

Africa Briefs

DR Congo President Tshisekedi Brings the New Paradigm to AU

For the next year, the African Union (AU) will be led by a man who came to power as a reformer in 2018, Democratic Republic of Congo's President Felix Tshisekedi. Elected by the heads of state and government of the AU, he replaced outgoing chairman, South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa, on February 6.

On coming to power in January 2019, Tshisekedi was initially thwarted in breaking with the past, and was forced into a "power-sharing" arrangement with allies of former President Joseph Kabila.

Tshisekedi took on the challenge of the violence-plagued eastern region (bordering Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi), and eventually produced a peace accord in which 70 armed groups agreed to lay down arms on October 3, 2020. Then DR Congo and Uganda quickly agreed to a program of road building in the region.

In December, the President and his legislative allies in the Heading for Change (CACH) and other parties freed themselves from the grip of the past, taking control of both chambers from the Kabila-led party, a process that culminated in the resignation of the prime minister, a remaining Kabila ally, on January 29, after a no confidence vote.

On January 6, DR Congo became the 45th African country to join the Belt and Road Initiative, with China further agreeing to cancel \$28 million of debt, and offering an additional \$17 million for development projects.

Nigeria Faces Renewed Terror Surge as London Sees 'Failed State'

On January 27, Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari demanded the "immediate resignation" of the chiefs of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, and the Chief of Defense Staff, declaring that the country was in a "state of emergency." A former Army general himself, Buhari assured his chosen replacements of his full support. The country is currently facing a renewed terror threat as jihadist forces from the northeast are now pushing into the heart of the nation.

This comes in the wake of a December 22, 2020 *Financial Times* article with the blaring headline, "Nigeria at Risk of Becoming a Failed State," which declared that "Africa's most populous country is teetering on the brink." This unusually blunt "prophecy" from the country's former imperial oppressors provoked a rare, sharp response directly from the President, who declared on December 24 that "*a procured offshore medium*" was behind efforts "to sow seeds of discord and discontent in the country."

Beginning last October, Nigeria's entrenched color revolution networks had been mobilized with the "End SARS" protests, which targeted an element of the national police force, a month-long action that climaxed in a confrontation in which some 20 demonstrators were killed on October 20, with protest leaders immediately blaming the Army.

'Vaccine Hoarding' Leaves Africa, Entire World at Risk

UN Secretary-General António Guterres held a press conference on

January 28 to caution against "vaccine hoarding," later tweeting: "More than 70 million doses have been administered, less than 20,000 of these on the African continent. A global immunity gap puts everyone at risk." While South Africa has now received the continent's first one million doses of vaccine from AstraZeneca in India, the country has been forced to halt its distribution, after the company admitted it was virtually ineffective against the new variant of the COVID-19 virus now spreading around the country, and the world.

A February 4 report from London-based Oxfam has noted that of the 108 million people vaccinated as of that date, only 4% of total vaccinations have been in developing countries, the vast majority of which have been in India. "Rich countries have bought up enough doses to vaccinate their populations three times over, leaving developing countries to compete for the leftovers," Oxfam said, and in Africa, "Guinea has been able to vaccinate [only] 55 people. Unless action is taken, only one in ten people will be vaccinated by the end of the year in many developing countries."

Museveni Orders Shut-Down of 'Democracy' NGO

Newly re-elected Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has suspended indefinitely the operating license of the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF), accusing it of election interference ("meddling") by directing funds to the opposition candidate, Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, a musician turned activist, better known by his stage name, Bobi Wine. DGF is an Europe-based NGO, funded by the

governments of Denmark, Ireland, Austria, UK, Sweden, Norway and the European Union, which has been operating in Uganda since 2011, disbursing “huge lump sums of funds”—in the words of one opposition journalist—to regional human rights organizations.

Museveni’s order comes amid a larger crackdown on social media during the election campaign, when the President shut down the internet for five days preceding the January 14 election, alleging meddling by social media monopolies Facebook and Twitter. DGF remains suspended pending a review by the cabinet and the installation of a new oversight board.

S&P Issues ‘Warning’ on Mozambique, Citing ‘Climate Risk’

Securities rating agency S&P Global Ratings, formerly Standard & Poor’s, has issued a “warning” on the creditworthiness of Mozambique, citing the Global Climate Risk Index (GCRI), a rating of the creditworthiness of governments and nations based on so-called climate criteria. The GCRI has been issued for 15 years by the climate-change NGO, Germanwatch, but this is possibly the first time its ratings have been used as a credit rating instrument by a financial institution.

Mozambique is one of the nine poorest countries in Africa. Located on the Indian Ocean, it is prone to flooding and wind damage from cyclones that routinely devastate the region.

S&P’s application of the GCRI to Mozambique is consistent with the Green Reset, which prioritizes ESG ratings—environmental, social, governance—as a primary concern for corporate “health.” If extended to

other countries, it will have devastating effects on the finances of already pandemic-stressed institutions.

Poor as it is, Mozambique has vast natural gas deposits, onshore and offshore, discovered in and since 2010, which when developed will put Mozambique among the world’s top ten sources.

African Development Bank Joins Great Reset

The African Development Bank (AfDB) announced on January 25 the launch of the Africa Adaptation Acceleration Program, at the Global Center for Adaptation (GCA) summit, a partner with the AfDB in the effort. “Our ambition is bold,” said AfDB President Akinwumi Adesina, “to galvanize climate resilience actions; support countries to accelerate and scale up climate adaptation and resilience; and mobilize financing at scale for climate adaptation in Africa.” It is an ambition to capitulate to the de-industrialization and de-population policies of the British-led Green New Deal, the “Great Reset” announced at the Davos World Economic Forum last month.

South Africa Joins World Logistics Passport

South Africa, India and Indonesia are the newest members of the Dubai-based World Logistics Passport (WLP), joining Colombia, Senegal, Kazakhstan, Brazil, Uruguay and WLP’s initial sponsor, the United Arab Emirates. Created in 2019, the WLP is fast becoming the unofficial trade network of the developing nations.

As described on its website, the WLP “creates opportunities for business and governments to actively im-

prove existing trading routes, and develop new ones, through the world’s first logistics loyalty program for freight forwarders and traders.” Through its “loyalty program” the WLP seeks to unite all phases of global trade—from local producers to international transporters—into an interdependent network based on an “incentive/reward” system.

The Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce has signed a framework agreement with the WLP, reports *Engineering News*, adding that “joining the WLP is considered a key enabler of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement.”

High-Quality Coking Coal Industry Expands, Bucks Green Reset

Two mines, one in South Africa, the other in Zimbabwe, are proceeding with planned developments for mining high-quality “hard” coking coal. In January, Contango Holdings PLC stated it was on schedule to open its mine in Lubu, Zimbabwe this month, adding that other multi-nationals are considering building coal processing facilities, depending on the quality. It would be a major boost for Zimbabwe.

In South Africa, MC Mining has just been granted its third permit for its Mopane project in Limpopo Province in the north, an area targeted for development of the energy and metallurgical industries within the nascent Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone.

While the coal industry, and especially coal-fired power plants in Africa, have become a target of financial strangulation through the “sustainability” requirements of the Great Reset, the demand for metallurgical coal—led by China, world’s largest steel producer—remains high.