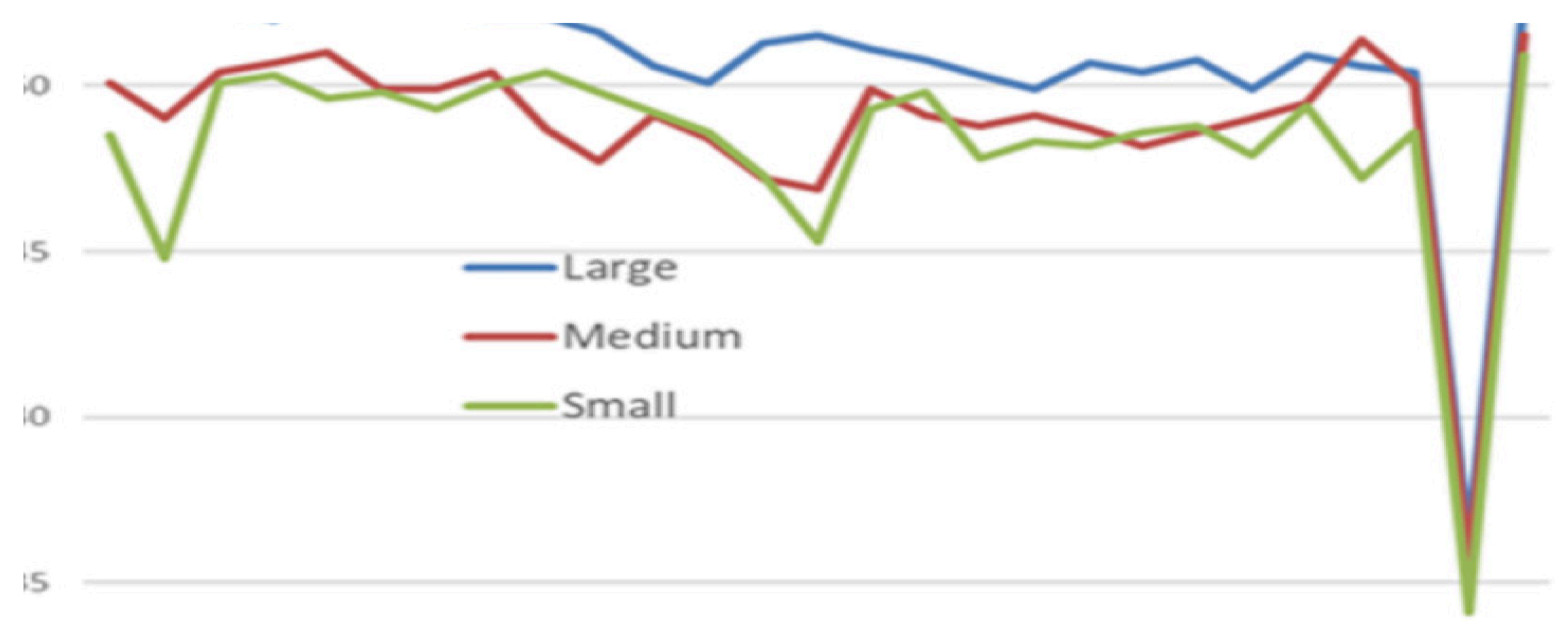
The appointment of Nigeria's Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala as the new director-general of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the first woman and African to hold this position has broken the glass ceiling for rise of African females into leadership roles. Women play a critical role in all spheres of society and now most importantly in business and economic activity. According to the third edition of the Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs (MIWE), Uganda, Ghana and Botswana are the top three African countries with the highest percentages of women-owned businesses across the 58 markets evaluated around the world.

Women in Africa must overcome high barriers to becoming leaders. These include social and cultural barriers, traditional gender roles, the low status of women in many societies, and limited access to educational and employment opportunities. Despite these challenges women have remained resilient and progressed into leadership roles in male dominated industries such as construction, mining, transportation and technology. Today we have more female executives at the helm of large corporations both public listed companies and private institutions. According to Mckinsey report on women in leadership roles, the private sector in Africa has more women in executive committees, CEO, and board roles in companies than the average worldwide.

Despite these advances, however, women are still vastly underrepresented. Although appointed into leadership positions, women face an even greater hurdle of gender pay gap. The gender pay gap or gender wage gap is the average difference between the remuneration for men and women who are working. The awareness of pay disparities has increased with some companies adopting policies to ensure that diversity and pay inequality is addressed.

The coronavirus pandemic has created a slowdown in economic activity, impacting business profitability and employment prospects. Women's participation in the labour force had been increasing, but these gains are being lost due to COVID-19. The pandemic has inflicted disproportionate damage to sectors employing more women, such as retail stores, restaurants, and the hotel and hospitality business. Globally, women's job losses due to Covid-19 are 1.8 times greater than men.

Gender norms in Africa emphasize the primary role of women as mothers and wives, which discourages them from joining the workplace and ascending to higher positions. These antiquated stereotypes are being destroyed with the rapid rise of female leaders. Going forward, African females in leadership is expected to grow exponentially walking in the footsteps of trailblazers like Nigeria's Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala.



Commercial banks face huge losses from the fallout of Covid-19

By Emmanuel Allottey

Financial Institutions face the inherent the risk of default by customers. Commercial banks finance all segments of the economy from corporates to Small Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMME) to individuals. The economic interconnectedness of the different types of customers places banks at a unique position of elevated loss during times of economic downturn.

The effect of the government-imposed lockdowns, movement restrictions and social distancing has decimated the profitability of businesses and household income leading to business collapse and loan default. Banks around the world face an imminent loan impairment crisis as their customers struggle to stay afloat and meet loan repayments.

There are specific industries that have been hardest hit by the pandemic such as Aviation, Tourism and Hospitality as well as the informal employment sector. Capital intensive industries such mining, construction and manufacturing have started yielding negative return on investment due to slowdown in economic activity.

Financial Institutions have taken an unprecedented move to offer relief measures such as payment deferrals, mortgage forbearance, loan modifications, late fee waivers, and suspension in reporting account delinquencies and other relief measures in support of customers. These initiatives created a temporary reprieve albeit somewhat fruitless as the recovery from the pandemic remains prolonged. Businesses are facing the inevitability of loan default and the repercussions that ensue such as collateral repossession and disposal of assets to repay their obligations.

An agile Credit risk management strategy combined with innovative credit risk models will assist in navigating the tumultuous operating environment as the pandemic drags on. Banks need to review their existing acquisition policies, strategies, and cut-offs to manage emerging risks and provide ongoing credit to customers. These enhanced policies should embody learnings from the current crisis and include an informed incorporation of horizon risks. Commercial banks can leverage their credit risk management strategy as a way to gain competitive advantage.

Commercial Banks are at the epicentre of the COVID-19's economic storm. Governments and regulators introduced support measures to prevent economic collapse, ensuring the flow of credit and functioning of markets. Some of these measures included rate cuts and other directives which has a direct impact on the banks profitability. As the pandemic rages and economic recovery remains muted banks face the pressure to develop innovative ways to help businesses stay afloat while ensuring their own business continuity.

Limkokwing Caps Class Of 2020 Virtually

Limkokwing ecosystem produces extraordinary graduates. Each one is a creative mind with talent that has been unleashed. Each one is a confident youth, comfortable with new media technology. Their creativity and innovative mindset sets them apart and today many are successful in their careers. Some have ventured into business as entrepreneurs within chosen fields with expertise while others have become important participants in growing business of the companies they are employed in.

Another cohort of creative minds has successfully been transformed and have acquired the 21st century skills and are set to become contributors and drivers of the new economy while shining as innovative leaders across all creative industries in Botswana. Limkokwing University hosted its first ever most anticipated Class of 2020 Virtual Graduation, on Saturday 27th February, 2021 through a glittering ceremony that was broadcast live on BTV, DSTV Channel 289 as well as the Limkokwing Facebook Page.

In his occasional speech the guest of honor, minister for Tertiary Education, Research, Science & Technology Dr. Douglas Letsholathebe, stated "Let us reflect on the journey of the Class of 2020. A few years ago, as you successfully applied for admission to this Institution, all you held was a dream, an ambition to change your lives for the better. Even as today marks the earning of you qualifications, we only understand that this is the beginning of multiple journeys of achievement, of experimentation and of self-improvement. By graduating from Limkokwing University of Creative Technology, you are better placed than most to exploit technology, entrepreneurial skills, creativity and other techniques of analysis and creation to self-employ."

Limkokwing University's goal has always been to design graduates who can make meaningful contributions to society. Along the way the University wants to help shape their graduates' characters while they develop their sense of values and impart to them the skills they need to become World-Class industry leaders.

All 654 students who virtually graduated were eager to experience a different, relevant and limitless type of learning environment. New doors of creativity were opened to them and they were trained using the latest industry-standard equipments, tools, and software in digital and broadcast media, video, web, computer graphics, architecture, advertising and packaging and fashion among many other exciting fields of study that are on offer at Limkokwing University.

Creating industry leaders has been the highest priority at Limkokwing University. LEAP= Limkokwing Entrepreneurship Acceleration Programme is aimed at producing entrepreneurs amongst graduates so they can become employers and not just employees. It is an intensive programme where all that the students learn is put to test as they develop a business idea, work as a team and present their ideas to industry mentors, hence preparing them to think beyond employability upon graduation.

This most anticipated virtual ceremony was celebrated under the theme; "Design Your Future". Having enhanced their talents, sharpened their skills and having broadened their minds within this specialized and globalised ecosystem where Batswana prepare themselves to face an extraordinary future. These words underscore the capabilities and mindset that we have fostered in our graduating students. The words; "Design Your Future' are meant to inspire; as well as define the caliber and mindset of our graduating class which is highly skilled, highly adaptive, highly competitive and highly enterprising tech savvy creative thinkers.

Limkokwing Botswana is pushing the education transformation envelope and is leading the way as the Innovation and Creativity Hub of Africa, and this is evident through this most globalized cohort of young professionals which is not only from the Botswana but also includes 12 students from Angola, China, Congo, Egypt, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Phillipnies, South Africa, eSwatini and Zimbabwe.

Of the (654) graduates, a total of (51) students were awarded with the Tan Sri Limkokwing Awards of Excellence.

Limkokwing University global graduates in general practice; carry the best results that are often achieved through a mix of traditional and contemporary media. They are fully effective, and carry a genuine commitment to creating dialogues that involve and informs creative industries.

Limkokwing Botswana Class of 2020 bring to the industry, government and society, skills in managing new media technology, a problem-solving mindset that seeks innovative solutions to issues and an entrepreneurial spirit that will benefit Botswana as it builds its competitiveness following the new global order as we press towards 2036.

Pandemic likely made 2020 'another devastating year' for world's forests

The rate of destruction of the world's tropical forests is likely to have gathered pace last year, green groups warned, as the pandemic weakened environmental regulations, cut funding for protection work and forced city migrants back to rural areas.

In 2019, tropical rainforests disappeared at a rate of one football pitch every six seconds, according to monitoring service Global Forest Watch (GFW), despite more awareness of the key role of carbon-storing forests in slowing climate change.

The tracking platform, which uses satellite imagery and is run by the U.S.-based think-tank World Resources Institute (WRI), is due to release its deforestation numbers for 2020 - when the COVID-19 pandemic struck - in the next three months.

Frances Seymour, a senior fellow at WRI, said the work of law enforcement and forest protection agencies had been constrained by limited mobility due to coronavirus lockdowns and budget cuts linked to economic woes.

"In addition, there are indications that some governments have reacted to the economic crisis by relaxing environmental regulations as a way to facilitate investment and jump-start economic growth," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Cutting down forests has major implications for global goals to curb climate change, as trees absorb about a third of the planet-warming emissions produced worldwide, but release carbon back into the air when they rot or are burned.

Forests also provide food and livelihoods for people living in or near them, as well as an essential habitat for wildlife.

In 2019, the loss of 3.8 million hectares (9.3 million acres) of forest was the third-biggest decline since the turn of the century, with Brazil, Democratic Republic of Congo and Indonesia the top three offenders, according to GFW.

While the pandemic last year caused a dip in demand for the commodities often blamed by environmentalists for deforestation, such as palm oil, timber and soy, many urban workers also lost their jobs and returned to their rural homes, said Seymour.

It was hard to predict the net effect for forests of those opposing forces, she added.

"While a drop in commodity prices could slow conversion of forests for commercial agribusiness, the return to rural villages of urban workers ... could increase small-scale clearing for subsistence," she said.

Deforestation rates for Indonesia, which is home to the world's third-largest tropical forests but also its biggest producer of palm oil, remained at historically low levels for the third year in a row in 2019.

Tougher law enforcement to prevent forest fires and illegal logging, and a moratorium on new rainforest clearance and oil-palm concessions all helped, forestry experts said.

Nonetheless, weak government institutions, corruption and overlapping land claims mean the sprawling archipelago still experiences regular forest-clearing and fires.

In addition, last year the Southeast Asian nation scaled back its forest protection efforts because of the COVID-19 crisis and introduced a job creation bill that investors and activists said could damage the environment in years to come.

Gemma Tillack, forest policy director at U.S.-based environmental group Rainforest Action Network, said initial data for Indonesia showed deforestation, logging and fires persisted - and in some cases spiked - throughout last year.

"2020 will be remembered as a year where rainforest destruction continued unabated, despite major brands and banks declaring it a make-or-break year to end deforestation," she said.

After missing a 2020 target to end deforestation in their supply chains, high-profile companies in the Consumer Goods Forum launched a new initiative, vowing to speed up work to stop the main commodities they use causing further loss of forests, in a bid to curb climate change.

David Ganz, executive director of international land rights and forestry nonprofit RECOFTC, predicted that tropical and temperate forest losses in 2020 would be four to five times greater than in 2019, largely due to uncontrolled fires.

"The irony is that forest loss and increased contact between people and wildlife are key drivers of the emergence of new pathogens, such as those that cause Ebola, SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) and now COVID-19," he added.

In Brazil, government data shows deforestation rates in the Amazon rainforest surged to a 12-year high in 2020 with destruction soaring since right-wing President Jair Bolsonaro took office and weakened environmental enforcement.

Anders Haug Larsen, head of policy at Oslo-based Rainforest Foundation Norway, said forest monitoring data showed deforestation rates in Brazil's Amazon could have risen by about 10% in 2020.

He blamed that on reduced funding for agencies combating deforestation and forest fires, and further dismantling of institutions for environmental monitoring and control.

"We also see that local authorities in Indonesia are diverting funds from forest-fire prevention to battle COVID-19," said Larsen, who urged countries to invest in a green recovery from the pandemic.

In Australia, bushfires in 2019 and 2020 destroyed more than 11 million hectares (37 million acres) across the southeast, equal to about half the area of Britain.

Fran Raymond Price, global forest practice lead at WWF International, said 2020 had been "another devastating year" for forests in many parts of the world, calling on governments to introduce stronger legislation to halt deforestation.

Such regulation must focus on strengthening and expanding tenure rights for indigenous people and local communities, as well as supporting farmers to embrace sustainable practices, she added.

Businesses also have a responsibility to better understand their ecological footprint and boost efforts to clean up their supply chains, Price said.

Consumers, meanwhile, can do their part by asking lawmakers to act on deforestation and ensuring the products they buy do not contribute to deforestation, she added.

"2021 can be the year we turn the tide on forest loss, but we need decisive action on the chief drivers of deforestation to ensure that solutions are sustainable and benefit both nature and people," Price said.

(Reuters.)

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ALL COVID-19 SAFETY PROTOCOLS FOLLOWED

Why it pays to link products to places - and how African countries can do it

Around the world, people commonly associate certain foods and products with particular geographical areas. These products are known for characteristics like aroma, flavour, and the traditional knowledge systems used to make them. Legal and agricultural scholars speak of these characteristics as terroir.

For example, coffee from Ethiopia's Yirgacheffe, Sidamo and Harrar regions is famous for its quality. The Ijebu people of western Nigeria call their processed cassava Ijebu garri. Roquefort cheese and Darjeeling tea are also products associated with certain places.

These kinds of products, which have characteristics unique to their source, can be identified and protected by a type of intellectual property right called Geographical Indications (GI). This right gives economic and financial advantages to the place of origin. The products can be registered with a global treaty registry like the World Intellectual Property Organization. This helps to counter fake products in the international market.

Developed economies, especially in Europe, have benefited from GI protection and promotion since 1994, when they adopted the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. And as early as 1883, the geographical origin of products was recognised as as aspect of industrial property in the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property. It accords them protection due to their value in national economic growth.

According to a 2020 European Commission study, Europe's economy gained about €75bn in the 2017 sales value of GI products. This means GI products accounted for 7% of the total sales value of Europe's food and drink sector. The study also shows that the sales value of GI products doubled on average, when compared with similar products without GI certification. People attach value to buying authentic products from their sources.

As a predominantly agrarian region, Africa could adopt this strategy to boost the economies of rural communities. The second phase of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) focuses on intellectual property rights and trade. It's an opportunity to take steps towards recognising the economic value of GI.

There are two main treaties currently regulating Geographical Indications. They include the Lisbon Agreement for the Protection of Appellations of Origin and Their International Registration (Lisbon Agreement), and the Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement on Appellations of Origin and Geographical Indications (the Geneva Act). Together, they are called The Lisbon System.

Most African countries have not signed these GI treaties. Accession to these treaties carries political and economic benefits. Not even Ethiopia and Nigeria – countries with great agricultural potential – have done so. GI status attracts higher revenue streams because of the customary assumption of quality that accrues to these products.

Joining the Lisbon Agreement and the Geneva Act would aid African countries in extending their products beyond their shores. Member countries have treaty obligations to protect GI products from misappropriation and abuse.

For example, Oku white honey from Cameroon, South African Rooibos tea and South African lamb are certified GI products. They enjoy protection outside the continent, leading to enormous financial benefits to their places of origin.

The local producers of GI products and services have inadequate knowledge of intellectual property and economics. Identifying GI products and including them in a formal database requires learning and experience. Therefore, private and public institutions should intervene in guiding producers and farmers.

They can do this through the formation of cooperatives and educating members about GI. Producers and farmers should form GI management organisations to help members manoeuvre through the legal landscape. These include registration of products and collection of royalties and licensing revenues.

African nations should also streamline their regional intellectual property bodies. Two major African IP regional bodies – the African Intellectual Property Organisation and the African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation – could be merged into a single organisation for efficiency. The Anglophone and Francophone dichotomy in African intellectual property rights management shouldn't exist. With the AfCTA encouraging a single trade market, a divided IP regional management structure may not be effective.

Nigeria and Ethiopia, like most African countries, do not have a single governmental institution that deals with GI. Although Nigeria's trademark laws regulate registration, they do not cover GI registry. Ethiopia does not have any law for geographical indications nor a registry.

A specialised governmental office should regulate GI in each African country. For example, Zimbabwe has its Geographical Indication Act. South Africa has its Geographical Indications Regulation of 2019. It sets up its GI registry and guidelines to protect GI agricultural products.

African countries could position GI to help global IP rights enforcement for developing economies. Registration and export of GI products will improve the economy of rural African communities.

(TheConversation.)

Total U-20 AFCON – African talents abroad showing off

Coaches present at the 2021 edition of the Total Africa Cup of Nations in Mauritania told CAFOnline.com how this competition is important in the constitution of future football elites in their countries. This is why they did not hesitate to go and take the best young people where they are.

"Why deprive us of our players, if there is the possibility of bringing in talented players from abroad, we must not hesitate," said Central African Republic coach Sébastien Ngato, who qualified his team for the quarterfinals in their maiden appearance. Ngato has five of his players having their career abroad.

For their first match in U-20 AFCON history, Tunisia fielded eight expatriates out of their starting 11. "Our football federation launched a policy towards our players abroad, that is to bring them to integrate our national teams", said Maher Kanzari, Tunisia coach and former Carthage Eagles midfielder.

This new policy satisfied French side Stade Rennais goalkeeper Elias Imed Damergy, who said he is proud to be able to represent his country at this level of competition.

"I was already called up to senior Carthage Eagles last November in AFCON qualifiers, and it is a huge pride to be able to represent my country," Damergy said.

The language barrier was not a problem for German-born defender Ramzi Ferjani who plays for FC Nitra in Slovakia. "I'm speaking English with several players in the squad but you know football is a universal language," he said.

Burkina Faso has seven abroad based players in their squad, and coach Oscar Barro said he sees no difference between locals and expatriates. Same applies for Cameroon as per coach Cristophe Ousmanou. "The Cameroon team are all Cameroonians, whether they were born in the country, outside or working in other countries," he said.

Cameroon has seven abroad based players, including the sons of former stars, Samuel Eto'o and Bill Tchato. At the end of the day, of the 12 teams present in Mauritania, only Namibia did not have expatriates.

However, the presence of abroad based players expatriates does not necessarily mean being competitive. Mozambique, which lost all three group games had three players in the Portuguese championship. While Uganda advanced to the semifinals with only one expatriate player, Jack Komakech of Ascent Soccer Academy in South Africa.

(Cafonline.)

Tokyo Games refugee team to be finalised in June – IOC

The refugee team that will compete at the Tokyo Olympics will be finalised in June from a group of 55 athletes preparing in 12 sports, the International Olympic Committee said on Wednesday.

The IOC unveiled its first team of refugees at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics in 2016 in an effort to raise awareness of the issue, and it became one of the feel-good stories of those Games.

The 10-member team from Syria, Congo, Ethiopia and South Sudan at those Games were in the spotlight after marching into the stadium for the opening ceremony at the Olympic stadium in Brazil. They competed in athletics, swimming and judo.

"Olympic solidarity is supporting 55 promising refugee athletes from 13 countries and being hosted by 21 National Olympic Committees across all five continents, representing 12 sports," IOC President Thomas Bach told a virtual news conference.

The IOC has said the refugee team in Tokyo will be larger than in Rio.

"The final composition will be announced in June and based on number of criteria, including athletes' sporting performance but also qualification as refugees status," Bach said.

More than a million refugees entered Europe in 2016 alone as they fled fighting in the Middle East and elsewhere, prompting the IOC to create the first Olympic refugee team.

Tens of millions more are housed in camps in countries across the world, having escaped wars or armed conflicts in their home nations.

(Reuters.)

Libya cleared to host international games after ban lifted

A decade-long ban on international football matches being played in Libya has been lifted, the country's football federation said on Thursday.

The decision comes less than a month after the Confederation of African Football (CAF) sent a delegation to inspect facilities and the security situation in the north African country, beset by civil strife over the last decade.

"I have good news today, especially for football fans and all Libyans, which is the lifting of the complete ban on all our stadiums, especially the ban in terms of security," said Libyan Football Federation president Abdulhakim Al-Shalmani in a video message on Twitter (@ LibyaFA).

CAF sources on Thursday confirmed to Reuters the lifting of the ban, although the organisation has yet to make an announcement.

Libya's national team and its clubs competing in African club competition have been forced to stage home matches outside their borders, in countries like Egypt, Mali, Morocco and Tunisia, since the ban was imposed.

An initial restriction was ordered by FIFA in 2011 during the civil war that led to the ousting of dictator Muammar Gaddafi. It was lifted briefly in 2013 before being reimposed.

Al Ahly Benghazi will now host their first home game in the group phase of the African Confederation Cup against Entente Setif of Algeria on March 17. Libya's national team can host neighbours Tunisia in an Africa Cup of Nations qualifier a week later.

Al-Shalmani, who is also a CAF executive committee member, said the Benghazi stadium was earmarked for the first home appearance of the Libyan national side since a World Cup qualifier in mid-2013.

"We have been asked by CAF to put together a security plan to receive the Tunisian team at the Martyrs Benina Stadium, as well as to host other matches later in other Libyan stadiums," he added. League football in Libya resumed last month after a three-year hiatus.

(Reuters.)

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Motor Racing-
Formula One Says Racing In Africa Is A Priority

Formula One needs to have a grand prix in Africa and the absence of one is wrong, according to the sport's global director of race promotion Chloe Targett-Adams.

The continent has not featured on the calendar since the last South African Grand Prix at Kyalami in 1993. Morocco also hosted a round of the world championship at the Casablanca circuit in 1958.

Seven times world champion Lewis Hamilton, the sport's only Black driver, said last year it was important for the sport to race in Africa.

"I completely agree with Lewis," Targett-Adams told the Black Book Motorsport virtual summit.

"Africa is a continent that we don't race in and that is just wrong. It's somewhere that we very much want to (race in). It's a priority.

"We've been in talks with possible options for a few years and we're hoping that ultimately we will be able to achieve a race there in the near to mid-term," she added.

Formula One's new chief executive Stefano Domenicali told reporters last month that there was interest from North and South Africa.

Targett-Adams said the sport still hoped Vietnam, whose inaugural race has been put on hold, might make its debut eventually.

She expected Saudi Arabia, making its first appearance this year with a night race in Jeddah, to become a fixture for at least a decade.

That race has attracted criticism, with some campaigning organisations writing to Hamilton asking him to boycott the race or speak out against reported human rights abuses in the country.

Targett-Adams said it was important to question the records of countries the sport visited.

"From Formula One's perspective, we choose to engage with partners and we have a framework contractually to set out our expectations on human rights and how we expect to work," she added.

A partnership with the all-female W Series, which is supporting eight grands prix this season and has the ultimate aim of getting a woman driver onto the F1 grid for the first time since 1976, could be expanded.

"We're already talking to them potentially about the growth of that across our season for 2022. So I see ultimately W being at more races with us." she said.

(Reuters.)

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