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The Voice

Pastor Elvis Iruh:

**DEALING WITH
STEREOTYPES:**

“Everything White Must Be Good”!

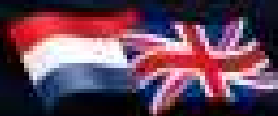
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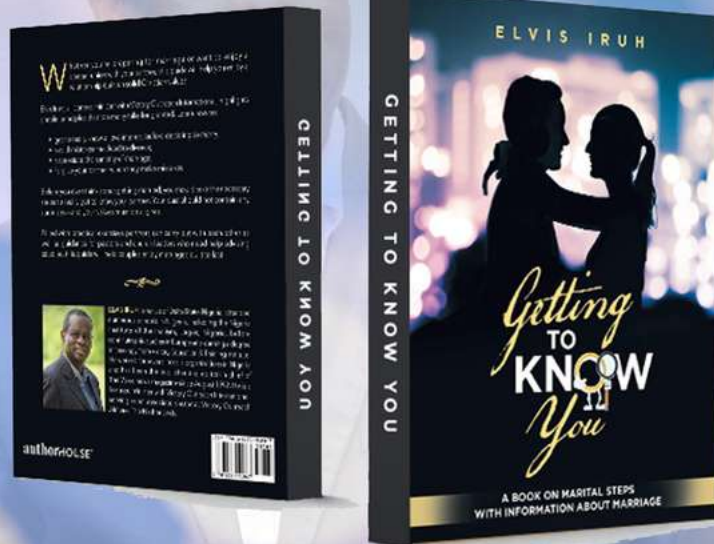
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Getting to know you written by Pastor Elvis Iruh
Pastor Felix Asare wrote the foreword



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The Voice News Magazine has been published in the Netherlands by Stichting Paddi Europa since August 1999, with an online format available for worldwide distribution since 2016.

The publication is registered with the Chamber of Commerce in Amsterdam and aims to serve as a vital link among African readers in the diaspora.

The Voice News Magazine provides objective information and organizes the exchange of opinions among African people both on the continent and abroad. It strives to foster a complete understanding of the African continent's challenges and brings information to help address those issues.

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NIGERIA ELECTION 2027:

President Tinubu Is The Man To Beat In 2027

As Nigeria inches towards the 2027 general election, one political reality is becoming clearer by the day to political foes and friends alike — President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is the man to beat. He is not joking about his re-election bid. Unlike the era of Goodluck Jonathan of PDP who depended on power of incumbency to help him with the election. President Tinubu is preparing for another fight with his close challengers including Atiku and Peter Obi.

It is not by accident. It is by design, by structure, and by mastery of the game.

President Tinubu came into office in 2023 at a time when the nation's economy was on life support. Subsidy was a bottomless pit, foreign exchange was a bazaar of arbitrage, and investor confidence was at its lowest. In two years, he has taken the difficult but necessary decisions that previous leaders avoided for political convenience. The removal of fuel subsidy and the unification of the exchange rate were painful pills, but they were the surgery Nigeria needed to survive.

Today, the signs are emerging. FAAC allocation to states and local governments has tripled. States that could not pay salaries are now executing capital projects. The student loan scheme, the consumer credit corporation, the Renewed Hope infrastructure fund, and the aggressive drive in solid minerals and CNG revolution are laying a foundation that will define the next decade.

Politically, President Tinubu remains the grandmaster. He controls the national structure of the ruling APC, he has successfully neutralized the opposition by strategic co-option, and he has built bridges across the North, South-South, South-East and South-West in a way no other contender can boast of. The opposition remains fragmented, leaderless, and driven by personal ambition rather than a coherent alternative agenda for the country. While they argue on social media, Tinubu is building roads, bridges, railways and political alliances. Majority of the population are dissatisfied with the performance of President Tinubu but they don't see better option in the candidates vying to unseat him.

The 2027 election will not be decided by noise. It will be decided by structure, incumbency, performance, and reach. On all four fronts, President Tinubu towers above any potential challenger.

Those who wish to contest against him must first answer one question: What is your alternative plan that is better than Renewed Hope that President Tinubu is offering Nigeria's? Thus far, we have heard slogans, not solutions.

Whether one likes him or not, President Tinubu has redefined governance as continuity with courage. He is not a perfect president, but he is a prepared president to face all challenges thrown at him. And in 2027, beating a prepared man with the power of incumbency, with control of 25+ states, with an economy finally turning the corner, will require more than wishful thinking of the opposition. Without a united front from the opposition, they do not stand a chance to come close to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu talk less of beating him.

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is not just in the race for 2027. He is the race. He is the man to beat.

Welcome to our October edition. We have plenty still from our 2026 Achievers Award event in London. Enjoy your copy and see you all in November 2026.

Pastor Elvis Iruh

Publisher & Editor-in-Chief

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Almere, The Netherlands



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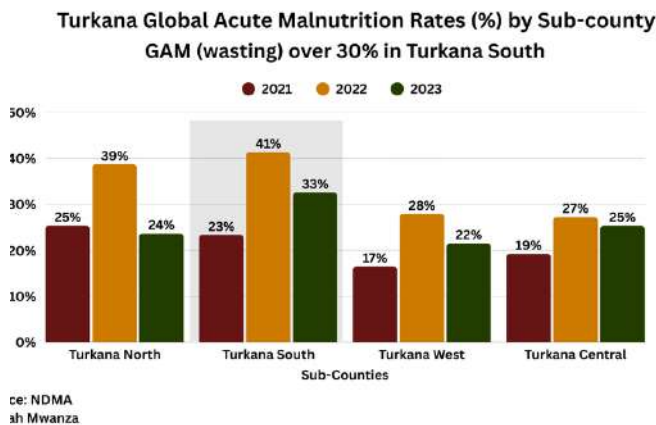
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How Lolupe Women Stepped In When Aid Failed

In Turkana's Lolupe village, drought exposed more than hunger—it revealed the limits of aid that came too late. As children grew weaker, a group of women made a decisive shift: stop waiting, start producing. What followed is a story of survival turning into structure, and scarcity into strategy.

Text: Regina Mwanza



For residents of Lolupe village in Turkana County, 2019 is remembered as a year of fear. The rains failed again. Riverbeds cracked open, grazing land disappeared, and hunger crept steadily into homes. For mothers, the most painful sight was not empty granaries—but children growing thinner by the day.

The crisis exposed critical gaps in drought response systems, where delayed aid and limited local resilience measures often leave communities vulnerable at their most critical moments. A county nutrition briefing referencing the 2019 SMART survey reported that 25.6% of children were wasted, 23.3% were stunted, and 37% were underweight. The effects were visible.

Health clinics began to record a rise in cases of undernutrition among children under five. Hair thinned and lost its colour. Ribs became pronounced. Mothers walked long distances to health centres, carrying weak infants on their backs. Relief food was promised, but deliveries were often delayed, sometimes arriving after the damage had already been done.

Action under pressure

For many families, waiting was no longer an option. "We waited for help, but help did not always come," recalls Rose Ekiru, a mother of five and now chairperson of the Lolupe Women Group. "Our children were suffering. We knew we had to do something for ourselves."

That realisation became a turning point. For years, families in Lolupe had depended heavily on relief food during droughts. While lifesaving, aid was often unpredictable. Quantities were often insufficient, and delays meant households endured long stretches without food. And the drought cycles were not easing.

An ACAPS drought impact [report](#) later projected that 556,000 people in Turkana would face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse between October and December 2022—up from 139,000 during the same period in 2020.

In 2025, Save the Children warned of worsening conditions across Kenya, estimating that 87,000 children under five and 36,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women required treatment for acute malnutrition. A significant share of the population was also not getting enough food. Women bore the heaviest burden. They skipped meals so their children could eat. They queued at clinics with malnourished babies. They lived with constant anxiety. "We would hear that food was coming, but it could take weeks," Rose says. "By then, children were already sick."

In the middle of one particularly harsh season, a small group of women began meeting informally under a tree near the village. They gathered around a simple question—but radical for a community long dependent on emergency aid: What can we do with what we have?

...Continued on Page 11

Despite Turkana's harsh climate, the women believed small-scale farming was possible, if done strategically. With guidance from local agricultural officers and community partners, they selected crops suited to local conditions: kale, which grows quickly and is nutrient-dense; beans, a key source of protein for children and breastfeeding mothers; and potatoes, which are adaptable and filling even on small plots.

Their approach aligned with broader food security strategies that prioritise dietary diversity and local production in arid and semi-arid regions. "We chose kale because it grows fast, and beans because they give strength," Rose explains. "We were thinking about nutrition first."

Using small plots near their homes and seasonal water points, the women pooled labour, shared seeds, and prepared land together. Some had never farmed before. Others had lost confidence after years of failed harvests. "When the first green leaves appeared, it felt like a miracle," Rose says quietly. "We were no longer waiting. We were providing."

Crisis to structure

What began as a crisis response, gradually evolved into a structured initiative. The women formalised their meetings, elected leaders, and agreed on shared responsibilities. Rose Ekiru was unanimously chosen as chairperson not for being the loudest, but for being consistent. "She never missed a meeting," one member recalls. "Even when things were hard, she showed up."



Each woman tended her own plot, but labour and knowledge were shared. When one member fell sick or gave birth, others stepped in. Solidarity became the group's backbone.

Kale became a regular part of meals, replacing days when families survived on a single portion or relief porridge. Beans provided reliable protein, particularly for children and lactating mothers. Over time, the women also improved food preparation, preserving nutrients instead of overcooking vegetables.

"At the clinic, nurses started asking what we were feeding our children," Rose says. "They could see the change." These improvements underscore the role of community-led interventions in complementing formal health and nutrition systems.

In a county where acute undernutrition among children under five consistently ranges between 21% and 37%, such shifts matter. A national IPC analysis published in September 2023 reported Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) levels above 30% in Turkana South. This underscores how severe conditions remain, even with ongoing humanitarian assistance.

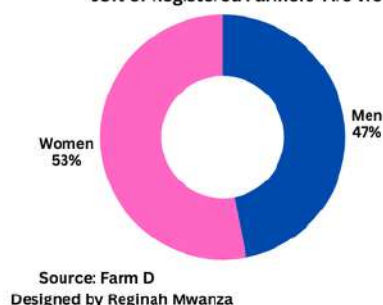
From aid to agency

Before 2019, many households in Lolupe depended almost entirely on supplementary feeding programmes run by NGOs and government agencies. While lifesaving, access was inconsistent.

"Sometimes food came, sometimes it did not," one woman recalls. "We lived with that uncertainty." By growing their own food, the women began to reduce that uncertainty. Relief aid became a backup not the foundation of survival. Families could plan meals. Children ate vegetables regularly. Mothers could think beyond the next distribution.

"We are farmers now," Rose says with quiet pride. "Not just mothers waiting for help." This shift reflects a broader move toward self-reliance in drought-prone regions, where communities are increasingly building resilience alongside and sometimes in place of formal support systems.

The 2023 national KIAMIS system Registration by Gender
53% of Registered Farmers Are Women



As the first harvests succeeded, membership grew rapidly. What began with fewer than ten women soon doubled. The idea spread across the sub-county: these women were no longer waiting for aid - they were producing food.

At the same time, some sustained interventions can shift outcomes at a larger scale. County data from the SMART survey indicates that Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) in Turkana declined from 26.4% in June 2023 to 21.8% in June 2024 a notable improvement, even as levels remain high.

Growth, however, brought its own challenges. Managing shared plots, scheduling watering, and resolving disputes required structure. The group responded by developing a simple but effective system. They introduced rotational labour on collective fields, shared knowledge instead of competing, and reinvested earnings into seeds, tools, and savings.

They also introduced a weekly savings and credit scheme many members' first experience with financial planning. This enabled them to buy farm inputs, manage emergencies, and support one another during difficult periods.

Stability

As production increased, surplus kale, beans, and potatoes began reaching local markets. The income was modest but transformative. Women used their earnings to pay school fees, buy clothes and household essentials, and cover medical expenses.

"This money may be small, but it changes lives," says Namoru Etuk, a group member. "Before, we had nothing. Now, we have food and a voice." The transformation was not only economic, it was psychological.

Women no longer woke up fearing whether food would arrive. They woke up knowing they could work, plant, and harvest. "This is freedom," Rose says. "If the rains fail, we have a plan."

To cope with Turkana's unpredictable weather, the group adopted more resilient farming practices. They began harvesting rainwater in small tanks and troughs. They also used mulching and composting to improve soil fertility, and practised intercropping to reduce the risk of total crop failure.

Agricultural extension officers and health workers now hold regular training sessions. These focus on pest control methods and drought-resistant farming techniques. Over time, Lolupe has evolved into a learning hub, attracting women from neighbouring villages who come to observe and replicate the model.

The impact is visible beyond the farms. Local health workers report improved weight gain among children in participating households. They also note fewer clinic visits linked to diet-related illnesses. Teachers also note better school attendance and concentration, as children are no longer learning on empty stomachs.

"Before, I feared every night my baby would sleep hungry," Rose says. "Now I see them running, laughing, growing strong." At the county level, support is beginning to take shape.

Policy limits

Janet Akipetot, the agriculture officer in charge of Turkana Central Sub-County, says the county government has been supporting farmers through agribusiness training. It also provides farm input subsidies, such as seeds and tools, and links farmers to markets and partners.

Farmers are also given opportunities to visit larger farms such as Natoot Farm in Loima sub-county to learn and benchmark on improved techniques. These efforts form part of a broader mandate to strengthen food security, though challenges related to scale, climate variability, and sustained support persist.

The approach also aligns with continental priorities under Agenda 2063, which emphasise food security, climate resilience, and community-led development. Yet translating these commitments into consistent, localised support remains an ongoing challenge.

Despite the pressures of climate change, Janet notes that agricultural activity has begun to improve food security in the region, with women making up between 75% and 80% of small-scale farmers. Still, the broader picture remains fragile.

As of early 2026, Turkana continues to face critical food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or worse), driven by persistent drought and low rainfall. According to the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA), more than 30% of households are experiencing poor food consumption, while approximately 87,000 children under five require treatment for acute malnutrition.

The progress in Lolupe offers a glimpse of what is possible. However, it also raises a larger question: whether community-driven solutions like this can be sustained and scaled, without consistent institutional support in the face of worsening climate shocks.

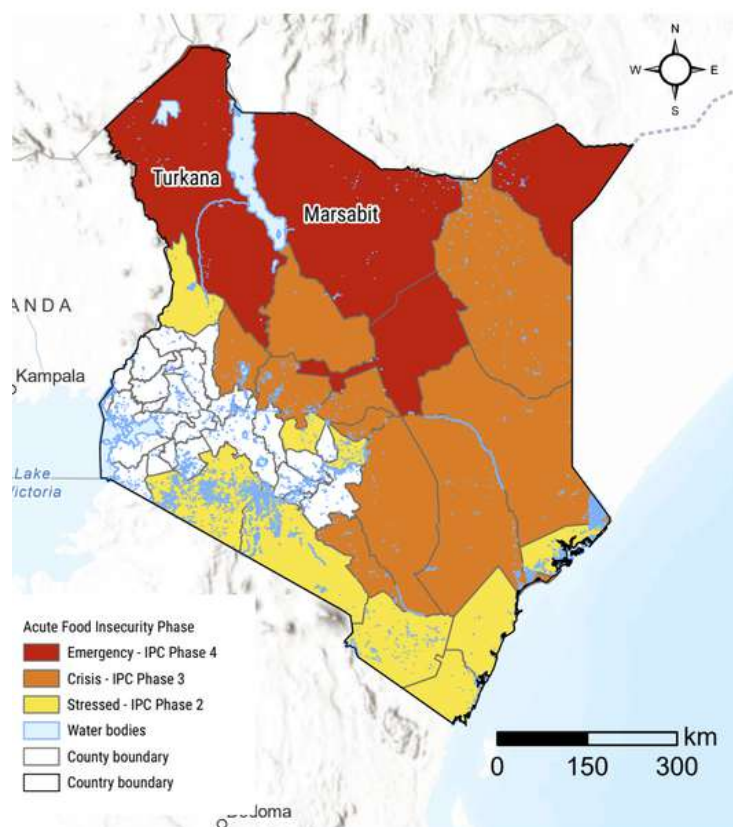
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SITUATION PER COUNTY

Key characteristics/information

	TURKANA COUNTY
Total population (2019 census)	926,976 (KNBS 04/11/2019)
Drought-affected people (July 2022)	728,000 (KFSSG/Turkana CSG 07/2022)
Proportion of population facing acute food insecurity (October–December 2022)	60% (IPC 28/09/2022)
Absolute poverty rate (2015–2016)	79.4% (KNBS 11/2020)
Refugees hosted (as at 30 June 2022)	244,286 (UNHCR accessed 02/12/2022)
Livelihood source for majority of population	Pastoralism (KFSSG/Turkana CSG 07/2022)

Map showing areas projected to face acute food insecurity (October–December)



Source: Map by ACAPS using IPC 28/09/2022



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Peter Obi And The Obidient Movement: A Hope For New Nigeria - Interview With Professor Maurice Okoli

By Kestér Kenn Klomegâh

As the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) prepares for the next 2027 presidential elections, the Obidient Movement is increasingly gaining weight into Nigeria politics, crafting a remarkable consensus among the youth and elites within the multi-ethnic population, estimated at 230 million. Obidient Movement has carried, in its fold, political integrity and public trust, intertwined with diplomacy. Obidient Movement creates an opportunity, and additionally an environment for raising greater influence and relationships abroad, while striving to improve complex issues relating to development, investment and economic profiles.

In an in-depth interview, Professor Maurice Okoli, an economist and research fellow associated with the Russian Academy of Sciences (including the Institute for African Studies and IMEMO) as well as an expert with the Valdai Discussion Club, breaks down the contemporary political landscape through research-driven explanatory facts, and concludes that Nigeria's ethnic heterogeneity could make for a deep harmonization, pursue a better economic architecture, and reposition Nigeria as an economic power in the West African region and on the continent under the forthcoming Peter Obi's presidency. Here are the interview excerpts:



Within Nigerian party politics, I was actively involved with the People's Democratic Party (PDP), where I served as Chairman of PDP Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States. That position gave me direct experience working within a formal political organization. I was involved in coordinating party members, engaging stakeholders, mobilizing support, representing the party's interests within the Nigerian community in Russia, and liaising with relevant Russian institutions.

At the same time, I served as President of the Nigerian Community in Russia. That responsibility was broader than party politics, as I was representing Nigerians in the diaspora. It exposed me directly to the challenges Nigerians faced abroad and strengthened my experience in community organization, representation, advocacy, conflict resolution, and bringing people together around common interests.

I also served as Vice President of the Russian-African Diaspora Foundation. This position broadened my perspective beyond Nigerian politics and the Nigerian community. It allowed me to engage with the wider African diaspora, build relationships across national and cultural boundaries, and promote cooperation between African communities and Russian institutions.

TV: *As a member of the Obidient Movement, what was your political background before Peter Obi entered the Presidential race?*

Professor Maurice Okoli: Before Peter Obi entered the presidential race, my political background was shaped by a combination of academic expertise, formal party politics, diaspora leadership, and international engagement. As a professor of geopolitics and international economics, I had developed a strong analytical understanding of international relations, political systems, economic policy, and the strategic forces shaping Nigeria's position in the global community. My academic background allowed me to examine Nigeria's political development not only from a domestic perspective but also through the broader lenses of international affairs, economic cooperation, global strategy, and diaspora engagement.

...Continued on Page 16

So, before Peter Obi became a presidential candidate, my experience had developed across four interconnected areas: formal Nigerian party politics, academic and professional expertise in geopolitics and international economics, Nigerian diaspora leadership, and broader African diaspora engagement.

My decision to support Peter Obi was therefore a deliberate political choice, rather than the beginning of my political involvement. I believed he represented an opportunity to build a different kind of political movement—one that could combine popular participation with competent leadership, institutional reform, economic development, and a stronger connection between Nigerians at home and Nigerians in the diaspora.

In that sense, my support for Peter Obi grew naturally out of the experiences I had accumulated over many years: understanding political institutions, engaging communities, analyzing international economic and geopolitical realities, and working to connect Nigerians and Africans across borders.

TV: You had already occupied a significant political position in Russia, as the Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). What was it about Peter Obi personally and politically that convinced you that this was someone worth abandoning your previous political trajectory for and, more importantly, worth putting your own money, reputation, relationship, and political capital?

Professor Maurice Okoli: Let me put it this way: what made me support Peter Obi was the same thing that persuaded many Nigerians to reconsider their political alignment when he emerged as the Labour Party's presidential candidate. For me, it wasn't simply the excitement around a new political movement. It was a conviction that I was looking at someone whose character, record, and philosophy were remarkably consistent.

My decision to support Peter Obi was publicly reported on 21 October 2022 in Vanguard and several other major newspapers, including under the headline, "PDP Chairman, Russian, Backs Peter Obi." But the decision itself went much deeper than the headlines.

What struck me most was the consistency between the man, his record in public office, and what he was saying on the campaign trail. I saw someone who understood that leadership is not about the excitement or prestige of vying for office.



It is about accepting the enormous responsibility that comes with holding public office.

I was attracted to his discipline. I was attracted to his emphasis on competence. I was particularly attracted to his understanding of public resources not as something that belongs to politicians or as an entitlement that comes with office, but as something held in trust for the people.

Most importantly, I believed he genuinely understood the seriousness of Nigeria's problems. He did not appear to approach leadership as an opportunity for personal aggrandizement. His ambition seemed subordinate to his sense of responsibility. That distinction mattered enormously to me.

What ultimately convinced me was that Peter Obi's political philosophy appeared consistent with how he had conducted himself in public life. His approach to governance was rooted in competence, accountability, prudence, and the belief that government exists to serve the people.

And that gave me something concrete to examine. I did not make my decision solely based on campaign promises or political rhetoric. I could look at his record, his decisions, his conduct in office, and the principles he had demonstrated over time.

Politically, I eventually came to believe that supporting Peter Obi was bigger than supporting one individual. It was about supporting a different political culture—a culture in which competence should matter more than patronage; where public resources should be treated as a trust rather than a political entitlement; where accountability should be expected, not negotiated; and where leadership should ultimately be judged by what it delivers for ordinary Nigerians.

That was what made the decision consequential for me. I was prepared to put my own money, reputation, relationships, and political capital behind him because I believed the stakes were bigger than my personal political interest.



I believed that Nigeria needed a different standard of leadership, and I believed Peter Obi represented, at that moment, the strongest expression of that alternative. In the end, my support was not based on the belief that Peter Obi was perfect, as imperfection is the limitation of all human beings. It was based on the conviction that he possessed the will, competence, discipline, and capacity to confront the seriousness of Nigeria's challenges-and, equally important, that his record gave me sufficient reason to trust that conviction.

For me, that was the point at which political loyalty became secondary to national responsibility.

TV: In supporting Peter Obi, who were the people, organizations, and the institutions you brought into Peter Obi's support ecosystem?

Professor Maurice Okoli: In supporting Peter Obi through the Obedient movement, particularly from the diaspora, I deliberately worked to bring influential individuals, institutions, organizations, professional networks, media personalities, and business stakeholders into what I came to regard as a broader international support ecosystem for Peter Obi. My objective went beyond simply generating votes or political support for Peter Obi. I wanted to build an international network that could build awareness, credibility, advocacy, and meaningful relationships around his candidacy, while also opening channels that could potentially strengthen Nigeria's international relationships in diplomacy, trade, investment, business, media, and people-to-people engagement. I therefore sought out individuals, institutions, and organizations whose influence extended beyond Nigerian politics and who could contribute to a broader international understanding of Peter Obi's candidacy and vision for Nigeria. Institute for African Studies, Academy of Sciences, Russia, which has hosted many African presidents, was excited about Peter Obi's profile and vision. One of the people I introduced into this ecosystem was Mrs. Damila Tasmagambetova, a well-known media personality in Russia.

The proprietor and Editor-in-Chief of Caravan Info news agency. After I introduced her to Peter Obi and she had the opportunity to listen to some of Obi's speeches and understand his political vision, she became deeply interested and passionate about Peter Obi's candidacy.

She subsequently became an important channel for increasing awareness of Peter Obi in Russia and across the Commonwealth of Independent States. His involvement helped to give Peter Obi greater visibility within Russian and wider CIS media and social circles, allowing people who might otherwise have had little exposure to Nigerian politics to become familiar with Obi, his background, and his message.

Another significant individual whom I brought into the ecosystem was a member of the Russian Duma. After becoming familiar with Peter Obi's profile and his political vision, he expressed considerable enthusiasm for his candidacy and discussed the possibility of forming an informal committee to promote Peter Obi's election as President of Nigeria.

What particularly impressed him was the possibility that an African political leader could represent a different approach to governance and development. He viewed supporting Obi not merely as participation in another country's election, but also through the broader lens of supporting Africa's development and challenging what he regarded as continuing forms of neocolonial influence on the continent.

His involvement became particularly valuable because of the relationships he was able to facilitate with Russian business interests, non-governmental organizations, professional networks, and other stakeholders. These relationships expanded the scope of the ecosystem beyond electoral advocacy and created opportunities for conversations about Nigeria's future international partnerships.

Another important person attracted by Peter Obi's profile was Professor Zenebe Kinfu from Ethiopia, President of the African-Russian diaspora organization. After reviewing Peter Obi's background, profile, and political vision, Professor Kinfu became actively involved in promoting and supporting his candidacy. He is eager to visit Nigeria to meet Peter Obi. His involvement was significant because it brought an established African-focused diaspora network into the broader ecosystem.

It demonstrated that interest in Peter Obi was not confined to Nigerians abroad; his candidacy could also resonate with wider African communities interested in the continent's political and economic development.

I also engaged with the Russian Chamber of Commerce and the Moscow Chamber of Commerce, not simply from the immediate perspective of the presidential election, but with a longer-term vision.

I wanted to explore the possibility that a Peter Obi presidency could create new opportunities for trade, investment, business partnerships, technology transfer, and stronger economic relations between Nigeria and Russia. Their members were inspired by Peter Obi's profile and vision.

This was an important aspect of my approach. I did not see the diaspora campaign solely as an electoral exercise. I saw it as an opportunity to begin developing relationships that could potentially become useful to Nigeria beyond the election itself.

Other organizations worth mentioning are Nigerians in Diaspora Russia, Nigerian community Russia, and the African community Russia, whose involvement contributed to the broader mobilization and coordination of Nigerians and Africans within the Russian diaspora.

In addition to these individuals, several other influential personalities, professional diaspora groups, civil society organizations, business networks, media platforms, and community organizations were connected to the Obedient movement through these efforts. They are too numerous to mention individually, but collectively they formed an important part of the international network that developed around Peter Obi's candidacy support ecosystem.

The ecosystem was therefore deliberately multidimensional. Political actors provided advocacy and access. Media personalities created visibility and public awareness. Diaspora organizations mobilized communities and provided networks of support. African diaspora leaders broadened the movement's continental reach. Business and commerce organizations opened conversations around investment, trade, and economic cooperation.

Professional organizations and civil society networks provided additional platforms for engagement and credibility. This approach reflected my broader understanding of diaspora politics. Nigerians abroad should not be viewed merely as a source of electoral support or remittances. The diaspora possesses intellectual capital, professional expertise, international relationships, institutional access, business networks, and political influence that can be strategically deployed in the national interest.

My role, therefore, was not simply to campaign for Peter Obi. I sought to connect people and institutions that could help amplify his message while simultaneously creating relationships that could potentially serve Nigeria's broader interest. In all my activities with Peter Obi and the Obidient movement, I worked closely with Valentine Ozigbo, who was the special adviser to Peter Obi.

TV: Did Peter Obi and the Obidient Movement adequately understand how to communicate with foreign governments, diplomatic institutions, international media, investors and the Nigerian diaspora?

Professor Maurice Okoli: Peter Obi had an excellent international outreach in 2022-2023. Peter Obi held a consultation with Nigerians abroad, spoke at Harvard, discussed foreign policy, diaspora remittances, foreign investment, and said it loud and clear that the diaspora was very important

to Nigeria's future. The movement fully understands the importance of international government engagement. He engaged the international community. He also recognizes the importance of diaspora remittances and foreign investment. However, for the election of 2027, Peter Obi and the Obidient movement should understand that several different audiences need different messages, such as foreign governments, foreign investors, diaspora organizations, global Nigerian professionals, international journalists, democracy and human rights organizations, international financial institutions, embassies and high commissions in Nigeria, and international organizations.



For the 2027 election, I would advise that the Obidient movement establish a professional diplomatic and geopolitical team with a focus on Africa and ECOWAS, the United Kingdom and Europe, the United States and Canada, the Middle East and Asia, international financial institutions, foreign investment, international media, and diaspora affairs. This team will ensure that foreign governments and international institutions have accurate, timely, and truthful information about Nigeria's electoral process. One of the most important things is that the Obidient movement should understand that in our world today, there is a small group of people who influence or determine what happens in it. This small group of people is very powerful, and they are sometimes called international decision makers, or global decision makers. It is unimaginable the level of insanity this small group of people is willing to exhibit to protect their interests, including influencing the result of an election. There is no doubt that Nigeria, as one of the largest economies in Africa, falls within the area of their interest economically and geopolitically. Peter Obi and the Obidient movement should find a way to have a confidential diplomatic engagement and quiet diplomacy with them.

TV: Something significant happened in the 2023 election. What is it that happened that Nigerians are still discussing it until today?

Professor Maurice Okoli: Something genuinely new happened in the history of Nigerian elections in 2023, and it is important to acknowledge just how extraordinary and phenomenal the Obedient movement was.

Peter Obi, together with the Obidient movement, took what was initially a relatively small Labour Party and transformed it into a national political movement in an extraordinarily short period of time. Whatever political interpretation one may attach to the outcome of the 2023 election, there is no denying that Peter Obi and the movement achieved something significant.

Peter Obi and the obidient won the election but were rigged out by the establishment. For many Nigerians, particularly young Nigerians, Peter Obi represented something they had been looking for: a politician they could identify with and a political alternative built around accountability, honesty, competence, and a rejection of the traditional political establishment.

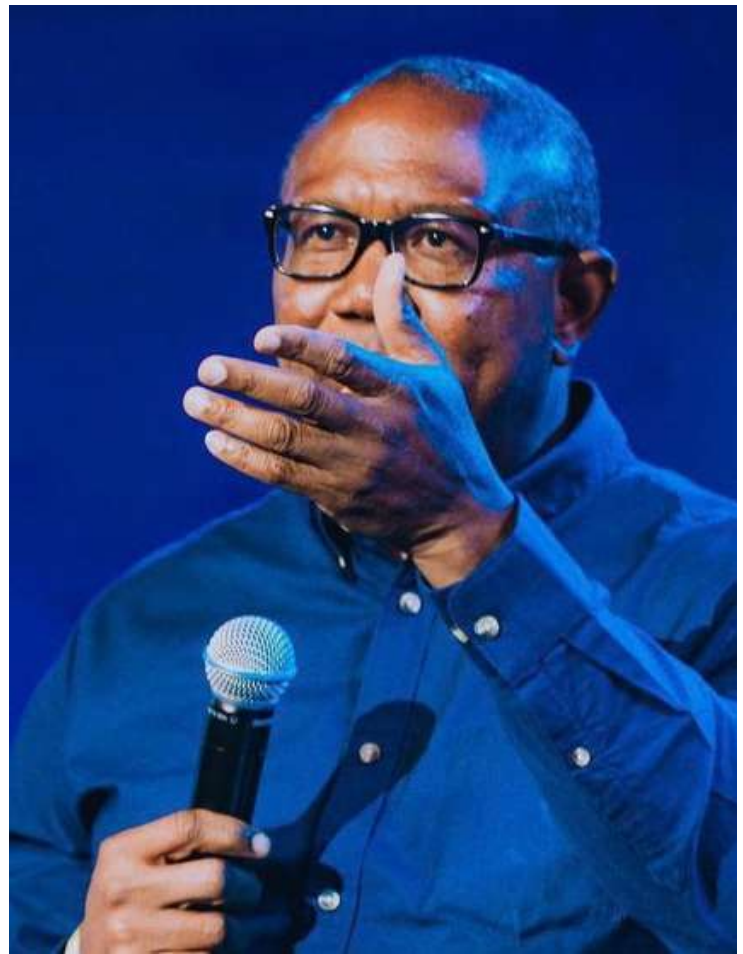
People who had never previously participated in public or electoral politics suddenly became deeply engaged.

They began discussing politics, attending rallies, organizing their communities, mobilizing others, and contributing their time and resources to a political cause. That level of spontaneous engagement was unprecedented in modern Nigerian politics.

I say this not as an outsider looking in, but as someone who was part of the movement. Like many other Obidients, I put my own resources behind it. We invested financially, emotionally,

and personally because we genuinely believed that Peter Obi represented an opportunity to change the direction of Nigerian politics.

The importance of the Obidient movement therefore goes beyond the final electoral numbers or the political arguments surrounding the 2023 result. Its greatest achievement was demonstrating what was possible.



It proved that Nigerians were hungry for something different. It proved that young Nigerians could become politically engaged and mobilized on a scale that the traditional political parties had underestimated. And it demonstrated that a political movement could emerge from ordinary citizens, social networks, and grassroots enthusiasm rather than being built entirely through the established structures of Nigerian politics.

Whatever one's political position may be today, the Obedient movement was one of the defining political phenomena of the 2023 Nigerian election. It changed the conversation, brought a new generation into political participation, and showed that there is a substantial constituency of Nigerians who want accountability, competence, integrity, and a fundamentally different kind of politics.

TV: What happened in the 2023 election, and what did believe must be done differently in the upcoming 2027 Nigerian election?

Professor Maurice Okoli: I believe the 2023 presidential election was a wake-up call for the Obedient movement, particularly for those who had assumed that winning an election was simply a matter

of mobilizing voters and turning up on election day. In Nigeria's style of democracy, an election is like going to battle or war, unlike what is obtainable in other countries. In Nigeria's style of democracy, the most important battle is before the election and on election day. Any other time is too late.

The obedient movement should not go into an election with the mindset to win the election, and if they still it goes to court. It is a wrong mindset because those who still win the election also capture the court. In a situation where the ruling party controls the security forces, intimidates voters, and controls the election machinery, the court cannot be relied upon. The only option here is for the obedient movement and Nigerian of good conscience to, by all lawful means, protect every single vote. And make it practically impossible to manipulate and alter the result of the election. The 2023 experience exposed serious weaknesses in our electoral process, and I believe important lessons have been learned by the Obedient movement. The approach to the coming electoral cycle must therefore be fundamentally different especially in protecting the integrity of every vote and ensuring that the people's mandate is not subverted.

If they bring it to the mud in the process of protecting the integrity of every vote. Do not be afraid; rather, help them to add cement to make the mud stick.

For revolution to take place, there must be a revolutionary situation, and for new Nigeria to come, there must be a new Nigerian situation. The new Nigerian situation is here, and it is now or never.

I had raised this concern before the 2023 election. In an article I published in major Nigerian newspapers, including Vanguard and The Guardian, on 9 October 2022, I warned the Obidient movement that the APC and the opposition party PDP were highly organized political machines and that they should not underestimate the lengths to which an established political structure could go to protect its interests. My argument was simple: political enthusiasm and popular support were not enough. The movement needed to be organized, vigilant, and strategically prepared to protect every vote. And that the whole strategy should be designed and built on the assumption that any of the actors, such as ruling party APC, other opposition parties, electoral officials, or security officials, could attempt to manipulate and alter the result of the election.

Unfortunately, the reaction I received to that warning suggested to me that many people within the movement did not fully appreciate the nature of the political contest they were entering. What happened in 2023 demonstrated the consequences of that lack of preparedness not only to vote but to protect the vote. The rest, as they say, is history. INEC must organize a free, credible, fair, verifiable, peaceful, and transparent election. If they do not know how to do it, the Obidient Movement will teach them. And if they fail to learn, the Obidient Movement should lawfully force them to learn.

Election rigging and manipulation must stop in Nigeria at all costs. It is very shameful and disgusting to watch the election process in Nigeria. Election rigging and manipulation create a dangerous incentive for politicians and political parties. If politicians believe they can remain in power by rigging and manipulating elections rather than serving the public, they will have fewer reasons to listen to the citizens; instead of working hard to earn people's trust, they may focus on finding ways to protect their position. This is why election rigging and manipulation should be treated as a grave attack on democracy.



A country becomes stronger when politicians know that the only dependable way to remain in power is to serve the people. That is the real power of free, fair, and transparent elections.

TV: What will happen if Ahmed Bola Tinubu wins the upcoming presidential election?

Professor Maurice Okoli: If Tinubu wins the 2027 presidential election through a peaceful, credible, transparent, free, and fair election, I will heartily congratulate him, because a free and fair election is the foundation upon which a democratic society is built. It is the mechanism through which citizens exercise their fundamental right to determine who governs them, and that process must remain absolutely free of corruption.

There are many things that may happen, which I would not wish to speculate about here. But there is one thing I am certain will happen: in view of the kompromat on Bola Ahmed Tinubu and his efforts to prevent that kompromat from being made public, by the time he completes his four-year second-term presidency, Nigeria will have become like a corporation or limited liability company, with shares and shareholders, where the majority of the shares and shareholders will belong to foreign interests. That would be something far worse than colonialism and neocolonialism combined.

A FEW FACTORS THAT BREAK UP MARRIAGES!



By
Mrs. Uche Ideho
Councilor UC



Marriages do not suddenly end when the divorce is finalized because when marriage reaches the point of divorce, a “post-mortem” relationship will often reveal the presence of bad habits practiced by one or both partners that slowly and insidiously robbed the marriage of its strength, vitality, and ultimately, its life.

Marriage is a continuous work and once the work stops, then the cracks in the walls of the marriage begin to affect the relationship and finally the center can no longer hold. Just like our human body, you need to take care of your body or else, you will become sick; so you must help to protect your body from illness and disease; therefore, you must take good care of your body so it is the same with your marriage.

We are able to protect our marriage when we work to protect ourselves from bad habits that are gradually destroying the marriage itself.

We can protect our marriages from failure by avoiding these very destructive relationship patterns. If I do not have the space to finish it in this publication, I would continue in the next edition of the publication. The first danger in any marriage or even a relationship working towards marital relationship is lack of honesty.

*If you have any relational question
or advice, you can reach our
counsellor on WhatsApp:
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Lack of Honesty

Often when we think of honesty, notably honesty in marital relationships, we think of a very tangible “where were you last night” kind of honesty. While this is obviously critically important, there are many other kinds of dishonesty that can destroy marriages. Honesty regarding things such as spending habits, internet relationships, and substance use or addiction can create cracks in a marriage that quickly become chasms. Fostering secrecy regarding these issues can lead to creating secret lives that not only keep our partners out, but can involve ever more consuming relationships with other people (or substances or behaviors such as gambling) that then can become primary in our lives. Our partners soon cannot compete with the pull and attraction to these secret lives and marriages fail. Affairs often begin this way.

Affairs also often begin as a result of a failure in our most basic and difficult form of honesty; emotional honesty. Emotional dishonesty involves withholding, denying, or simply lying about how we feel in regard to our partner, our marriage, or ourselves. Saying “I’m fine” when we are not may seem like an innocent response to an inquiry about our day or how we are feeling, but if it is not true, then it is dishonest.

If we are feeling angry, frustrated, neglected, or even fearful in relation to our partner, and we do not address these feelings openly and honestly, we cannot reach resolution. Without resolution, these feelings will no doubt fester and grow. Being fully and completely honest about how we are feeling will allow awareness and understanding to grow in a marriage, and this in turn deepens our commitment.

Honesty is key to the success of every marriage; therefore you need to guide it religiously among the two persons involved. Next edition we would highlight more points and give reasons to work on to ensure your marriage stands.

Note: I would be examining other factors that may be underlying factors before divorce. When you notice these points, do something about it, seek counsel and don’t say with time things would be better or keep staying in a toxic relationship.





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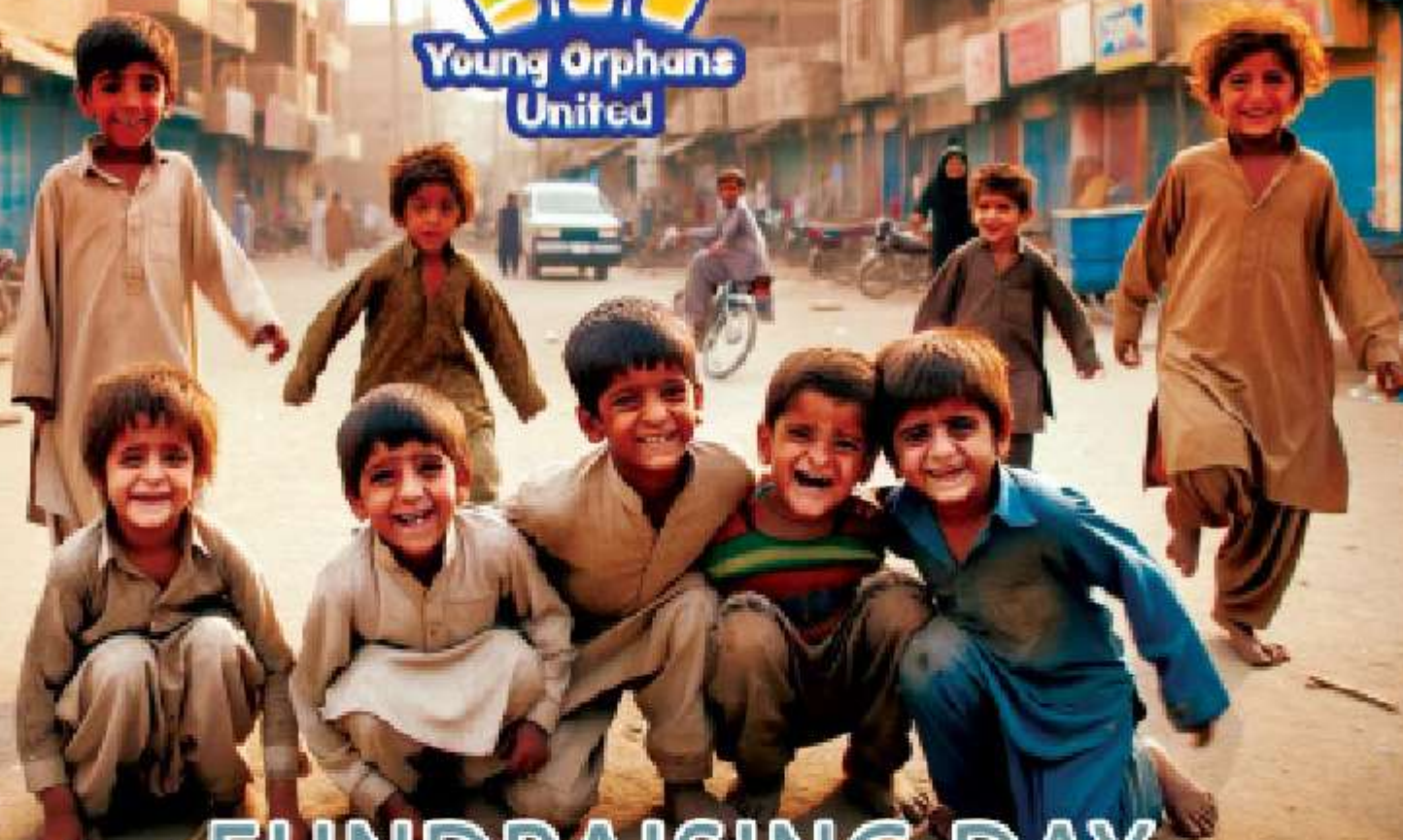
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Officials From Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Sudan And Namibia Visit Ghana To Draw Lessons From GoldBod

This is to help these African countries formalise gold trading and centralised gold market regulation

Ghana's GoldBod model is increasingly attracting interest from countries across Africa, with seven international delegations undertaking official visits and engagements with the Ghana Gold Board over a 12-month period to study Ghana's new approach.

This is to help these African countries formalise gold trading and centralised gold market regulation toward value maximisation and local value retention.

The visits, involving Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Sudan and Namibia, reflect growing interest in Ghana's efforts to assert national sovereignty over the exploitation of its gold resources under the GoldBod model through a centralised, well-structured and effectively regulated gold value chain.

The engagements began in September 2025 with a visit by Sierra Leone's Minister of Finance, Sheku Ahmed Fantamadi Bangura, on September 18.

Discussions with GoldBod Chief Executive Officer Sammy Gyamfi centred on how Sierra Leone could adapt the Ghanaian model to strengthen its mineral revenue management.

Mr. Bangura commended the achievements of GoldBod within a relatively short period and described the model as a potential blueprint for sustainable gold-sector reform in Africa. At the time, GoldBod was also working with the Ghana Commodity Exchange on initiatives involving tokenisation and exchange-traded funds, while the Securities and Exchange Commission was engaged on investor protection.

In October 2025, a high-level delegation from Mozambique's Ministry of Mineral Resources and Energy undertook a two-day study visit to Ghana. The delegation, which included officials responsible for the Kimberley Process, examined Ghana's institutional arrangements for regulating gold trading and certification.

The Mozambican officials were taken through GoldBod's regulatory framework and day-to-day operations by Deputy Chief Executive Officer Richard Nunekpeku, Esq. The visit formed part of Mozambique's broader interest in strengthening the regulation and legality of precious metals, rough diamonds and gemstones.

The interest continued in January 2026 when a 15-member delegation from Tanzania's Minerals Commission visited GoldBod to study Ghana's gold-buying system and the regulatory regime supporting it.

Led by Dr. Theresia Numbi, the delegation indicated that Ghana had been deliberately selected after comparisons with other countries and described Ghana as a pioneer and centre of excellence in Africa.

Tanzania's interest subsequently extended beyond the Minerals Commission. Four months later, a separate delegation from the Central Bank of Tanzania returned for a study tour focused on Ghana's Domestic Gold Purchasing Programme and its successor, GANRAP.

In April 2026, GoldBod hosted the BetterBrands Team from Zimbabwe on a technical visit focused on opportunities for formalising Ghana's artisanal and small-scale mining sector.

The engagement added another dimension to the growing regional interest in the Ghanaian model, particularly in relation to the organisation and formalisation of the artisanal and small-scale gold-mining ecosystem.

In July, Zambia sent a high-level government delegation to GoldBod on a fact-finding mission following an official request routed through Ghana's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The delegation's interest came against the backdrop of Zambia confirming commercially viable gold deposits and seeking to develop a structured trading system around its emerging gold sector.



...Continued on Page 28



The delegation's interest came against the backdrop of Zambia confirming commercially viable gold deposits and seeking to develop a structured trading system around its emerging gold sector.

The Zambian team was received by Deputy CEO Richard Nunekpeku, Esq., who took the delegation through GoldBod's operations, achievements and ongoing reforms. Subsequent public comments from ZCCC Investments Holdings indicated interest in the Ghanaian model as Zambia seeks to increase value from its small-scale gold sector.

A few days later, on July 21, 2026, a Sudanese delegation led by the Ambassador to Ghana visited GoldBod to understand the model and explore how it could be replicated within Sudan's natural-resource management framework.

The most recent documented engagement was by Namibia's Ministry of Industries, Mines and Energy, which visited GoldBod in September 2026 for a benchmarking exercise.

The Namibian delegation examined GoldBod's statutory mandate, licensing regime, gold purchasing, and sales operations. The delegation described the GoldBod model as a robust framework from which Namibia could draw valuable lessons as it works towards greater uniformity and standardisation in its own minerals sector.

The delegation was received by Deputy CEO Richard Nunekpeku, Esq., while officials from GoldBod's Legal Department and Technical Operations provided presentations on the institution's mandate and operations.

A Growing African Interest

Taken together, the seven engagements demonstrate the breadth of international interest in Ghana's approach to gold-sector governance.

The delegations have not all come with identical objectives. Their areas of interest have ranged from mineral revenue management, gold trading and certification, licensing and regulation, domestic gold purchasing, artisanal and small-scale mining formalisation, natural-resource management and value addition.

What connects the engagements is a desire to understand the institutional framework Ghana has developed through GoldBod and to examine elements that could potentially inform reforms in the visiting countries.

Within 12 months, the Ghana Gold Board has therefore become a reference point for officials and institutions from different parts of Africa seeking practical insights into the organisation and governance of their own gold sectors.

The sequence of visits—from Sierra Leone and Mozambique in 2025 to Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Sudan and Namibia in 2026—provides a growing record of regional engagement around the GoldBod construct.

For Ghana, the study tours also provide an opportunity to share its experience while strengthening technical and institutional cooperation with other African mineral-producing countries.

As more African countries explore ways of capturing greater value from their mineral resources, the continued interest in GoldBod places Ghana's experience within a broader continental conversation about gold governance, formalisation, regulation, value addition and mineral-resource management.



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Land Whose Dust Never Settles



When people hear of Northern Uganda, many still think first of war- the conflict that began in 1986 and stretched across decades, deeply affecting the Acholi sub-region. It disrupted communities, fractured social life, and left lasting scars. But that is not the whole story.

Today, the Acholi people are reclaiming their voice reviving traditions that once seemed lost and telling a different story. A story not of gunshots, but of drums. This is an invitation to experience Northern Uganda anew.

As the sun dips below the horizon, casting golden light across the Savannah, the air begins to pulse with rhythm. The sound of drums rises, steady and alive. This is the world of Acholi dance. It is not just performance, it is identity.

Each movement, each beat, each song carries history. These dances are living expressions of culture, passed from one generation to the next. They embody values, struggles, and triumphs. To experience Acholi dance is to step into a living archive.

It is a language-one that speaks without words, yet carries the wisdom of ancestors. In a world that often feels disconnected, Acholi dance reminds us of something deeper: the power of community, of shared joy, and of belonging. Here, you are not just a spectator. You are invited to participate.

Across the vast landscapes of Northern Uganda, the rhythm of Acholi dance continues to echo—steady, powerful, and deeply rooted in community life. These dances are more than coordinated movement. They are living archives of history, identity, and belonging- woven into everyday life. Through them, stories are told, values are reinforced, and connections are sustained.

To truly understand the Acholi, one must understand their dance. Each performance carries meaning. Some mark celebration while others signal transition - initiation, courtship, harvest, or community gatherings. Together, they form a cultural language that communicates far beyond words.

Embedded within these traditions are foundational stories- such as the legend of the Spear and the Beads, which speaks to separation, identity, and enduring connection among the Acholi people.

In Acholi, history does not sit quietly in the past. It moves, breathes, and rises with every beat of the drum. Through dance, memory becomes motion, and identity is carried across generations. What unfolds is more than performance; it is a living archive of resilience, where culture is not remembered from a distance, but embodied in the present.

Written by Atim Patricia

It is within this rich cultural landscape that individual dances take on their full significance.

The Bwola Dance

The Bwola dance stands as one of the most recognizable and ceremonial expressions of Acholi culture. Traditionally associated with royal occasions, it reflects leadership, unity, and pride. Dancers move in coordinated formations, often dressed in elaborate attire that signals status and occasion.

The rhythm is deliberate, the movement measured, and the atmosphere dignified. To witness bwola is to experience a performance that carries both beauty and authority- a celebration not only of culture, but of collective identity.

...Continued on Page 31

The Larakaraka Dance

If Bwola speaks of leadership and unity, Larakaraka speaks of connection. This is a courtship dance - one of the most vibrant and socially engaging expressions of Acholi culture. It brings young men and women together in a space where attraction, confidence, and identity are expressed through movement.

The energy is unmistakable. Dancers move with rhythm and intention- each step, turn, and gesture communicating interest, admiration, and personality. It is both performance and interaction.

Traditionally, Larakaraka also played a role in relationship formation. Through dance, young people observed one another character, confidence, and presence all becoming part of the social language.

The symbolism is subtle but powerful. For women, grace, rhythm, and coordination reflect confidence and cultural pride. For men, strength, control, and presence signal readiness and responsibility. These are not rigid expectations, but expressions shaped by tradition.

At its core, Larakaraka is about more than courtship. It is about community- about how relationships begin, how people connect, and how culture provides a shared space for that connection to unfold. To witness it is to see culture in motion.

The Orak Dance: Celebration and Community

If Larakaraka expresses connection, Orak embodies celebration. Performed during communal gatherings and harvest moments, Orak is a dance of joy, gratitude, and togetherness. Its movements are lively and expressive, often accompanied by laughter, clapping, and playful interaction.

It reminds us that culture is not only preserved in solemn moments, but also in joy. For visitors, Orak offers something immediate and inclusive. You do not simply watch—you feel the rhythm, join the movement, and become part of the shared experience.

Echoes of Identity: The Spear and the Beads

Underlying many Acholi traditions is the enduring story of the Spear and the Beads- the tale of Gipir and Labongo. This story explores themes of separation, identity, and the enduring connections that link communities despite divisions.

Its presence within cultural expression, including dance, is subtle but significant. It reminds us that Acholi identity is not static- it has been shaped by history, resilience, and continuity. In every rhythm, in every movement, that story echoes.

Northern Uganda invites you - not just to visit, but to experience. To step into Acholi is to encounter a culture that lives through rhythm, movement, and community. It is to witness a people whose history is not only remembered, but performed.

In a world that often feels fragmented, Acholi offers something grounding: connection. Connection to history, people, and to self. Here, dance is not just art; It is memory. It is identity. It is life.

And as the drums rise and fall across the savannah, one truth becomes clear: The dust of Northern Uganda never settles. It rises with every step, every beat, every story - carrying with it the spirit of a people who continue to move, to remember, and to welcome the world.



Post-Voice Achievers Awards 2026: Diplomatic Courtesy Visits To Ghana High Commissions In London

Following the successful conclusion of the 15th Edition of the Voice Achievers Awards (VAA) and Business Dialogue 2026 in London, a post-event diplomatic courtesy visit was undertaken to the High Commissions of the Republic of Ghana.



Amb. Mrs. Sabah Zita Benson, Ghana High Commissioner to United Kingdom and Ireland in a warm handshake with Pastor Elvis Iruh, Founder of The Voice Achievers Award Inc.

The visit was undertaken by Mazi Godson Azu, accompanied by Pastor Elvis Iruh, Publisher and Founder of The Voice Magazine and the Voice Achievers Awards, alongside two distinguished African fashion designers and cultural representatives from Ghana and The Gambia — Ms. Eyram Olympio of KatieO Eleganza Fashion, Ghana/UK, and Ms. Aminata Jarju of Amina's Fashion, The Gambia.

The primary purpose of the diplomatic engagements was to formally express our appreciation to the diplomatic mission for their support, participation and encouragement towards the Voice Achievers Awards 2026. The visit also provided an opportunity to strengthen existing relationships, exchange views on the recently concluded event, acknowledge areas requiring improvement and explore opportunities for deeper cooperation in future editions of the VAA and other Africa-focused programmes in the United Kingdom.

Courtesy Visit to the Ghana High Commission

The delegation visited the Ghana High Commission in London, where they were warmly received by Her Excellency, Ambassador Mrs. Sabah Zita Benson, High Commissioner of Ghana to the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Ambassador Benson has continued to demonstrate a strong commitment to diplomatic engagement, partnership-building and the promotion of Ghana's interests in the United Kingdom. Her current role places her at the centre of Ghana-UK diplomatic, economic and diaspora relations.

After Pastor Elvis Iruh introduced the delegation, he addressed the protocol and organizational challenges encountered during the VAA event, specifically those affecting the Ghanaian delegation.

Speaking for the Voice Achievers Awards team and organizing partners, Pastor Iruh apologized sincerely to Her Excellency for any inconveniences and asked for her understanding.



Mazi Godson Azu extended an invitation to Her Excellency, Amb. Mrs. Sabah Zita Benson for the upcoming London Political Summit this October 2026 in London.

...Continued on Page 33

Her Excellency received the explanation with considerable grace, maturity and understanding. Her response demonstrated the qualities of an experienced diplomat and public servant who understand the importance of constructive engagement, reconciliation and continuous improvement.

The delegation also expressed its profound gratitude to the Ghana High Commission for its support and goodwill towards the Voice Achievers Awards and for its continued encouragement of initiatives that celebrate African excellence, creativity, enterprise, diplomacy and cultural identity.

We remain particularly appreciative of Her Excellency's commitment to strengthening partnerships between Ghanaian stakeholders and institutions in the United Kingdom.

We deeply appreciate her gracious disposition and her willingness to accept our explanation in the spirit in which it was offered.

Before the team departed from the mission, Mazi Godson Azu (MA, BA (Hons), FOSHA, AMILM, MID, MloD, MloG), CEO of Cater and Merger Consult UK and Director of the C&M Centre for Leadership and Good Governance UK, extended an invitation to Her Excellency for the upcoming London Political Summit in October 2026. Amb. Mrs. Sabah Zita Benson received the invite with appreciation.





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My Diaspora Exit Plan: When Going Home Stopped Feeling Like Failure

Written by Ritah Atuhaire

A regional conflict may have accelerated Ritah Atuhaire's departure from Dubai, but her journey home began long before that. After years of chasing opportunity abroad, she returned to Uganda and discovered that the future she wanted might have been waiting for her there all along.

My name is Ritah Atuhaire, one of the many Africans who have called the United Arab Emirates home in recent years. Like many young Ugandan graduates, I left home with dreams of building a teaching career in the field I had trained for. But reality unfolded differently. Instead of a classroom, I found opportunities in hospitality—a path that, while far removed from my profession, mirrors the experience of many people in the diaspora.

The journey was not without rewards. Working in some of Dubai's leading restaurant venues exposed me to new cultures, perspectives, and opportunities. It also opened the door for me to report diaspora stories for Vice Versa Global, deepening my understanding of migration, identity, and belonging. The experience strengthened my resilience and broadened my horizons. Yet beneath the growth and achievements, I carried a persistent feeling that there was still more potential within me waiting to be explored.

At the beginning of 2026, after more than four years in Dubai, I created my first vision board. It contained four simple goals: grow my writing and creative career, double my income, reunite with my son, and serve God more faithfully. I believed those dreams were achievable. The question that troubled me was how.

I found myself weighing different possibilities. Should I stay in Dubai a little longer or return home and begin a new chapter? Plan A was to use my teaching qualifications to pursue another teaching opportunity. It offered better pay, more time for writing and church service, and the possibility of either bringing my son to Dubai or returning to Uganda with enough savings to start afresh.

Plan B was to build on my hospitality experience and pursue a management position in the industry. Plan C—my favourite plan—was to complete my contract in November 2026 and return home to become a full-time writer and creative with Vice Versa Initiative. It was the option that aligned most closely with the life I imagined for myself.

An unexpected turning point

Looking back now, I realise I should have included a Plan D: trust God's plan completely. In all my calculations and careful planning, I never imagined that my departure from Dubai would be accelerated by a regional conflict that would force me to reconsider everything.

It began on what seemed like an ordinary afternoon at work. Then a loud explosion-like sound shattered the routine. "What was that?" I wondered. "Did you hear that?" a colleague asked as he rushed outside.

I followed him. Hundreds of people were already gathered, staring into the sky. Above us, smoke drifted across the horizon. Reports soon began circulating that a missile had been intercepted.



...Continued on Page 36

People began talking about attacks on American military installations across the Gulf region. At first, few of us imagined how serious the situation might become. Many assumed the tensions would pass quickly. Yet I felt uneasy. I had read enough history to know that conflicts often begin by appearing distant and temporary.

The two colleagues I was working with tried to lighten the mood. “Relax, Ritah,” one of them joked. “If another missile comes, I’ll catch it and throw it back before it reaches you.” They laughed, and I forced a smile. But beneath the humour, a quiet sense of fear had already begun to settle inside me.

As reports and rumours continued to circulate, anxiety spread through the city. People rushed home. Restaurants, offices, and shops closed earlier than usual. Our workplace also shut down ahead of schedule. At the time, most of us convinced ourselves that life would return to normal within a few days. It seemed unthinkable that the uncertainty would last.

But it did.

What followed were weeks of heightened tension, security alerts, and growing concern across the region. Residents regularly received notifications advising caution whenever potential threats were detected, followed by updates that the situation had been brought under control. While daily life continued, uncertainty became impossible to ignore.

The effects soon reached the economy. Businesses began operating more cautiously as travel plans were disrupted and visitor numbers declined. Hotels and restaurants, which depended heavily on tourism, felt the impact almost immediately.

Reservations were cancelled, customer numbers dropped, and employers began looking for ways to cut costs. Some workers were placed on unpaid leave. Others lost their jobs altogether. I was one of them.



The journey back

As unprepared as I felt, my first instinct was not to search for another job. Instead, I found myself thinking about home.

Watching supply chains come under pressure and food prices rise made me reflect on how millions of people survive in the UAE, a country that has achieved remarkable food security despite its harsh climate and dependence on imports. At the same time, my thoughts kept returning to Uganda.

Uganda remains one of the most fertile countries in the world. Vast stretches of arable land remain underutilised, yet the country continues to produce food for both local consumption and export. The contrast stayed with me. I found myself asking a question I had never seriously considered before: Am I supposed to leave fertile land back home uncultivated while the world struggles with food insecurity?

That question changed something in me.

For the first time, returning home no longer felt like a backup plan or a sign of defeat. It felt purposeful. I began imagining a life that went beyond earning a salary abroad—a life where I could contribute to solving bigger challenges while encouraging fellow Africans in the diaspora to rethink what opportunity really means.

Perhaps the greener pasture we spend years searching for abroad sometimes already exists at home. Sometimes it simply takes distance, disruption, and a change in perspective to recognise it. The more I reflected on that possibility, the more certain I became: it was time to go home.



Even when my company reduced my final payment, I chose peace over a lengthy dispute. At that moment, time mattered more than money. Airspace restrictions had already begun, but I managed to secure a ticket home. As my departure date approached, I prayed constantly for safety, uncertain about what the coming days might bring. That uncertainty became painfully real at the airport. We had already boarded our flight when an announcement instructed us to disembark and return to the terminal. Reports of an approaching threat had prompted heightened security measures.

Within moments, the atmosphere shifted. Conversations stopped. Anxiety spread across the room. Would the flight be cancelled? Would we remain stranded for days like the travellers I had seen on the news?

I looked around for reassurance, but every face reflected the same emotions: worry, confusion, fear, and silent prayer. Thankfully, operations resumed after some time, and our journey continued. That was how I left a region gripped by uncertainty and returned to the place that had unexpectedly become my greener pasture: home.

Rediscovering home

When I arrived in Uganda, I headed straight to the countryside, determined to begin again. Few people believed I would actually settle in a rural area. Even before leaving Uganda, I had always been seen as a city girl. Yet something had changed. My priorities were different. My vision of success had evolved.



I chose Mpigi, a place I had never lived before but where I had purchased land while still in the diaspora. I arrived with plans to grow vegetables for local and international markets. But what I discovered there went far beyond farming.

I rediscovered community.

On my very first day, an elderly woman from a neighbouring banana plantation approached me carrying beans and bananas. “Young lady, you can have some beans from my garden,” she said warmly. “Moving to a new place is hard when you don’t have food yet.”

My immediate assumption was that she intended to sell them to me. When I asked how much I owed her, she laughed gently and explained that it was simply her way of welcoming me to the village.

I was stunned. Nalongo reminded me of a generosity that is deeply woven into many African communities—a generosity that asks for nothing in return. And she was not the only one.

I found neighbours who genuinely cared about one another’s well-being, elders willing to guide younger people, and farmers eager to share their knowledge with someone who was completely new to agriculture. Their kindness made it easier for me to settle in and reconnect with the community around me.

For years, I believed success was somewhere far away. Yet in the quiet hills of Mpigi, I found something I had not realised I was searching for: belonging, purpose, and peace. Sometimes we need to leave home to truly understand its value. And now, for the first time in a long time, the future feels beautiful.

The Gambia High Commissions In London

By Mazi Godson Azu



The delegation, led by Mazi Godson Azu and accompanied by Pastor Elvis Iruh, Publisher and Founder of The Voice Magazine and the Voice Achievers Awards, alongside two distinguished African fashion designers and cultural ambassadors - Ms. Eyram Olympio of KatieO Eleganza Fashion, Ghana/UK, and Ms. Aminata Jarju of Amina's Fashion, The Gambia. We were warmly received at the High Commission of The Gambia while we waited patiently for the High Commissioner. The team was graciously hosted by Her Excellency Dr. Fatou Bensouda, High Commissioner of The Gambia to the United Kingdom in her office where in an engagement that reinforced cultural diplomacy and continental collaboration.

Following the successful conclusion of the 15th Edition of the Voice Achievers Awards (VAA) and Business Dialogue 2026 in London, a post-event diplomatic courtesy visit was undertaken to the High Commission of the Republic of The Gambia. The Gambia High Commission in London plays an important role in strengthening bilateral relations between The Gambia and the United Kingdom, as well as promoting Gambian interests, culture, tourism, trade and investment.

The meeting with Her Excellency Dr. Fatou Bensouda - an accomplished jurist, articulate exponent of international law, towering intellect on the global bench, former Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, global icon of justice, and now distinguished diplomat representing the government and people of The Gambia. The meeting was particularly warm and engaging. Pastor Iruh thanked her for her support through the award ceremony preparations and her acceptance to be the Special Guest Speaker at the Business Dialogue. Her paper presentation captivated the audience.

...Continued on Page 39

She was visibly delighted to welcome the Gambian fashion designer who had participated in the VAA 2026 programme, where she presented a vibrant runway showcase celebrating Gambian creativity, fashion, and cultural expression.

Her Excellency expressed her appreciation of the designer's work and shared her observations concerning the event. Her comments were constructive, encouraging and forward-looking, with positive feedback on the overall programme while also identifying areas where improvements could be made.

She encouraged the organisers to learn from the experience, strengthen the relevant protocols and organisational arrangements, and return with an even stronger programme at the next edition of the Voice Achievers Awards, scheduled to take place in Amsterdam in 2027.

Her Excellency's constructive observations were received with appreciation and humility. We believe that every successful international event must be viewed as a continuous learning process, and that honest feedback from diplomatic partners and distinguished stakeholders is essential to achieving higher standards.



Pastor Elvis Iruh and Mazi Godson Azu also expressed their profound gratitude to Her Excellency for personally attending both the VAA Business Dialogue and the Awards Gala Dinner.

Her presence, together with members of the Gambian delegation, was deeply appreciated and regarded as an important demonstration of support for the objectives of the Voice Achievers Awards and its commitment to promoting African excellence on international platforms.

We sincerely thank Her Excellency and the High Commission of The Gambia for their participation, encouragement and constructive engagement.



L-R: Ms. Aminata Jarju of Amina's Fashions, The Gambia & H/E Dr. Fatou Bensouda presenting her with a gift



L-R: Ms. Eyram Olympio of KatieO Eleganza Fashion, Ghana/UK & H/E Dr. Fatou Bensouda

He adds: 'The more the participants apply these principles, the better they evolve. We do not simply tell participants to have confidence and accept it to come to pass. Through CBS, participants learn by doing, which has brought about enormous change at both individual and community levels.' Bachunguye says today, they see improvements in the mental, social, and economic well-being of the people. He further adds that women today report a reduction in Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

'Husbands who have participated in the CBS programme now have respect within their families. The mental well-being of individuals who suffered from mental turmoil before has improved. They realise they can still contribute to the development of their families and their communities. They are hopeful and feel useful. Before CBS, there was mistrust amongst individuals, but sociotherapy has helped bring back confidence. People have started working together, which was not the case before. Relations between different ethnic groups have improved. They are working together towards economic development and peacebuilding,' he says.



L-R: Mazi Godson Azu & H/E Dr. Fatou Bensouda

Strengthening Africa–UK Cultural and Diplomatic Partnerships

The diplomatic courtesy visit was more than post-event protocol engagements. They represented an important opportunity to reaffirm the value of sustained relationships between African diplomatic missions, cultural practitioners, business leaders, media organisations and event platforms operating in the United Kingdom.

The Voice Achievers Awards has consistently sought to provide a platform where African excellence, entrepreneurship, culture, creativity, diplomacy and leadership can be celebrated and promoted internationally.

The participation of The Gambian diplomatic missions and their respective representatives further demonstrated the importance of collaboration in presenting Africa positively and creating platforms for greater cultural and economic engagement.

As organisers and partners, we recognise that international events of this nature require continuous improvement, effective protocol management, strong communication and close coordination with diplomatic missions and participating delegations.

The feedback received from the High Commission will therefore be carefully considered as part of our post-event review and planning for future editions.

By Mazi Godson Azu

International Development Expert; Global Affairs Analyst; Trade & Investment Facilitator and Leadership & Good Governance Consultant



L-R: Pastor Elvis Iruh & H/E Dr. Fatou Bensouda



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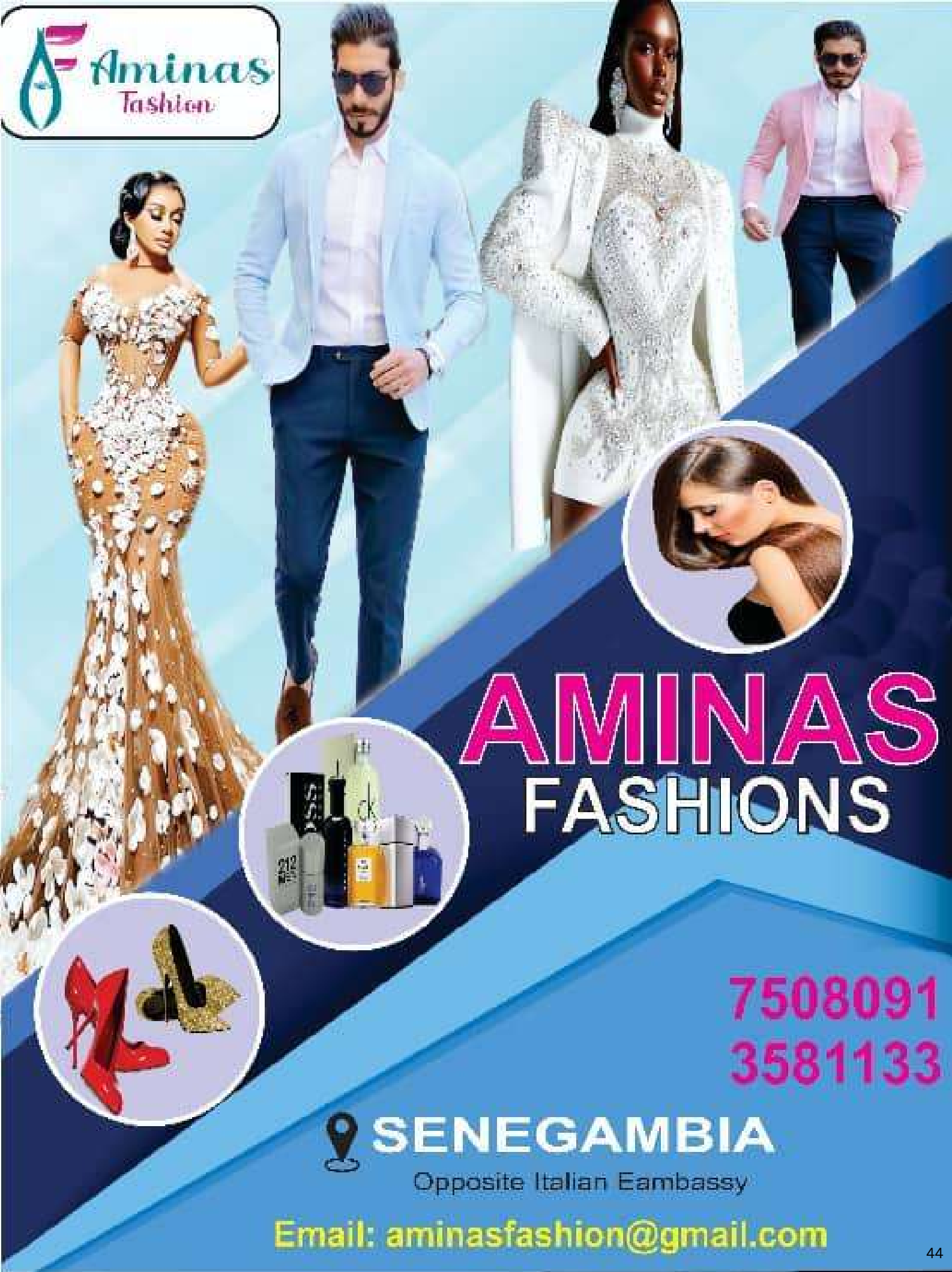
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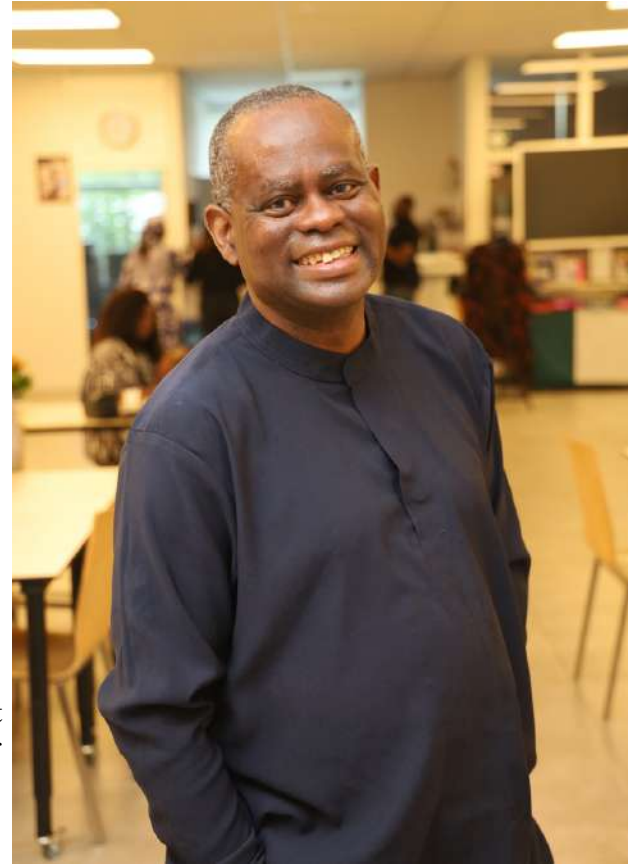
EVERYTHING WHITE MUST BE GOOD

Nigerian journalist and Pastor Elvis Iruh has lived in the Netherlands for almost thirty years. He has seen how African qualifications are valued less in Europe, but he also knows the other side: the persistent African image of Europe as a paradise of money, opportunity and success. “We need to change the narratives on both sides.”

Text: Cissy Nalumansi & Marc Broere

When Elvis Iruh tried to continue his career as a journalist in the Netherlands in the mid 1990s, he quickly ran into a wall. He had trained as a journalist in Nigeria. He had learned his profession in Lagos, at a journalism school where, in the 1980s, even students from Britain and Ireland came to study. But once in the Netherlands, his qualification suddenly seemed to be worth very little.

He approached the School of Journalism in Utrecht because he wanted to continue his studies. There, he was told that his Nigerian education did not meet their standards. His qualification could not be properly verified, he was told. The solution was simple: he could repeat in the Netherlands the journalism course he had already completed in Nigeria. Iruh refused. “I knew who I was and I knew what my qualifications were. I knew that if I was given the same opportunity to work alongside a Dutch journalist, I would be able to do my job well.” It became one of his first encounters with something he would see repeatedly over the following decades: knowledge, education and expertise from Africa are far from always valued equally in Europe. He still sees highly educated Africans working far below their level in the Netherlands because their qualifications are not recognised, or because starting their education all over again is practically impossible. They have families, need to earn an income and are older by then. “You have studied for four or five years at an African university, and then you come here and you are told that your qualification is not good enough.”



Cissy Nalumansi, a Ugandan Film maker and the producer of the Podcast interview with Pastor Elvis Iruh in The Netherlands

...Continued on Page 47

For Iruh, it was a reason to find his own path. In 1999, he founded The Voice magazine, an English-language magazine for the African diaspora in the Netherlands. The magazine recently celebrated its 27th anniversary. It started extremely modestly. Iruh barely spoke Dutch, did not know the Dutch media sector and had no money. His wife, Sandra gave him 3,000 guilders to produce the first edition. A pharmacist friend, Edward Ogbee made a computer and his home available.

Iruh laughingly calls that first edition “the ugliest magazine I have ever seen”. The design was primitive and the quality of the photographs was poor. Five hundred copies were printed. Of those, 497 were sold. There was clearly a need for a voice of their own. Africans living in the Netherlands were trying to understand a new country and a new culture while remaining connected to the continent they came from. Dutch media offered very little space for that. So they created their own medium.

But anyone who thinks stereotypes travel only from Europe to Africa has, according to Iruh, understood only half the story. He often thinks of his grandmother in Nigeria. When she saw television for the first time in her life, she sat right in front of the screen. Whenever a white person appeared, she reached out and touched the image with her hand. “She said, ‘They are so clean. They are so good.’

His grandmother even fantasied about another life. If she came back, she wanted to return as a white woman. And if she were born Black again, she at least wanted to live in the land of white people.

The young Elvis could not understand it. “I thought: what is so special about these people? They have two eyes. They have two hands. They are just like us.”

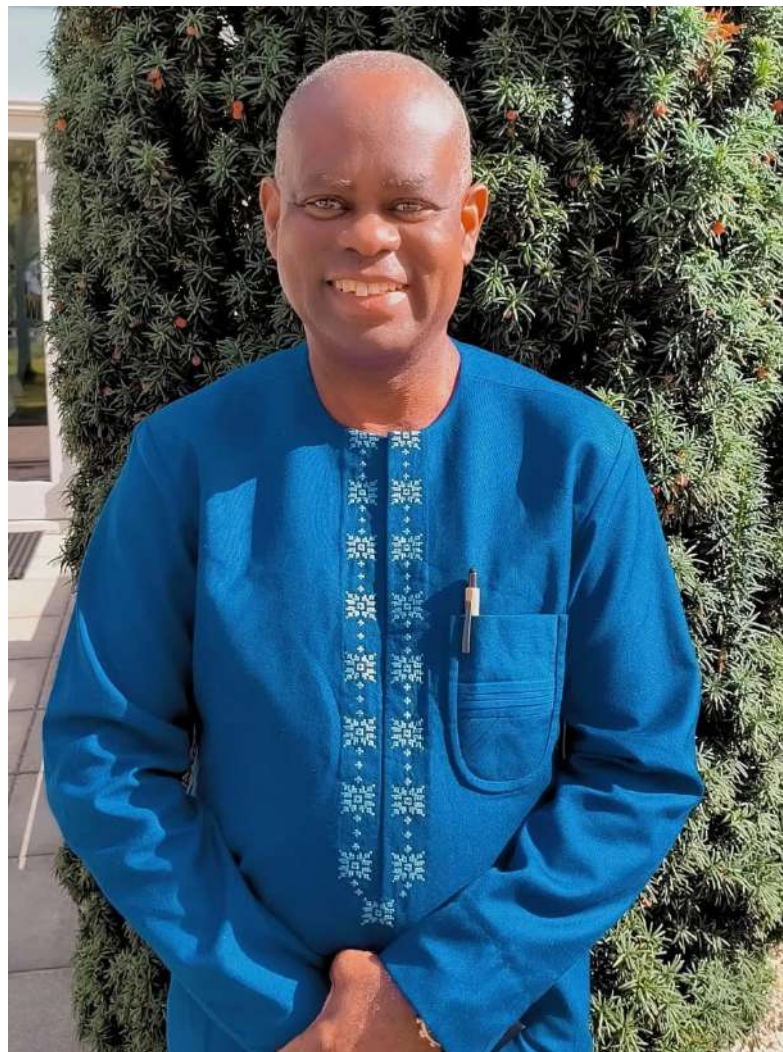
Only much later, when he was living in Europe himself, did he begin to understand how deeply rooted the idea was that everything white must also be good and better. For him, it raised a more fundamental question: where does that admiration come from? When did Africans begin to associate white skin, European clothing and European ways of doing things with progress and success?

He sees traces of it everywhere. Even in the hot climate of African countries, people turn up at official occasions wearing dark suits and ties. When Iruh travels from the Netherlands to Africa and deliberately wears African clothing, people react with surprise: but don’t you come from Europe? He laughs about it. After years of wearing ties, these days he prefers freedom. “I want my own voice.”

Iruh experienced just how persistent the image of wealthy Europe can be during a journey through Nigeria with two Dutch media professionals in the late 1990s. In Onitsha, a group of children ran after their car shouting, “Oyibo! Oyibo!” – white man. One of his Dutch travelling companions got out with a Polaroid camera and began taking photographs. The children watched the photographs appear immediately from the camera and went wild with excitement. They posed, received their pictures and then ran after the car asking for more.

One of the Dutchmen initially found the whole experience rather intimidating. Iruh found it amusing. As the journey progressed, he watched his travelling companion gradually become more relaxed.

But during that same journey, Iruh encountered a very different stereotype. At an event involving Nigerian football star Nwankwo Kanu, the Dutch visitors were formally introduced. Until then, almost everyone had assumed that Iruh was their driver.



As soon as people realised that the two white men were from the Netherlands, young women appeared wanting to know which hotel they were staying in.

Iruh felt responsible for his Dutch friends. Both had partners back home, so he refused to reveal the name of their hotel. The women eventually managed to find out for themselves where the group was staying. “They thought my Dutch friends were the Central Bank of the Netherlands and had all the money.”

Even Iruh received an offer: if he gave the women access to his Dutch travelling companions, he would get a share of the proceeds.

It is an anecdote he can still laugh about. But the underlying image, he says, still exists. When he visits Nigeria, families ask him to find European husbands for their daughters. On one occasion, five young women were even lined up waiting for him. Their mothers expected Iruh to return to the Netherlands with their photographs and find suitable husbands for them.

Young footballers also send him photographs and profiles, asking whether he might have a connection at Ajax, Vitesse or another European club. On the other side of the Mediterranean, Europe often remains the stage on which dreams appear to come true almost automatically.

Iruh places part of the responsibility for this with the media. Africans see magnificent European stadiums, tidy streets and prosperous cities. The other side of Europe and the United States reaches African audiences far less often. He remembers his first visit to America in 1998. He could hardly believe that people there were sleeping on cardboard boxes in the streets and asking him for a dollar. White Americans too.

The reverse, he says, also happens. When European media want to show poverty in Africa, they show hungry children, poor housing and dusty football pitches. But modern African homes, infrastructure and good stadiums much more easily disappear from view. “The media on both sides have a role to play.”

For him, this is not an argument for hiding problems. It is about showing a more complete picture. Africa has poverty and deprivation; Europe has homelessness and exclusion. Africa has villages without running water; it also has modern cities, universities, entrepreneurs and professionals. When only one half is repeatedly shown, a reality is created in which Europe automatically becomes the standard and Africa automatically becomes the place that has to catch up.

Iruh sees how powerful these images are in the migration debate. When he is in Nigeria, he sometimes tries to explain to young people that Europe “is not heaven”. Life can be expensive, and a European existence without work or a network can be extremely hard.

But then they ask him a logical question: if it is not better there, why are so many good things there?

For Iruh, the answer cannot simply be that Africans need to change their image of Europe. He also points to the enormous differences in infrastructure and opportunities.

In the Netherlands, he can live in Almere and have almost the same basic services as someone living in Amsterdam or The Hague.

In the Nigerian region where he grew up, he has seen villages empty because water, roads and economic opportunities are lacking.



His father once studied in Britain and returned immediately to Nigeria afterwards. At the time, there were jobs and there was confidence in the future. “He did not stay one day longer. He went back because he had a vision and a dream of what he wanted his country to become.”

According to Iruh, Europe therefore also needs to examine its own role. Africa cannot develop through loans, aid and charity alone, he says. People need to be able to build a future at home. Water, electricity and roads may sound like basic things, but they help determine whether someone stays or leaves.

The conversation eventually arrives at a complicated word: equality. What does it actually mean when Europe and Africa say they want an equal relationship? Iruh is not sure whether “equality” is even the right word. Countries do not possess the same resources, technology or economic power. Nor are people identical in every respect. For him, the heart of the matter lies somewhere else: in human dignity, mutual respect and a willingness to treat others as you would want to be treated yourself.



As a Pastor, he expresses this through his Christian faith. No human being, he says, stands above another. His own network includes Christians, Muslims and people without a religious faith. What holds them together is not that they think the same way, but that they respect one another as human beings.

“We may never be completely equal. But we can reach understanding, agreement, mutual respect and treat one another as we ourselves would like to be treated.” For him, that is also at the heart of the relationship between Africa and Europe. An equal relationship does not begin with the illusion that all differences will disappear, but with the question of whether the other person’s knowledge, interests and dignity are taken equally seriously. And according to Iruh, that mirror emphatically needs to face both ways.

Towards the end of the conversation, he tells the story of someone who had sent him a message that very day asking whether he could send some money for Christmas. Iruh refused. What happens after Christmas, he asked in return. Why not think about starting a small business or another idea that could help you move forward yourself?



It brings him to an uncomfortable side of the same discussion. Challenging the white saviour complex is necessary, Iruh believes. But the conversation cannot end there. “We also need to address the culture of dependency and the begging mentality that sometimes exists on our side of the continent.”

That is precisely why he believes in different stories. He sees African filmmakers now producing images that make European viewers ask in surprise whether those modern houses really are in Nigeria, Ghana or Uganda. He sees a second generation of African Dutch people claiming their place far more naturally than their parents’ generation did. Young people who say: I was born here, I am Dutch and African, accept it.

And he does not see his own role changing any time soon. Through The Voice, his church and the Voice Achievers Award, he wants to make people visible while they are still alive, instead of waiting until after they have died to say beautiful things about them.

“We can tell our own stories, do things differently and recognise that we ourselves are achievers.” For Iruh, that is ultimately where changing perceptions begins. Not by replacing the old image of Africa or Europe with a new idealised one, but by being willing, on both sides, to reconsider the stories we have come to believe.





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Lebarty American Leadership Academy Lauded For Building Students With Strong Moral Values

The wife of the Speaker of the Oyo State House of Assembly, Olamidun Majekodunmi-Ogundoyin has stressed on the importance of building students with strong moral values

Text: Eubaldus Enahoro

The wife of the Speaker made the appeal during her visit to the American Leadership Academy in Benin city at the weekend

According to her, the vision should go beyond the physical structure and she commended the management of Lebarty American Leadership Academy for building students with strong moral values

There was excitement at the school as the students and teachers welcomed Olamidun Majekodunmi-Ogundoyin, wife of the Speaker of the Oyo State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Adebo Ogundoyin.

The visit brought together the school management, teachers and students, as the Speaker wife, toured the academy to see the world class structure built by the Proprietor of the school, Okenfe Aigbe Lebarty and took part in some of the activities by the students to welcome their visitor

She interacted with students and staff while observing activities across the academy.

In an interview, she expressed excitement at the growth of the academy, saying her vision goes beyond physical expansion and stressing the importance of building students with strong values and morals.

The Executive Director of Lebarty Enterprise, Pst. Mrs. Ovis Enahoro, Head of School, Binichukwu Ozuem, and students appreciated the visit and expressed optimism for continued support for the academy and its students.

The visit ended with the Speaker wife spending time with students and staff in a lively atmosphere.

Lebarty American Leadership Academy is located at No. 16 Ogiesoba Street, Idumwowa Quarters, Benin City, Edo State.



The wife of the Speaker of Oyo State House of Assembly, Olamidun Majekodunmi-Ogundoyin (Middle) with management, staff and students during her visit to the Lebarty American Leadership Academy in Benin City , Nigeria.

Legendary Actor, Olu Jacobs Dies At 84

Nigeria's globally acclaimed actor theatre arts practitioner, Oludotun Baiyewu Jacobs, popularly known as Olu Jacobs, has passed away at the age of 84.

His wife, multiple awards winning iconic actress Joke Silva, and son, Olusoji, announced his death in an Instagram post today Wednesday, September 16, 2026.

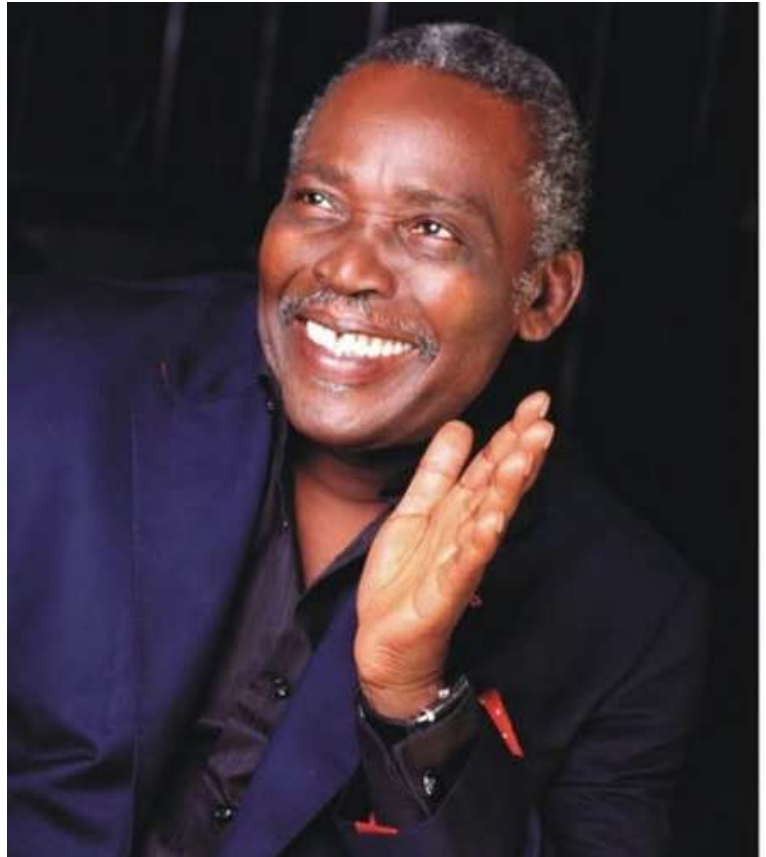
Silva paid tribute with a memorable photograph of the actor, and a public statement of his death from the family.

“It is with gratitude to God for a life well lived and fought that we announce the passing of our dear husband, father, grandfather, and uncle. The Lion of Lufodo.

“We call on all bloggers and social media influencers to respect our family's privacy at this time,” the statement informed.

The legendary Nigerian actor, more than an actor. He was a writer, stage and movie director, producer, arts and cultural ambassador.

Jacobs was one of Nigerian and African most esteemed and impactful actors, with an iconic trailblazing and pacesetting globally outstanding career in theatre, television and film production widely described as a reference point of excellence in Nigeria, Africa and worldwide.



Known for his exceptional professionalism, discipline and nonsense character, Jacobs was professionally trained at the famous London Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in England. After graduation, with unprecedented hard work and dedication, he became a leading figure in the British theater television and film industry, and Hollywood. When he came back in the 70s he tremendously excelled in Nollywood and was a doyen and mentor to so many actors with his uncompromised global standards, superlatively memorable performances. His uncanny contributions to theatre arts, television and the Nigerian film industry earned him his deserved national award of Member Of The Federal Republic, MFR.

Jacobs is survived by his wife, Joke Silva, and their two blessed sons.

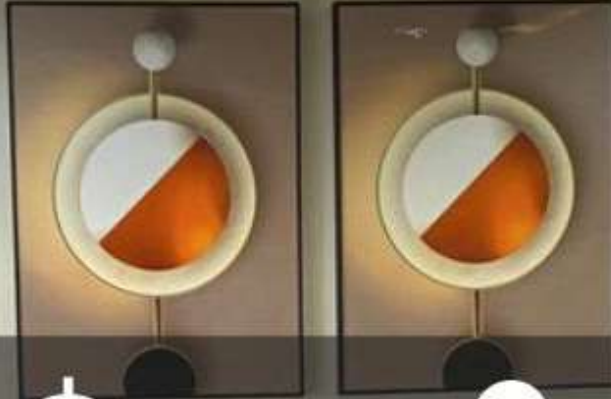
May his wonderful soul rest in perfect peace of God.



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NIGERIA IS TRANSFORMING AFRICA, ECONOMICALLY AND SOCIALLY

In this segment of the article I'll be using only one country for illustrations of the huge big brother role of Nigeria in African countries. Let's examine below the economic investment of Nigeria in Ghana. Nigeria is the number one investor country in Ghana out of all African countries followed by South Africa. A similar picture could be observed in most countries of the continent, where Nigeria is helping raise their economy through aggressive investments.

These are a list of a few Nigerian companies in Ghana.

1. Access Bank
2. Ecobank
3. Fidelity Bank
4. GT Bank
5. Zenith Bank
6. United Bank of Africa
7. Globacom
8. GiG logistics
9. Silverbird Galleria
10. Oando
11. Dangote Cement
12. Ovation magazine
13. Flutterwave
14. Plentiwaka
15. Remx Capital
16. Venture Garden
17. Multigate Solutions
18. Sendbox Software
19. Bento Technologies Instant Payment Solutions.
20. Scientellect DNA Diagnostic Centre
21. Eastern Quarries Ltd.
22. De Simone Ltd
23. Love Simon Series
24. Supermaritime Gh. Ltd.
25. Harley Reed Management Training
26. Monolo Plant Ltd.
27. Shopadollar
28. speed Technologies ltd
29. Waltergates Ltd.
30. Zomatek Engineering Ltd.
31. AB Bumps Ltd

NIGERIA CONTROLS THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY IN AFRICA

I recently saw the article below on the internet which further proves the place of Nigeria in the music and entertainment industry of Africa and beyond.

“A Nigerian singer Rema has surpassed 20 million monthly listeners on Spotify. He joins fellow Nigerian singer CKay as the second African artist to accomplish this milestone.

In October of 2021, CKay became the first African artist to garner over 30 million monthly listeners on the popular music streaming platform. The Edo state born musician from Benin-City, Nigeria is doing incredibly well”

Here are the Top 10 Spotify monthly listeners in Africa.

- 1) Rema - 20.1 million - Nigeria
- 2) Burna Boy - 18.7 million - Nigeria
- 3) Tems - 15.4 million - Nigeria
- 4) Ckay - 15.3 million - Nigeria
- 5) Wizkid - 8.8 million - Nigeria
- 6) Fireboy - 7.8 million - Nigeria
- 7) Soolking - 7.3 million - Algeria
- Oxlade - 5.4 million - Nigeria
- 9) Mr Eazi - 5.07 million - Nigeria
- 10) Amaarae - 5.05 million - Ghana

Apart from economic influence, the cultural and social impact of Nigeria on Africa is much stronger than the economic impact. Nigeria's music industry is pulling up their contemporaries all over Africa. The same thing can be said of the movie industry, it's so big that even in French speaking African countries, Nigerian accent or even pidgin could be heard from the locals. Simply put Nigeria is the United States Of America of Africa. Let's therefore stop denigrating our country for Christ's sake.

HOW NIGERIA STANDS IN AFRICA:

Nigeria is truly the giant of Africa. This is not just in term of population where every fifth black African is a Nigerian. Nigeria also controls a lot of the economic force on the continent, with 1/6 of the continent's total wealth belonging to Nigeria. In West Africa Nigeria controls 2/3 of the region's economy even though there are 15 countries there. What is even more impressive is that Nigeria is playing a huge role as a big brother to all countries of Africa.

1. Largest country in Africa by population
2. Largest movie industry in Africa
3. Largest democracy in Africa
4. Richest Black man
5. Richest African woman
6. Largest rice mill in Africa
7. Largest fertilizer plant in Africa
8. Largest oil refinery in Africa
9. Largest cement plant in Africa
10. Largest music industry in Africa
11. Fastest train in Africa
12. Longest subsea gas pipeline in Africa
13. Largest city by population
14. Largest news network in Africa
15. Largest pharmaceutical industry in Africa
16. Fastest woman in Africa
17. Longest concrete road in Africa
18. Most streamed musicians in Africa
19. Most awarded artist in Africa
20. Most valuable tech startup in Africa
21. Largest economy in Africa
22. Most tribes in Africa
23. Most languages in Africa
24. Largest university in Africa by area
25. Most accomplished writers in Africa

NIGERIA'S INFLUENCE CUTS ACROSS ALL SPHERES OF LIFE IN AFRICA.

A Cameroonian brother recently called me to thank me for putting out all the positive information and statistics on Nigeria. According to him Nigeria is the only reference point for the black man. Otherwise only North African countries will be there to talk about, which would have further cemented the notion that black peoples can never amount to anything in life. If you point to South Africa, they'll tell you it was built by whites. But to have so many Nigerians accomplished so much in all spheres is encouraging to our fellow Africans.

Another brother from East Africa told me that in most countries in East Africa, most successful and richest people are normally Indians or Arabs. Making them to think that they don't belong even in their own country. So when they, the black Africans in East Africa began to see how comfortable Nigerians are with being the best, they are now bold to challenge the Arabs and Indians in their countries.

The chat below helps illustrates this dominant role of Nigeria and Nigerians in all areas of endeavours, especially when it's seen in comparison to other countries of the continent.

- 1) Richest man in Africa and richest black man in the world - Aliko Dangote - Nigerian \$18.3 billion.
- 2) Richest woman in Africa - Folorunsho Alakija - Nigerian \$1 billion.
- 3) Richest male footballer in Africa - Samuel Eto'o - Cameroonian \$95 million.
- 4) Richest female footballer in Africa - Asisat Oshoala - Nigerian \$3 million.
- 5) Richest pastor in Africa - Bishop David Oyedipo - Nigerian \$200 million.
- 6) Richest male musician - Youssou N'Dour - Senegalese \$140 million.
- 7) Richest female musician in Africa - Asa - Nigerian \$28 million
- Richest Comedian in Africa - Trevor Noah - South African \$100 million
- 9) Richest leader in Africa - Mohammed VI of Morocco - Moroccan \$10 billion



- 10) Richest doctor in Africa - Ambrose Bryant Chukwueloka Orjiako – Nigerian \$1.2 billion
- 11) Richest lawyer in Africa - Adewale Tinubu - Nigerian \$700 million
- 12) Richest Basketballer in Africa - Hakeem Olajuwon - Nigerian \$300 million
- 13) Richest stock exchange in Africa - Johannesburg stock exchange - South Africa -\$1.3 trillion
- 14) Richest African nation by nominal GDP - \$610 billion - Nigeria
- 15) Richest city in Africa - Nigeria \$210 billion
- 16) Richest UFC fighter in Africa - Kamaru Usman - Nigerian \$3 million
- 17) Richest boxer in Africa - Anthony Joshua - Nigerian \$80 million
- 18) Richest DJ in Africa - DJ black coffee - South African \$60 million
- 19) Richest female DJ in Africa - DJ Cuppy - Nigerian \$3.5 million
- 20) Richest actress in Africa - Charlize Theron - South Africa \$160 million
- 21) Richest music producer in Africa - Don Jazy - Nigerian \$18.5 million

NIGERIAN ECONOMY IS 24th LARGEST IN THE WORLD (GDP by PPP):

Wait a minute how many times did you ever hear that Nigerian economy is one of the top world economies. If you listen to Nigerians too much you might even come to the conclusion that Nigeria is the worse place with the world's worse economy.

Yes, our per capital income is still nothing to write home about but you need to build the economy before the economy could produce for you a higher GDP per capita. Right now Nigeria's GDP per purchasing power parity is number 24 in the world. By nominal GDP we are number 27th economy in the world. Yes some platform will put Nigeria only as 27th position GDP(PPP), and 31st position GDP nominal. Whatever the true figures are, my point remains that Nigeria must be credited for the progress we have made as a nation.

I strongly believe in the next 10 years we will emerge as a top 20 economy in the world. Bear in mind that there are close to 200 countries in the world and Nigeria is in number 24, in my opinion it isn't the worst of place to be. We also stand a good chance to become one of the top 10 economies of the world in 20 years. This will mean that by the time we are a 100 years after independence we as a country will be one of the 10 richest countries in the whole world. Friends, believe me this is not bad when we speak in terms of age of countries. The next few paragraphs you'll be reading next is copied straight out of Wikipedia under the caption "Economy Of Nigeria"



“The Economy of Nigeria is a middle-income, mixed economy and emerging market with expanding manufacturing, financial, service, communications, technology, and entertainment sectors. It is ranked as the 27th-largest economy in the world in terms of nominal GDP, and the 24th-largest in terms of purchasing power parity and the largest Sub Saharan Africa’s economy. Nigeria has the largest economy in Africa. The country’s re-emergent manufacturing sector became the largest on the continent in 2013, and it produces a large proportion of goods and services for the region of West Africa. In addition, the debt-to-GDP ratio.

Nigerian GDP at purchasing power parity (PPP) has almost tripled from \$170 billion in 2000 to \$451 billion in 2012, though estimates of the size of the informal sector (which is not included in official figures) put the actual numbers closer to \$630 billion. Subsequently, the GDP per capita doubled from \$1400 per person in 2000 to an estimated \$2,800 per person in 2012. Again, with the inclusion of the informal sector, it is estimated that GDP per capita hovers around \$3,900 per person. The country’s population increased from 120 million in 2000 to 160 million in 2010. The GDP figures were to be revised upwards by as much as 80% when metrics were to be recalculated after the rebasing of its economy in April 2014.

Although oil revenues contributed 2/3 of state revenues, oil only contributes about 9% to the GDP. Nigeria produces only about 2.7% of the world’s oil supply. Although the petroleum sector is important, as government revenues still heavily rely on this sector, it remains a small part of the country’s overall economy.

The largely subsistence agricultural sector has not kept up with the country’s rapid population growth. Nigeria was once a large net exporter of food, but currently imports some of its food products. Mechanization has led to a resurgence in the manufacturing and exporting of food products, and there was consequently a move towards food sufficiency. In 2006, Nigeria came to an agreement with the Paris Club to buy back the bulk of its owed debts from them, in exchange for a cash payment of roughly US\$12 billion.

According to a Citigroup report published in February 2011, Nigeria would have the highest average GDP growth in the world between 2010 and 2050. Nigeria is one of two countries from Africa among the 11 Global Growth Generators countries.”



*This piece was written by
Dr. Sunday Adelaja*

NIGERIA IS THE YOUNGEST MOST SUCCESSFUL COUNTRY IN THE WORLD

Nigeria is the youngest Most Successful Nation in the world. What that means is of the 23 countries that are ahead of us in economic growth of the GDP none is younger than Nigeria. As a matter of fact Nigeria is actually doing better than many countries which have long been independent before her. Nigerian Economy Bigger Than That Of: Ireland, Israel, Norway, UAE, Denmark, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Finland, Romania, Ukraine, New Zealand, Greece, Hungary, Austria, Argentina etc

Check this out, the age of most successful countries in our world. I’m bringing these statistics here so Nigerians will stop judging their country so harshly. Nations are never built overnight. Years, decades and centuries are needed to build great nations. Compare to most nations in our world our country is not doing badly at all. In fact we are the most successful youngest country in the world. Please compare the age of these nations below to that of Nigeria.

World's Largest Economies And Their Age.

- 1. United States 246 years**
- 2. China Over 5,000 years.**
- 3. Japan 30,000 years**
- 4. Germany since 962 AD.**
- 5. India 30,000 years**
- 6. United Kingdom 9.000 years**
- 7. France 1.035 years**
- 8. Italy 3,000 years**
- 9. Brazil 200 years**
- 10. Canada 161 years old**
- 11. Russia 1160years**
- 12. South Korea 78 years**

- 13. Australia 120 years**
- 14. Spain 555 years**
- 15. Mexico over 200 years**
- 16. Indonesia over 50,000 years**
- 17. Netherlands 37,000 years**
- 18. Saudi Arabia 89 years**
- 19. Turkey over 4,000 years**
- 20. Switzerland 173 years**
- 21. Poland 994 years**
- 22. Thailand 20,000 years**
- 23. Sweden 1000 years**
- 24. Belgium 191 years**
- 25. Nigeria 62 years**

By Dr. Sunday Adelaja



Zakaria El Hamel: A Champion Of Human Rights And Peace In Morocco

By Mohamed Nizar

Zakaria El Hamel is a prominent human rights activist from Morocco. He comes from a family of human rights activists and has been dedicated to promoting peace, understanding, and respect among different cultures and religions. Zakaria founded “Youth for Peace and Dialogue Between Cultures” in Oujda in 2005, aiming to bring young people from diverse backgrounds together to serve their communities.

He has been actively involved in various initiatives to uphold human rights, including participating in the Youth Summit for Human Rights International at the United Nations in Geneva. **Zakaria** collaborates with national and international human rights groups to promote intercultural action and has worked with religious leaders from different faiths to foster dialogue and understanding.

Zakaria El Hamel's efforts have been recognized through various awards and distinctions for his commitment to peace, human rights, and interfaith harmony. He is a member of the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Coalition for the International Criminal Court. His work has been featured in different platforms, highlighting his advocacy for human rights issues and his contributions to creating a culture of tolerance and peace in Morocco.

Zakaria El Hamel Leads National Movement for Human Rights in Post-Oppression Morocco

As Morocco emerges from nearly four decades of authoritarian rule, a new generation of leaders is stepping forward to champion human rights, peace, and civic responsibility. At the forefront of this national awakening is Zakaria El Hamel, a prominent youth activist and human rights advocate who is leading a transformative movement to educate and empower Moroccan citizens on their fundamental freedoms.

Born during one of the darkest chapters in Moroccan history, Zakaria El Hamel is the son of a human rights activist who instilled in him the values of justice, courage, and social responsibility. Growing up amid government repression, torture, and silencing of dissent, Zakaria witnessed firsthand the consequences of political defiance.

Determined to change the status quo, he pursued legal studies and committed himself to the advancement of human rights in his country.

In partnership with Youth for Human Rights International, Zakaria has conducted extensive human rights education campaigns across Morocco, reaching hundreds of thousands of people. His initiatives focus on raising awareness, particularly among youth, about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the importance of protecting freedoms at every institutional level.

Zakaria is the founder and president of Youth for Peace and Dialogue in Morocco, a civil society organization that promotes intercultural dialogue, peaceful coexistence, and youth leadership. Through this platform, he has built bridges between diverse communities, fostered democratic participation, and inspired a generation to stand up for justice and peace.

“Morocco is turning a page in its history,” says Zakaria. “But true progress depends on education, civic

engagement, and a shared commitment to human dignity. My mission is to ensure that no voice is silenced, and no right is forgotten.”

Zakaria El Hamel continues to be recognized internationally for his work in youth empowerment, conflict resolution, and human rights education. His vision is to see Morocco become a model for democratic development in the region, driven by an informed and engaged population by Making Human Rights a Reality in Morocco!



...Continued on Page 62

From Morocco to the World: Zakaria El Hamel's Message of Peace Reaches 240 Countries

The Voices for Humanity episode featuring Oujda's own Zakaria El Hamel has reached an extraordinary 240 countries and territories- an achievement that speaks volumes about the universal resonance of his message of peace and interfaith dialogue. Voices for Humanity, a television series offers a global stage for activists and humanitarians to share their work.

For Mr. El Hamel whose journey began in Oujda with the founding of Youth for Peace and Dialogue Between Cultures- this worldwide broadcast is more than recognition; it's a milestone in transforming local action into global inspiration.

This international exposure achieves three powerful outcomes:

Globalizes a Local Story: Grassroots peace building efforts born in Oujda are now presented as a model for the world, proving that change can start anywhere and inspire everywhere.

Amplifies the Message: His core belief that dialogue among youth of different faiths is the most powerful weapon against extremism- now reaches millions across cultural and national boundaries.

Puts Morocco on the Map for Peace: Beyond geography, it positions the city as a beacon of tolerance and proactive engagement.

With this broadcast, Zakaria El Hamel has become a true global ambassador for Moroccan values of dialogue, tolerance, and peace. It's a vivid reminder that a single voice, rooted in community, can echo across the entire planet.

Zakaria El Hamel became a human rights activist largely influenced by his upbringing within a family of human rights activists and his personal experiences living under a regime characterized by systematic government oppression. During his childhood, El Hamel witnessed firsthand the abuses committed against Moroccan citizens, which included acts of political defiance being met with imprisonment, torture, or even death.

These observations, combined with his exposure to ideas of equality and religious diversity at a young age, motivated El Hamel to follow in his father's footsteps and dedicate himself to protecting and promoting human rights

Additionally, El Hamel found inspiration in the transition away from the previous oppressive regime towards a new era of hope, as a new king came to power, signaling the possibility of positive changes for Morocco

This shift provided El Hamel with renewed optimism and motivation to contribute to building a society grounded in human dignity and respect for fundamental rights.





What inspired Zakaria El Hamel to become a human rights activist?

Zakaria El Hamel is leading a national movement in Morocco to bring human rights awareness to the country, especially as it emerges from decades of oppressive government rule characterized by torture, forced disappearances, and unlawful imprisonment.

This movement focuses on educating Moroccans about the importance of upholding human rights at all levels of society and institutions. Zakaria's work aims to promote dialogue, understanding, and respect among the population by engaging young people from diverse backgrounds in serving their communities and fostering a culture of tolerance and peace.

Zakaria's inspiration to become a human rights activist comes from his father, who was also a human rights activist, and his belief in the universality of human rights and faith in making the world a better place.

What are some of the challenges that zakaria el Hamel has faced in engaging the youth in Morocco?

Zakaria El Hamel has faced several challenges in engaging the youth in Morocco, including:

Limited resources and professionalism: Civil society organizations, including those led by El Hamel, often lack sufficient resources and professional capacity, hindering their ability to effectively engage and mobilize youth.

Restrictions on freedom of expression: In Morocco, there have been instances of harassment, arrest, and imprisonment of activists, journalists, bloggers, and artists for peacefully expressing their views, creating a climate of fear that may deter youth from engaging in activism.

Influence on decision-makers: Youth in Morocco face challenges in influencing decision-makers due to weak involvement in formal institutional politics and a lack of means to impact policy decisions effectively.

Centralization of power: The centralization of power in Morocco poses a challenge to civil society organizations like El Hamel's in their efforts to bring about genuine democratic processes and social change.

Security concerns: Spaces for political expression may face increased restrictions under the pretext of security concerns, limiting the opportunities for youth to engage in activism and advocacy.

Despite these challenges, **Zakaria El Hamel** continues his work to empower and educate the youth in Morocco about human rights, peace building, and intercultural understanding, aiming to inspire a new generation to stand up for peace and human rights in a region marked by turbulence and challenges.



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Sadio Mané Is Investing \$20 Million Of His Own Money In A Mango Factory In His Village

By Ikeoluwa Ogungbange

Sadio Mané laid the foundation stone for SM10 Agro at Bambali on Sept. 19, a 500-hectare agro-industrial park he is funding himself.

Sadio Mané laid the foundation stone on Saturday, Sept. 19 for an agro-industrial park at Bambali, the village in southern Senegal where he was born, and he is paying for all of it himself.

SM10 Agro will cost 11.7 billion CFA francs, about \$20 million, which Mané says comes entirely from his own funds. Construction is expected to take 18 months.

The plan covers 500 hectares of orchards, four processing units and capacity to handle 8,500 tonnes a year, with more than 1,000 direct jobs at startup. A training centre and a research operation sit alongside the factories.

Mangoes are the point.

Bambali sits in Moyenne-Casamance, where the trees produce heavily and a substantial part of the crop rots every year because there is nowhere to store it and nobody to sell it to. Mané intends to process the fruit into purée, dried mango and mango butter for domestic sale and export, with guava alongside it.

"I want the fruits of the land to stay here," he said.

What separates this from what he has done before is that it is meant to make money. Mané has funded a mosque, a school, a hospital and a petrol station in Bambali over the past decade, and opened a bakery last November. He told reporters in Dakar this month that he now wants to go beyond supporting the community and start creating production, work and value in it.

He is 34 and retired from the Africa Cup of Nations after the 2025 tournament, having scored 52 goals for Senegal, more than anyone else, and provided 31 assists, also more than anyone else. He finished second in the 2022 Ballon d'Or and won the Socrates Prize the same year, awarded for social work rather than football.

He played for Liverpool and Bayern Munich before moving to Saudi Arabia.

Senegalese coverage this week placed him at the top of a list of five domestic investors putting serious money into agriculture, alongside Sedima, the poultry and agribusiness group founded by Babacar Ngom, the chemical producer Industries Chimiques du Sénégal, the sovereign fund Fonsis and the rice operation Ciriz.

The mix of a footballer, a family conglomerate, an industrial group and a state fund is roughly what Senegalese agriculture now runs on.



Cameroon Wins First WAFCON Trophy, Sweeps Individual Titles

The Cameroonian Female National team, the "Indomitable Lionesses" made history on Sunday night by winning her first ever Women's Africa Cup of Nations, WAFCON. The gallant Lionesses did it in a grand style after three abortive final attempts with a sound 3- 0 beating of Malawian team in the final to win their debut Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) trophy with pride and celebration.

The title hungry Cameroonian team, who earlier defeated Nigeria, the ten-times winning defending Champions and top favourites, 2025 finalist and host nation, Morocco, dominated the game from the beginning. Their dominance was well rewarded as very prosperous forward Marie Ngah Manga scored two beautiful goals in the first half to boost the team's hope of lifting the trophy. As expected very talented PSG forward Naomi Eto sealed their victory with an exceptional third goal for Cameroon.

Although, the very skillful Malawian team with outstanding striker, Temwa Chawinga 'troubled' the Cameroon with her fast runs, dribbles and surprise shots in first half, but the excellent Lionesses goalkeeper Michael Bihina and defence were able to stop them. The Cameroonian ladies remarkably ended the final in a dominant first-half to totally out display their opponent who couldn't match their fire power all departments of the explosive game.

Having worked extra hard to settle the match in the first half, the Cameroonian ladies didn't do much in the second half. Although they scored what should have been the fourth goal in the second half, but it was ruled out for offside. However, the Cameroonian triumph was highly expected as the newly crowned WAFCON Champions classically defeated the daring Nigerian team and Moroccan team, two of the tournament favourites, and finalists in the last keenly contested edition in the quarter and semi finals stages.

Notwithstanding, the giant killers and first time debutante Malawi, should be appreciated and applauded for a memorable outing. it was no doubt a historically memorable outing for the young team who reached their first-ever final with epochal and mind blowing upsetting results. They first shook the globe with their 2-3 defeat of Nigeria in their opening match. They also sent home Zambia, an African women football powerhouse and others to make it to their historic



WAFCON final. Notably, Cameroon should congratulate the wonderful wonderful and selfless working partnership of Marie Ngah Manga. Naomi Eto and Marie Ngah Manga for their landmark Malawian defeat at the final.

At end of the historic game, 2026 WAFCON Champions also bagged most of the outstanding individual awards of the Championship. The Best Footballer of the Tournament Award aka TotalEnergies Woman of the Competition, was won by Monique Ngock. The Best Goalkeeper Award aka Golden Gloves Award went to the excellent Lionesses goalkeeper, Michael Bihina. While Malawian impressive striker, Temwa Chawinga received her deserved Golden Boots Award as the top scorer of the Championship with five goals. Third placed Algeria Female National team, incredibly defeated the Morocco, host nation to receive the bronze Medals, also smiled home with the "Fair Play Award.".

By ISAAC DANIEL

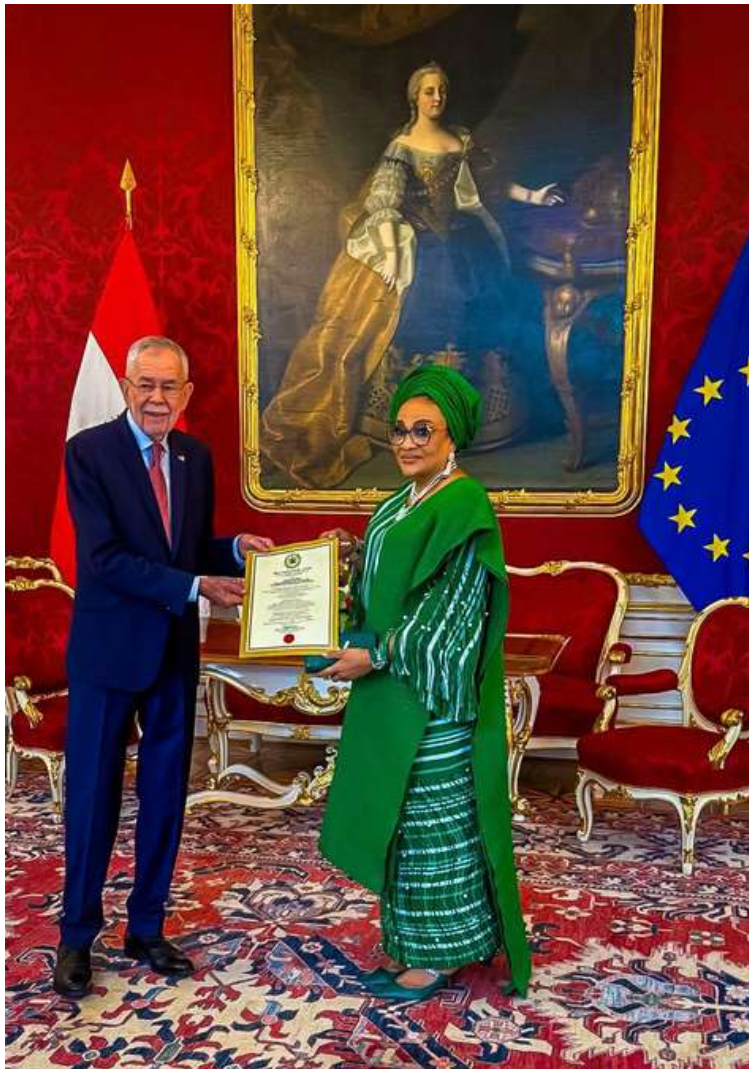
H.E. Ambassador Florence Ajimobi Presents Her Letters Of Credence To Austria's President.

Dr. Florence Ajimobi formally commenced her duties as Nigeria's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of Austria following the presentation of her Letters of Credence to His Excellency Dr. Alexander Van der Bellen, Federal President of the Republic of Austria.

The Executive Chairman of the Nigeria Revenue Service (NRS), Zacch A. Adedeji PhD, and His Royal Majesty Oba Francis Alao, the Olugbon of Orile Igbon, were among the distinguished guests present at the occasion.

The diplomatic ceremony marked an important milestone in Nigeria's representation in Austria and reaffirmed the enduring ties between Nigeria and Austria.

Congratulations, Ambassador Dr. Florence Ajimobi.





Ngetich Breaks World Record In Women-Only Half Marathon At World Athletics Road Running Championships

The previous record in the women-only half-marathon was set by Peres Jepchirchir, another Kenyan, when she won the World Half Marathon title in 2020. Kenya's Agnes Ngetich took a second off the women-only half-marathon world record when she won the World Athletics Road Running Championships in Copenhagen on Sunday, stopping the clock at one hour, five minutes and 15 seconds. Ngetich, who also broke the women-only 10 km world record last year, pushed to the front from the outset on a sunny morning in the Danish capital and led till the end, finishing 50 seconds before compatriot Veronica Loleo, who came in second.

The overall women's half-marathon world record is held by Ethiopia's Letesenbet Gidey, who clocked 1:02:52 in 2021. Sunday's win was the latest major title this year for the 25-year-old Ngetich, who also won the team half marathon in Copenhagen and the World Cross Country Championships in January.





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