

# THE C RIER

N. 14 N.E. – NOVEMBER DECEMBER 2009  
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THE MAGAZINE OF AFRICA - CARIBBEAN - PACIFIC & EUROPEAN UNION COOPERATION AND RELATIONS

REPORT

## Seychelles Social security under the sun

DOSSIER

## ACP and EU move jointly on science

DISCOVERING EUROPE

## Shannon Irish history repeats itself

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# THE COURIER

N. 14 N.E. – NOVEMBER DECEMBER 2009

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Marie-Martine Buckens

# Jerzy Buzek,

## the new President of the European Parliament

### “Human dimension of EPAs must be strengthened”



Jerzy Buzek.  
© EP

*In this period of economic crisis, how can the European Parliament keep the European integration project moving forward?*

Hard times always bring out new challenges, and of course in an economic crisis the populations of all countries are tempted to look after their own national interest. Fortunately, in the EU, we have a huge advantage because we have the most advanced system of regional integration in the world. It is not possible now to roll back the policies and institutional structures that hold this in place. But in the light of the economic and financial crisis, the EU institutions and their leaders have a special responsibility to make sure no one forgets the huge value of integration as the main motor for wealth creation. I am making sure the European Parliament keeps this key issue at the top of its agenda.

The people of Ireland showed us the way clearly. As they saw their “Celtic tiger” falter in the global economic storm, they put their faith in the European model and voted decisively in favour of the Lisbon Treaty. As soon as the

remaining pieces fall into place, the EU will have a new, more flexible decision-making structure allowing us to push forward to new levels of integration and cooperation both within the EU and with our partners around the world, especially our old friends in the ACP Group.

*Cooperation between the European Union and the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific countries is evolving. The two parties are trying to conclude new Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) while reviewing at midterm the Cotonou Agreement. What is your point of view on this evolution, as President of the European Parliament, but also as a former member of Solidarnosc and as a Christian?*

For the European Parliament, and for me as its President, it is especially important to reinforce the role of the parliamentary dimension of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement through its current developments. ACP and EU parliamentarians have a long history of solving problems together in the Joint Parliamentary Assembly, and this is especially important during these turbulent times. As the Economic Partnership

Agreements are negotiated with the ACP regions, it is vital to make sure parliamentarians can properly supervise the process. The revision of Cotonou offers an ideal opportunity to enshrine this feature with specific provisions to safeguard the JPA as a whole and to promote the regional parliamentary dimension as well.

At a more personal level, I am especially keen for the negotiations to strengthen the human dimension of these economic agreements. We have to help ACP countries work to improve the rights of workers, women and children (don't forget that I was a trade union activist in Solidarity in Poland!) Moreover, as a committed Christian, I have to say that the concept of regional integration must not take precedence over the religious and cultural rights of ACP citizens, whose traditions and beliefs must be respected throughout this process.

*More specifically, what do you as a scientist think about the Strategic Partnership between the EU and the African Union which, for the first time, contains a specific partnership in science? What should, in your view, the priorities for such a partnership be?*

The great novelty of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership is that it goes beyond traditional development aid, or should I say, it takes a more comprehensive approach to achieve development. For the EP poverty eradication should remain the ultimate goal of the partnership. I see the partnership on science as a new tool for development as it broadens the areas of cooperation to a field of the greatest interest for Africa. By supporting research in Africa, for Africa and by African scientists, we give the continent the means to have research efforts made in areas which are useful to its people. We all know the case of medicines: our research departments, public or even more private, do not take sufficiently into account the diseases which affect poor people in poor countries. I am happy to see that research on water and food security is currently the key priority. This is a very good start. I also hope that the partnership will have links with other programmes as Erasmus Mundus and the forthcoming Nyerere programme (on university exchanges and twinning between Africa and the EU) in order to have many scientists and students of science taking part in them.



Joyce van Genderen-Naar

# “Uganda is landlocked and transport is key”

*Uganda's Ambassador to the EU, H.E. Stephen T.K. Katenta-Apuli, says there's much work ahead to re-build rail and road connections which are vital to his land-locked country of 31.9 million citizens, the wider East African region and beyond. The recently launched EU-Africa transport programme is attempting to connect the Mediterranean EU and Africa.*

The European Commission lays out its plans to connect the Trans-European and African networks in its June 2009 Communication on strengthening African-European cooperation in the transport and infrastructure sectors ([http://ec.europa.eu/transport/international/regional\\_cooperation/africa\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/international/regional_cooperation/africa_en.htm)). Some €4.5bn of funding for the transport programme has been earmarked under the 10th European Development Fund (2008-2013).

There is a mammoth task ahead to build a common map for transport infrastructure. Africa is the continent where transport costs are the highest in the world, where the road density is low, the rail network is poorly interconnected (especially in Western and Central Africa; more than fifteen countries in Africa do not have railways at all), African airports do not have enough passenger capacity and the African maritime fleet is old. This situation affects the economy of African countries, their development, health, education and employment.

“What networks in Africa? There are no networks in Africa and no connections between roads. So if you want to connect networks, you have to develop the clusters in strategic parts of Africa first and then make the connections between the countries, preferably between countries that are regionally linked together, in Eastern, Central, Western and Southern Africa. We have a Northern corridor and a Central line and we want to develop the already existing network between Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania and interconnect them”, said Ambassador Katenta.

His country has ambitions firstly to renovate its railways which are much in the same state as in colonial times. “Uganda is a landlocked country and transport is key. We need good functioning railways, but our trains still function the way they did in the old colonial system, cities were and still are connected to the coast and there is no interconnection between cities, where most economic activities take place. The railways exist on one line instead of two, which is not efficient, time consuming and not safe. When the British wanted to build a railway from Mombasa (Kenya) to Kampala (Uganda), people thought it was a crazy idea and called it ‘the Lunatic Express’”, said the Ambassador.

“It functioned through the centuries, but it is a very old line now that should be repaired

and replaced by a new railway, creating two lines, in two directions, with wider gauge for more safety and electric or diesel electric engines, not the old locomotives and lorries we still have. Furthermore, the railways need to connect our ports with the hinterland, ports that need to be modernised. We are planning a railway to connect Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan”, he said.

## > Construction armies

“We will use the Ugandan and Kenyan armies to construct the Mombasa – Kampala line if we fail to get investors. Soldiers are a much better suited work force to do infrastructure”, he explained. “The soldiers have certain skills; they know the country very well. This is also a way to change their image and to make them useful to their communities, while learning skills and earning money. We could work with other countries and gain more trust towards each other while working on infrastructure. All African countries should have their own Army Corps of Engineers.”

Talking about the way Europe could be linked to Africa via the Straits of Gibraltar, the Ambassador said that a tunnel from Gibraltar to Africa would be an engineering challenge because of the depth of the water. “It is only eight miles, less than the Channel between the UK and France, which is 20 miles, but the conditions are



Stephen T.K. Katenta-Apuli  
© Debra Percival 2009

more difficult due to the strong undercurrents. A tunnel or a bridge linking Europe to Africa is not the only option. Why not look at the experience in Uganda, a land of many lakes (Lake Victoria and Nile basin, Lake Kyoga, Lake Albert, Lake Edward, Lake George), where wagon ferries are used as an efficient transport system for goods and passenger traffic”.

As for the €4.5bn sum so far pledged under the 10th EDF, Ambassador Katenta said it would be insufficient for all the work to be done in Africa. He suggests that a profitable use of the money would be to set up a guarantee fund to attract investors.

## Keywords

H.E. Stephen T.K. Katenta-Apuli; Uganda, Kenya; Strait of Gibraltar; road; rail; Joyce van Genderen-Naar.



Victoria Market on Sunday (officially named Sir Selwyn Clarke Market), Mahé, Seychelles. © Hegel Goutier



## The resurgence of science in Africa



Greater wisdom would suggest we should teach the poor how to fish rather than give them fish. Today, with greater generosity than before, it would advocate helping them to obtain the technology and means to build fleets of fishing boats capable of competing with others operating in their waters. This is, of course, a flight of fancy.

All the same, cooperation between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, as well as their collaboration in the field of science and technology, seems to have stepped up a gear in recent times. It now appears to be a more balanced cooperation between partners.

Scientific cooperation has been one of the main priorities in relations between Europe and Africa since the end of 2007. Eight joint strategies were agreed in Lisbon at the EU-Africa Summit in December of that year including one on science, information society and space, which, inter alia, created a number of researcher networks. The fact that the EU's framework programme for research and development recently called for proposals without positive discrimination in favour of African organizations highlights the credibility they have gained. Moreover, the World Economic Forum's 2009-2010 global competitiveness report commends the qualities of public-private sector research networks in countries such as South Africa and Kenya.

UNESCO believes countries like South Africa, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya and Zimbabwe possess real scientific research potential, not to mention Nigeria, which, despite losing ground in this area, is still

regarded as a major player for the future. Nigeria has 95 universities and around 10 technical institutes. More importantly, in 2006 it introduced measures to set up a US\$5 billion fund, levied from oil revenues, for scientific and technological development. While Nigeria's approach is commendable, the problem is that Africa's new-found commitment to scientific research is not yet backed up by financial assurances. Only South Africa dedicates more than 1 per cent of GDP to research.

As for the ACP group as a whole, the European Union financed the science and technology programme, launched in 2008, aimed at establishing research networks. In the Caribbean, Cuba remains the powerhouse as it continues to develop relationships with its neighbours. An example of this is an inter-Caribbean agreement that has a company from St-Kitts-and-Nevis producing and marketing new-generation pesticides and other veterinary products developed by Cuba.

Africa's new audacious approach, if this is what it is, to science and research has emerged hand in hand with recognition for and evaluation of the continent's contribution to science and technology, highlighted in this edition's dossier section. This is the continent where iron metallurgy – vital to the subsequent development of the western world – was discovered. Also the origins of mathematics are found in Africa: it is where the first ever calculator was invented 35,000 years ago.

*Hegel Goutier  
Editor-in-chief*

Hegel Goutier

**Hansjörg Neun**

Director of the CTA (Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation)

# A hands on practitioner assisting ACP farmers

© Hegel Goutier

*With his five-year mandate as head of the CTA coming to an end in February 2010, Hansjörg Neun was preparing to retire gracefully. He has transformed this little known organisation into a highly valued service supporting agriculture in the ACP countries, producing results that bear no comparison to the scant resources they have at their disposal. One key factor to the CTA's success is the creation of a management system based more on the marketing of private companies than on institutional management.*



Hansjörg Neun with staff. © Hegel Goutier

## ► Please get rid of the red carpet

To introduce the concept of marketing to the organisation, Hansjörg Neun has had to change the relationship between management and staff and find ways to get the most out of a small team of just 40 permanent employees and a dozen interns. Solution? Give them more influence over their work. More than that, he set the tone from day one. Surprised to find a long red carpet leading to the director's office reserved for him, he said: "Please get rid of the carpet". This was soon followed up by action. Example: when he gives interviews, he insists that the journalist also speak to his colleagues.

Now about to retire, *The Courier* asked him what had given him the most satisfaction in his work.

HN – Motivating my colleagues is one objective I set myself and I believe I've achieved that. This has been accomplished through restructuring and most of all empowerment. I told them that they were paid to do their job and it was up to them to take responsibility and not to leave decision-making to the manager. I told them to show me their business plans and budgets. I think this sense of empowerment made the staff feel more at ease and more able to identify with the organisation.



My role here is as manager. I have to see what the CTA and the market have to offer respectively. Using European taxpayers' money, I have to produce results. You could take a different approach, but that doesn't appeal to me.

### Restructuring

The number of operational units was reduced from four to three. We created a marketing position and strengthened our ICT capacities as well as our publication service. We focused much more on targeting strategic groups and identifying our privileged partners, who offer us comparative advantages through collaboration across the 79 ACP countries. One of these groups is the media. Despite the importance of agriculture to development (recognised by the World Bank's report on development in 2008), bringing agriculture back to the forefront, we have not seen adequate follow-up in terms of investment to improve productivity. Certainly not enough to feed a global population of 8 billion people by 2050. The final part of the CTA's restructuring involved creating a human resources officer position. This was vital to enhance staff motivation and to ensure better recruitment and good personnel management.

### Framework conditions

As set out in the Lomé Agreement and reiterated in the Cotonou Agreement, our mandate is to provide information and to assist the ACP countries with communication and capacity building. We therefore provide information using various media. Communication is a question of choosing the right channel to reach the target group. For example, to communicate with farmers and the agricultural world, you would primarily use rural radio, whereas it would be e-mail or the web for ministries and similar services. There is also our flagship publication, SPORE, available in print or on the web, and we use the participatory geographic information system.

### An acute lack of funding

When I started in 2005, our budget was €70M for five years, which works out at €14M per year. It is now €16M for more than 70 countries with an estimated population of one billion, 600 to 700 million of whom live in rural areas. That comes to just €0.02 per capita, which is a drop in the ocean. We had to clearly establish the CTA's niche to offer added value compared to the NGOs on the ground and bilateral and multilateral development aid agencies.



From left: Oumy Ndiaye, Hansjörg Neun and Koda Traoré. © Hegel Goutier

## RANGE OF INSTRUMENTS

### Mrs Oumy Ndiaye

#### Head of Communication Services

We work with partners in several African countries providing financial and technical support. Information on commodity prices and weather forecasts is taken from the Internet and rebroadcast via SMS and radio. This enables farmers to sell at the best time and for the best price. It also allows them to plant at the right time.



Carine Kazadi. © Carine Kazadi

### Koda-Traoré

#### ITC programme coordinator

Having recognised that lots of call centres have sustainability issues, we developed a programme along three axes: The management model – we studied the example of India with 100,000 call centres in a similar situation to Africa in order to deliver benefits for our African customers; Ownership – thanks to possibilities for people to manage the contents broadcast using tools like Web2; Capacity building – through low-cost training in rural areas.

### Carine Kazadi

#### Junior marketing service officer

We go on the ground and see how much our customers appreciate our products. The CTA is an organisation but in producing information, it becomes a brand. Our marketing approach looks at what method should be used to ensure a good overview of the situation on the ground? How can we make our products more competitive? How can we capture and ensure the loyalty of our target groups?

Debra Percival

## EU extends measures for Fiji

**T**he European Union's "appropriate measures" for Fiji have been extended for a further six months in the wake of the December 2006 coup by Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama. They will expire on 31 March 2010. Whereas development aid and special aid to assist the sugar industry are suspended, the measures also offer their resumption through further EU-Fiji dialogue under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement to which Fiji is still a party.

"The EU regards the extension of the measures as a window of opportunity for a possible new political dialogue. Should these result in new credible commitments from Fiji, the EU is ready to review its measures positively", read the 24 September state-

ment by the EU's Council. It added: "The appropriate measures currently in place are designed to assist the Fiji Islands in the transition: development cooperation would gradually be resumed if Fiji were to fulfil its commitments concerning human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law."

"As Fiji's authorities have decided to break a number of the commitments, this has led to losses for Fiji in terms of development funds. Humanitarian aid, as well as direct support to civil society, are not affected by the appropriate measures", it read.

The EU deemed the military takeover in Fiji of 5 December 2006 a violation of democracy and rule of law, both of which are 'essential elements' of the Cotonou Agreement. This triggered dialogue between the EU and the interim government. The outcome was a set of some 13 commitments agreed by Fiji's interim government in April 2007. The list originally included the holding of Parliamentary elections by 28 February 2009.

The Commonwealth has recently suspended Fiji for reneging on the election date after interim Prime Minister Bainimarama conveyed plans for new elections to be held only in 2014 in his 'Strategic Framework for Change' of 1 July 2009. But dialogue

between Fiji's interim government and the Commonwealth to promote adherence to Commonwealth principles and welfare of the people of Fiji continues.

In an interview with *The Courier*, Joseph Ma'ahanua, Ambassador to the EU for the Solomon Islands and former Chairperson of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Committee of Ambassadors (February-July 2009), gave his own nation's perspective on its neighbour, Fiji. "Historically we have a close connection with Fiji and so we are trying to work with them in the context of long-established relations apart from the fact that we are geographically neighbours."

He added: "On top of that we are countries that are quite new and have just come out of colonial rule and argue in terms of democracy and these democracies are based on foreign concepts, some of which in the early days disregarded cultural settings."

"When we come across difficulties such as in the situation of Fiji, we try to understand rather than isolate them. We have to help them deal with the underlying issues and roots of the problem and help them move forward. But that is not to say that we condone any undemocratic overtaking of any elected government", he said.



Traders, Fiji. © Reporters

## Despite the tragedy, Samoa tourism is open for business

**T**he European Union's Directorate-General for Humanitarian Assistance (ECHO) responded swiftly in approving €150,000 of emergency relief for tsunami-hit Samoa – with a possible follow-up of additional humanitarian support – in the aftermath of the tsunami of 30 September which killed 143 people in Samoa, and caused widespread structural damage in Tonga and American Samoa. In addition, the European Commission responded immediately by supplying water tanks to the affected area in the Southern coast of Upolu in Samoa from an existing Water Sector Support Programme.

Attention has also turned to how to re-build infrastructure and keep visitors numbers up.

The Samoan government has commissioned a study from a leading Pacific consulting firm, KVA Consult – funded by the Australian government – to assess the damage and to advise on a road-map to total rehabilitation in the least possible time, says Deputy Prime Minister, Misa Telefoni, who is also Tourism Minister. "It is essential that this study is sensitive to all the physical, financial, but as well the emotional costs of this natural disaster", says Telefoni. He told *The Courier* that the tsunami had "increased the vulnerability" of the country.

The Samoa Tourism Authority (STA) launched in October "a new aggressive marketing campaign". "The specialists are already working hard on this campaign, and

no time must be lost in ensuring that this message is made manifestly clear in the best possible way, taking into account the cultural and emotional sensitivities surrounding this situation", says Telefoni. Although the tsunami did sweep away some infrastructure, most hotels are still in business including over half of the beach 'fales' resorts – particularly affected due to their coastal locations. Samoa is a member of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of countries and receives €30M under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF), mainly in the water and sanitation sector (see Samoa 'Country Report' in *The Courier*, no. 12). **D.P.**

# Projects stepped up for Zimbabwe through NGOs



Patient assisted by a family member as they leave Parirenyatwa General Hospital, Harare, Zimbabwe, 2008. ECHO's focus has now shifted from food aid to public health. © Reporters/AP

Whilst talks are ongoing between the European Union (EU) and Zimbabwe's Unity Transition government on conditions to respect for the release of long-term development aid, the European Commission's Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid (ECHO) and the Directorate General for Development are expected to fund €120M of projects for the country this year through non-governmental bodies.

The form of the EC's humanitarian assistance to Zimbabwe is evolving, says François Goemans, Head of the ECHO office in Zimbabwe. Goemans explains that Zimbabwe is no longer in need of food aid, as measured by 'Global Acute Malnutrition' standards. ECHO's focus has hence shifted to public health; improving access to clean water to avoid a repeat of the cholera outbreak earlier this year and access to basic medicines. ECHO will ensure 42 basic medicines are delivered to 1,500 health centres.

"Though the food security situation has started to improve slightly, Zimbabwe continues to face a protracted emergency.

Urban populations are particularly vulnerable due to lack of access to land. It is therefore crucial in this period that ongoing food security interventions are reinforced and consolidated in order to reach the populations in need," said recently appointed EC Commissioner for Development, Karel De Gucht. François Goemans told *The Courier* that ECHO is consulting with the authorities on the allocation of small plots of land to urban dwellers for food cultivation.

Since 2002, chronic food insecurity in Zimbabwe has occurred due to complications in the Zimbabwean government's land reform programme, launched in 2000. Dry weather, fuel, fertiliser and tractor power shortages, under-investment in infrastructure and price controls have affected the productivity of agricultural and other sectors. EC officials say that food supply and access are now better due to an improved harvest, the dollarisation of the economy and the liberalisation of the cereals markets.

With the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) as partner, ECHO is helping to improve the conditions (including

nutrition) of Zimbabwe's 20,000 prisoners, especially those in larger prisons of above 200 inmates. Access to the prisons was given by Zimbabwe's Ministry of Justice.

Via NGOs, the Directorate General for Development's projects for Zimbabwe include the provision of seeds and fertilisers, and a 'retention scheme' run by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) providing money to professionals, such as health workers, to encourage them to stay in Zimbabwe rather than migrate to South Africa for work. Longer-term assistance to Zimbabwe under the European Development Fund (EDF) remains suspended until the EU is satisfied of further reform by Zimbabwe's Unity Government. **D.P.**

See: <http://www.delzwe.ec.europa.eu/en/>

## EU is trading away access to medicines, say NGOs

Non Governmental Organisations, Oxfam International and Health Action International Europe (HAI Europe) want all European Union (EU) institutions to get to grips with easier access for developing countries to generic medicines.

Their newly-published report, 'Trading Away Access to Medicines – How the European Union's trade agenda has taken a wrong turn', says that cheaper medicines are currently being denied to developing countries which already spend a sizeable 20-60 per cent of their health budgets on medicines.

The report says that in bilateral talks with developing countries, EU Member States are insisting on tough new intellectual prop-

erty rights in trade agreements that go beyond the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) existing agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). "The EU and Member States should not misuse free trade agreements to introduce TRIPS-plus IP rules in developing countries that extend monopoly protection and introduce new enforcement measures, which limit access to medicines", reads one of its recommendations.

The report also tracks how since late 2008, customs officials in Germany and the Netherlands have seized 19 shipments of generic medicines – 18 of which were legally manufactured and exported from India and bound for developing countries – because they were deemed to infringe an EU regula-

tion on intellectual property rights in the EU transit country. In one incident, a batch of the anti-retroviral medicine, *Abacavir*, bound for Nigeria was apprehended but eventually sent on its way.

"There is growing evidence that the EU's trade agenda is causing severe damage to public health in developing countries", said Sophie Bloemen, Projects Officer for Health Action International Europe at the report's launch. At the same time, the report says that the EU has failed to commit sufficient resources to medical research and development in developing countries. **D.P.**

For more information, see:  
[www.haiweb.org](http://www.haiweb.org)  
[www.oxfam.org](http://www.oxfam.org)



Marie-Christine Buckens

# Willingness for cooperation between countries in the south

*Representatives of around 60 countries from two continents vowed to step up cooperation at the Africa-South America (ASA) Summit, which took place at the end of September on the island of Margarita in north-eastern Venezuela. Closer links between the two also featured on the agenda of the Brazil-EU Summit on 7 October in Brussels.*

Jean Ping, Chairman of the African Union Commission, said: "This summit is an historic opportunity. We have to get beyond the rhetoric because the credibility of south-south cooperation is at stake."

The summit aimed to strengthen cooperation between participating countries in the wake of the food, financial, economic and environmental crises and to extend the agreements and action plans launched at the beginning of 2006 at the first summit in Abuja, Nigeria. In a first step, seven South American countries signed the founding act of the Bank of the South, an institution which will finance development projects, offering an alternative to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The President of Venezuela called on African countries to follow suit. Various bilateral

## BRAZIL THE TRAILBLAZER

In Brussels, Brazil's President, Lula da Silva, encouraged Europeans to invest in his country more, one of the few nations not to have been hard hit by the economic and financial crisis and which should see positive growth this year. Brasilia wants to increase its presence on the African continent. Trade between Latin America and Africa has gone from \$US6bn to \$US36bn since the first summit in Abuja, Nigeria, in 2006; Brazil's trade with Portuguese-speaking African countries alone has shot up to \$US15bn.



Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula Da Silva at the ASA Summit, Sept. 26, 2009. © Reporters/AP

agreements were signed, in particular on energy involving the construction of refineries in oil-producing African nations.

### Keywords

ASA; Hugo Chavez; Lula da Silva; Africa-South America Summit.

# Louis Michel co-chairs the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly



Louis Michel. © Reporters/AP

After five years at the helm of European development cooperation policy, Belgian Louis Michel is now a member of the European Parliament (Alliance of liberals and demo-

crats). Although sitting full-time on the EP's Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee, the former Commissioner has not turned his back on his former love. He is a substitute member of the EP's Development Committee and is notably now co-President of the African, Caribbean and Pacific-European Union (ACP-EU) Joint Parliamentary Assembly. Sitting alongside him is the ACP's choice for co-President, the Cook Islands' Deputy Prime Minister, Wilkie Rasmussen.

Louis Michel hence continues to influence relations between the EU and ACP countries

who remain the EU's privileged partners. But Louis Michel has bigger ambitions. His government has put him forward as candidate for the rotating Presidency of the United Nations General Assembly. The current incumbent is Libya's Ali Abdussalam Treki. The General Assembly has a consultative role for international peace and security issues as well as decision-making powers on the United Nations' budget and new UN membership. **M.M.B.**

### Keywords

Louis Michel; Wilkie Rasmussen; ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly.



Above: Masked activists protest outside the U.N. regional office in Bangkok, Thailand, where delegates were holding talks on climate change, October 2009. © Reporters/AP

Below: Coral reefs fringe the coast of Fiji. Among other factors, climate change is a catalyst for 'bleaching', where coral loses the algae it needs to survive. © Reporters/AP

# Climate change Demands from the South

*A month before the crucial summit in Copenhagen and at the time of going to print, continental Africa, which along with the Pacific islands is the most vulnerable to global warming, has set the bar very high by declaring in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) on 11 October that it will need €44bn to tackle the new challenges of climate change.*

**"W**e need this money to deal with the problem of climate change continent-wide", were the words of Salifou Sawadogo, head of the organising committee for the 7th World Forum on Sustainable Development. "This means our expectations are quite high", Mr Sawadogo, also Burkinabe minister for the environment, admitted. Speaking outside the forum on climate change, organised by the Burkinabe government in partnership with the UN and the African Union, Mr Sawadogo said: "Ethiopian prime minister Meles Zenawi made it quite clear recently. If nothing is done, Africa will walk out of the Copenhagen summit of 7-18 December".

The world's poorest continent, with very little industry, Africa, and its more than 800 million inhabitants, account for less than 4 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions. Climatic disturbance will affect already very delicate regions where agriculture, which has the lowest irrigation rates in the world, depends heavily on rainfall. The encroachment of the Sahara desert would also exacerbate the problem of migration. **M.M.B.**

## Keywords

Climate; Africa; Copenhagen.





## Science becomes part of cooperation

A telescope catches gamma rays from black holes as part of a fieldwork experiment near Gamsberg Mountain, Namibia. © Reporters

**Dossier by Marie-Martine Buckens**

Convinced that European economic recovery will be achieved through research and development, the European Union has decided to also make this field a priority in relations with its development partners – the nations of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group. Science is therefore one of the eight priorities established by the strategic partnership concluded between the EU and the African Union (AU) in December 2007 in Lisbon. This is a groundbreaking development. Science has also become a priority in relations with the entire ACP Group, symbolised by the ACP Science and Technology Programme, the first of its kind, launched in June 2008.

The term 'research and development' is understood in its broadest sense in the new emerging programmes. There are nevertheless hurdles to overcome. One is the different interpretation of the term 'development' in the north and south of the Mediterranean. The countries in the south primarily see it as developing niche scientific opportunities to strengthen capacity, whereas the better equipped European countries have decided to use science to enhance competitiveness. This is in line with the 'Lisbon Strategy' established by the heads of state and European governments in 2000 to make the EU "the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world". Will a way forward be found?



# The lost, forgotten – even exhumed riches from Africa

It is common knowledge that Africa is the cradle of humanity and of disciplines such as mathematics – that is, unless new discoveries come along to trump these widely-held assumptions. Reducing the continent to the role of ‘originator’, and in so doing conferring on the other continents – Europe, in particular – the mantle of finishing the task, so to speak, is to neglect the variety of inventions which have been created down the centuries, and indeed well before our time.

If we exclude the famous Timbuktu manuscripts (see box) which we are just beginning to salvage from obliteration and to demystify little by little, there are precious few accounts which we inherit from a scientific past which we could credibly conceive of as rich.

## > An activity wiped out from memory

There are some avenues of enquiry, however, albeit rare ones. Why so? The first, no doubt, is the scant interest of the invading colonisers for the customs of the local people – unless it was from the smattering of ethnologists and archaeologists who travelled with them, among whom Marie-Claude Dupré and Bruno Pinçon, who, jointly penned *Métallurgie et Politique en Afrique Centrale* – Karthala ed., ponder the fate of the “blacksmith kings” of the Bateke plateau (Gabon, the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo). These men, we are told, toiled generation after generation for more than 2,000 years in order to produce metals, requiring skills of the highest order. In spite of this, so they say, “metallurgy seems to have been entirely wiped from memory... meaning that today the invention of welding is widely attributed to the Europeans.” Why such denial? Is it because these peoples had abandoned the practices nearly a century before? The debate goes on.

## > The bones of Lebombo and Ishango

While mathematical genius has flowered the world over, proponents of this theory – of whom there are many – of a unique (and non simultaneous) origin of an invention



Ancient Islamic manuscripts displayed in a mud-walled house, Timbuktu, Mali. The manuscripts are a window to the city's rich tradition and past. © Reporters/AP

## THE MYTH OF ORALITY

“When someone old dies, a whole library disappears.” This old adage has been challenged since Mali, with the help from South Africa in particular, has begun exhuming the famous Timbuktu manuscripts.

Timbuktu contains not one library, but thousands, mostly kept by families in this Malian town situated on the borders of the Sahara. Some of these manuscripts date back to the pre-Islamic period, right back to the 12th century. Written in Arabic, and sometimes in Fula, by sages of the ancient empire of Mali, they contain information on subjects ranging from as-

tronomical to music and botany, as well as textiles and the Kola nut.

The Timbuktu manuscripts conceal a cultural and historical challenge but also a political one, which Thabo Mbeki, the former South African president and at the head of the African renaissance, took up in 2002. Since then, South Africa has helped Mali in exhuming and restoring these fragile texts. In 2006, a South African delegation laid the first brick for the new library – inaugurated in 2009 – which was to house the Ahmed Baba Institute's public collection, replete with 25,000 manuscripts.

will assert that chronologically, things really began in sub-Saharan Africa. Their argument is the following: the discovery of the first calculator in the Lebombo mountains between South Africa and Swaziland in the 1970s, a baboon fibula with 29 clearly visible notches dating back 35,000 years BC. In 1950, a Belgian geologist discovered a strange-looking bone at Ishango on the Congolese shores of Lake Edward, dating back to 25,000 years BC. It would become

the darling of archaeologists. The notches on its sides indicated, so it was held, a table containing the first numbers. This is how *Homo sapiens africanus* was already managing the consequences of having discovered arithmetic. **M.M.B.**

### Keywords

Blacksmith; mathematics; Timbuktu; manuscripts; South Africa; Lebombo and Ishango bones.

# Radioscopy of a continent

*Sub-Saharan Africa contributes around 2.3% to global GDP, but only accounts for 0.4% of spending on research and development (R&D). While it makes up 13.4% of the world's population, it provides just 1.1% of the planet's scientific researchers. It produces just one researcher or engineer per 10,000 inhabitants, compared to 20 to 50 in the industrialised world.*

Various initiatives have been introduced in an attempt to bridge this gap. In 2005, the African Union (AU) and NEPAD (the New Partnership for Africa's Development) launched an action plan to support their programmes in areas such as agriculture, the environment, infrastructure, industry and education. They outlined 12 research projects, ranging from biotechnology to traditional African knowledge and the use of new information technologies. However, African leaders failed to reach a consensus on the funding for the plan, which is estimated to total US\$158M over five years.

*While the number of African universities rose from 13 in 1960 to 300 in 2002, most lack staff and equipment.*



Medical laboratory at the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research, Ghana. © Reporters/Science Photo Library

Major obstacles must be surmounted in order to establish the scientific and technological basis required to overcome Africa's various development challenges, including a continual reduction in funding for higher education and R&D and the 'brain drain'. The links between industry and scientific institutions are very weak, which means that research results are rarely taken advantage of locally. National policies to promote science are outdated, and teaching standards have fallen, mainly due to a lack of money and infrastructure. As a result, Africa is falling far short of achieving the target it set itself of spending at least 1% of GDP on R&D (with the notable exception of South Africa). Funding providers' poli-

cies have contributed to the problem. The structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s reduced education budgets. While the funding providers have recognised the need to re-establish these budgets, they have focused on primary education, arguing that it benefits the whole of society, as opposed to higher education. While the number of African universities rose from 13 in 1960 to 300 in 2002, most lack staff and equipment, and their research results are among the poorest in the world.

## > Beatable problems

However, countries such as South Africa (see separate article), Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya

and Zimbabwe already have a relatively well developed scientific and technological base, and UNESCO believes they could set up high-quality technological and scientific establishments which would benefit the entire region, with reasonably small levels of additional investment. In 2006, Nigeria set up a fund of US\$5bn for developing science and technology, which was mainly financed through revenue from oil exports. **M.M.B.**

## Keywords

African Union; NEPAD; Science; Nigeria.





A man prepares drugs made from different herbal ingredients in a pharmacy for natural medicine, East London, South Africa, 2009. © Reporters/DPA

# Science at the service of sustainable development

*Science is now a key element in cooperation between the European Union and its ACP partners, as evidenced by the new scientific partnership between Africa and Europe and the launch of the ACP Science and Technology Programme.*

**"T**his is an encouraging development", explains Daan du Toit, science and technology advisor to the South African Mission to the EU: "We saw it coming following the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, which raised awareness of the important role of science as an instrument of development". Two years later, African science ministers adopted a consolidated action plan. "This plan marks a turning point", continues the advisor. So it almost goes without saying that the EU-Africa Strategic Partnership drawn up in December 2007 in Lisbon counts science as one of its eight priority areas. Science, accompanied by two sectors of direct application seen as particularly significant for African countries: space technology and Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

"If we really want to achieve sustainable development using science, we need people on the ground", continues Daan du Toit. Research is thus no longer merely a matter of research contracts, which until now have benefited better equipped European laboratories and research centres, but also of strengthening research capacities, still often very weak.

## > African network

On the European side, this involves a new level of cooperation between stakeholders who have hitherto worked 'on their own',

namely the EU Member States, as evidenced by their relatively low turn-out at meetings of the Joint Expert Group which facilitates implementation of the science partnership. This Group is presided over by Tunisia on the African side and France on the European side. Coordinating research on both sides of the Mediterranean still remains a challenge. This is why the partnership has envisaged the parallel implementation of a network that enables research centres to create self-financed groups similar to the European ERA-NET network (<http://cordis.europa.eu/coordination/era-net.htm>). Its counterpart, 'ERA-NET Africa' was



Analyses at Jamaa hospital, Nairobi, Kenya. © Reporters/BSIP





Scientist conducts research on a high energy stereoscopic system at the Namibian plateau. © Reporters

launched last July. “The consortia should allow policies to be harmonised”, explains Patrice Cayré, EU representative from the Institut français de recherche pour le développement (Institute of research and development France’s – the IRD), which has been asked by France to represent it in leading the European group of experts.

“For this remarkable partnership to be at its most effective, it needs to include actions which are as much focused on training as on research and knowledge transfer”, continues Patrice Cayré.” As far as the IRD is concerned, its Brussels representative has set his sights high: “Our ambition is to ‘Europeanise’ the IRD. In the longer term, a network, even a European research centre

for development would be needed. If this strategic partnership is limited to the actions planned between the two commissions (*Ed*: of the EU and the AU) it loses its significance. Member State involvement is vital.”

### ➤ Down with positive discrimination

“This partnership is a major challenge but a worthwhile aspiration”, echoes Francesco Affinito, Science and Technology Coordinator in DG Development at the Commission. This Directorate-General acts as focal point for the partnership, channelling the efforts of three other Directorates-General involved in the priority areas: DG RTD for research, DG INFSO for Information Society and

DG ENTR for space. Nineteen cooperation projects, of which six (two per theme) have been classed as early deliverables within the partnership (see *The Courier* n°8). How are these to be funded? No specific budget has been allocated to the partnership, and the Commission is juggling the two instruments presently at its disposal: the 7th framework programme (FP7), endowed with more than €50bn for 2007-2013, and the European Development Fund (EDF). “The subjects still need to be of interest to developing countries”, emphasises Patrice Cayré, who, in spite of everything, is delighted by the recent launch of a special call for proposals for Africa, which has a budget of €63M. “No artificial positive discrimination will take place”, confirms Philippe Froissard, deputy head of the specific international cooperation activities unit at the Commission’s Research DG, “Funding is based on free competition and scientific excellence. We are not funding any capacity building programme but high quality research in areas of mutual interest and benefit”.

Capacity building for Research has received funding under the 9th EDF (see box) and has been allocated €40M in the 10th. “These funds will benefit all the ACP countries”, states Francesco Affinito, “and by providing experience and enhancing capacity will enable ACP researchers and their institutions to gain easier access to FP7 funding”. **D.P.**

### Keywords

EU-AU Partnership on Science; Francesco Affinito; Philippe Froissard; Patrice Cayré; Tunisia; France; ERA-NET Africa; FP7; EDF.

## CONSOLIDATING THE ACP NETWORKS

During the ACP ministerial forum on research held in Cape Town in 2002, the ACP group decided to launch a programme aimed at supporting the activities of its researchers. The ACP Science and Technology Programme took off in June 2008. With a budget of €35M (€30M from the 9th European Development Fund and €5M from the European envelope for cooperation with South Africa), it should allow universities and research centres to

augment their networking capacities. Not only the ACP countries are concerned, as the programme is also open to the 27 EU Member States, the three European countries which have applied to join the EU and the three European Economic Area countries. It will also contribute to the evaluation of research requirements in order to enable countries to consolidate or implement national research policies. Networking should also produce an

improvement in the quality of research results and ensure they are used and distributed more effectively.

Six priority research sectors have been established: high-quality healthcare (traditional medicine and progress in biotechnology), environmental research, energy (in particular, renewable energies), transport (the saturation of transport capacity, air pollution and accidents), agriculture and agro-industry and fair trade.

# The South African powerhouse



South African Astronomical Observatory (SAAO), Sutherland, South Africa. © Reporters/Science Photo Library

**B**olstered by its considerable scientific prowess, with the highest number of patents and published articles on the continent, South Africa is intent on playing a major role in strengthening African cooperation.

Firstly, it is at the heart of the SADC (the South African Development Community, bringing together 14 countries from Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean), then by signing bilateral agreements, following the model of the treaty with Kenya, which is renewed once-yearly. Following this, emphasises Daan du Toit, adviser for science and technology to the South-African Mission to the European Union, “our R&D partnership with the EU is one of the most longstanding, going back to 1996, just after apartheid. This agreement was a model of its type, even though today it is no longer as important, since the 7th EU R&D framework programme has become open to all”. But above all, he insists, “this experience makes R&D one of the priorities of African cooperation. Thus, during the first presidency of NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa’s Development), South Africa has worked extensively on the African initiative on science. Our commitment to support African research is now a reality.”

There are five priorities in African Research & Development, starting with agriculture and health by means of the ‘Farmer to Pharma’ programme, which uses biotechnological and agronomical research to develop

new input and drugs. Renewable energies come second, particularly solar energy and fuel cells. Thirdly, the fight against climate change and maintaining biodiversity. Finally, space research and the cross-cutting examination of the impact of technology on society. **M.M.B.**

## Keywords

Sciences; South Africa; NEPAD; Innovation and research; South Africa; Kenya; World Economic Forum.

## RESEARCH MEASURED IN TERMS OF INNOVATION

South Africa has confirmed its position as the most innovative sub-Saharan African nation, followed by Kenya, where the strength of the network of cooperation between private and public-sector research has proven itself, despite the major political unrest following the 2007 elections. These are the findings of the 2009/2010 Global Competitiveness Report published in September by the World Economic Forum.

South Africa is in the highly respectable position of 41st (out of 133 worldwide). Kenya came in at 48th. The other sub-Saharan countries rank quite low for innovation, which Jennifer Blanke, chief economist at the World Economic Forum and one of the report’s authors, says is not yet a problem because they are in an

earlier development stage. She nevertheless noted Namibia’s rise from 111th to 103rd in the rankings, and Tanzania’s improvement from 101st to 93rd. In southern Africa, Botswana climbed to 71st, Lesotho to 95th, Madagascar to 84th, Mozambique to 105th and Zambia to 90th.

In the western Africa region, Burkina Faso was ranked 76th, Benin 89th, Cameroon 102nd, Gambia 72nd, Côte d’Ivoire 104th and Senegal 54th. Burundi and Chad came in at 116th and 120th respectively. Malawi and Mauritania’s positions remain unchanged at 94th and 125th respectively. Countries slipping down the rankings included Nigeria (73rd), Mali (81st), Mauritius (85th), Uganda (98th), Ethiopia (112th), Ghana (115th) and Zimbabwe (124th).

# Cuba, where science and development go hand in hand

*A figure that speaks volumes: Cuba allocates approximately 1.2 percent of its GDP (thus more than the EU average) to scientific research and technological development. Two sectors – biotechnology and pharmaceuticals – remain the priority although the government has decided to strengthen research in other sectors too, in particular the basic sciences, information and communication technologies and the social sciences.*

Cuba has given priority to education since the early 1960s. It is thanks to the national literacy programme launched at that time that Cuba today can pride itself on having one of the highest literacy rates of any developing country. The Cuban programme – today known by the slogan “Yes, I can” – has spread to the entire region. Alongside education, research is another Cuban priority. Here the main aim is to implement a “complete cycle” programme under which scientific research is linked to the use of results to benefit the country’s development. It is also a programme based on human resources, reflected in the fact that in Cuba 1.8 people for every 1,000 work in science, an average

that far exceeds levels in other developing countries.

In the past 50 years a number of scientific research centres – including seven major ones – have been set up in Cuba. Most of these are concentrated in Havana, at the “West Havana Scientific Pole”, which is home to a number of prestigious institutes such as the Centre for Genetic and Biotechnological Engineering (*Centro de Ingeniería Genética y Biotecnología*), recognised for its performances in terms of production (the recombinant vaccine – using a single purified viral or bacterial protein – against hepatitis B, for example) and biotechnological research; the *Pedro Kouri*

Institute of Tropical Medicine, recently praised by the UN and Harvard University as a spearhead of the Cuban health system; and the National Centre for Scientific Research (*Centro Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas*), known for its achievements in research in the neurosciences, natural products, the medical use of ozone and PPG production (an anti-cholesterol drug obtained from sugar cane). **M.M.B.**

## Keywords

Cuba; science; neem.

## SPOTLIGHT ON THE NEEM



Scoop of neem root. © Reporters/Science Photo Library

The many virtues of the neem tree (any parts of the tree have antimicrobial properties; they provide effective ingredients for traditional and modern toothpastes, medicines, cosmetics and insect repellents) which is very widespread in India, have not escaped the attention of researchers at the Institute of Fundamental Research on Agriculture, who are studying it for its natural pesticide properties. Neem growing began in 1991 and by 2000 Cuba had more than 500,000 trees. A joint project was set up with the Caribbean Agricultural and Research Development Institute (CARDI) to

develop technology for the agro-industrial exploitation of the neem tree and obtain from it pesticides and veterinary products. This even foresees a pilot programme in Saint Kitts-and-Nevis to produce and market pesticides obtained from the neem tree. Other research projects pursued by this Cuban institute include combating insects using plant residues (to date only tobacco residue has been used as a pesticide), the development of a maize hybrid and the integrated management of the papaya crop to improve yields.



Andrea Marchesini Reggiani

# Data sharing to improve medical research

*The Medishare project, financed by the Edulink Programme, in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.*



CINECA - Kick off Meeting, Bologna, Italy, 22-24 October 2008. © Eugenia Rinaldi

Like many other developing countries, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda have a heavy disease burden which is shouldered by the rural poor, especially women and children. The main obstacles to achieving the MDG (Millennium Development Goals) 4, 5 and 6 of reducing child and maternal mortality, as well as combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis (the leading infectious diseases) in sub-Saharan Africa, have been inequitable health systems.

Improvement in the quality, management and use of health data has been of particular importance. The *Medishare* project aims to create a durable and sustainable partnership governed by a bottom-up and horizontal flow of knowledge between universities and hospitals. The project leader is CINECA, a consortium for high-performance computing and information processing participated in by 36 Italian universities, and the partners include the University of Nairobi, the Makerere University in Uganda, the Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences in Tanzania and the Almalaura Consortium.

The project is financed by the Edulink Programme which is a European Development Fund programme ([www.acp-edulink](http://www.acp-edulink)).

So far, the project has created an academic research cell in each country, with expertise in the epidemiological/clinical trial field, and has also completed a pilot phase of data collection from eight private and public hospitals in the three countries. A database of 1,181 patients has now been created and the method was approved last September by the Ethical Committees of the three countries.

A new phase of the project has now begun, which involves increasing the number of active clinical sites that register their patients on the *Medishare* Database.

E-learning about HIV infection and research on HIV-affected children is also available on the website, with certification of training credits.

"We want to increase this aspect of our project", says the project coordinator Marisa De Rosa, "particularly through training on doctor-patient communication and social communication campaigns. We need to produce more information about the real causes of disease in order to avoid social stigma against sick people. We can say that this is the first political recommendation we have gathered from this phase of the project: governments, stakeholders and decision-makers

must commit themselves to increasing information and communication aimed at sick people and at the whole of society. This is also fundamental for preventative action".

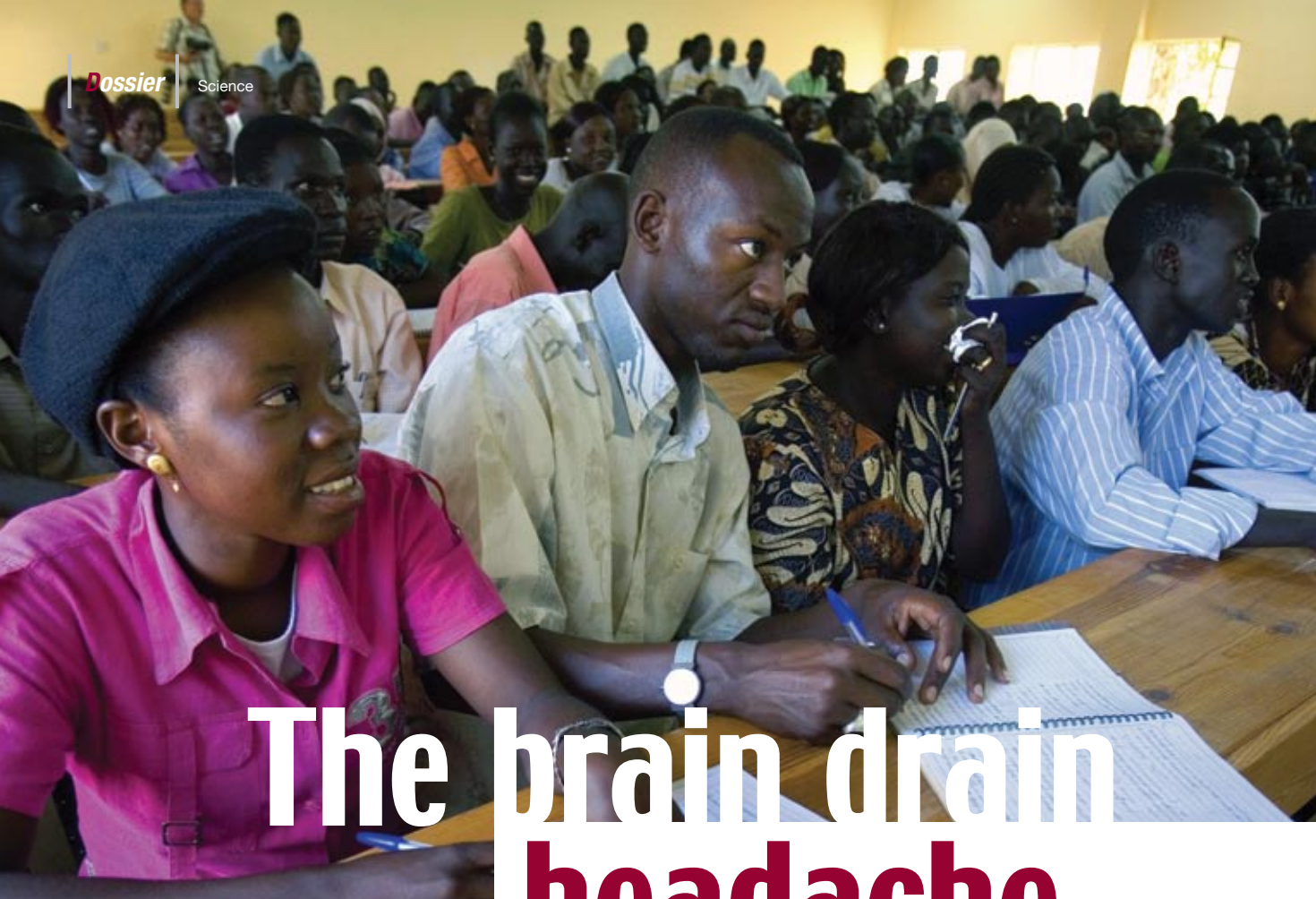
The project leader also aims to involve pharmaceutical companies, all of which carry out restricted clinical trials in individual countries, producing isolated databases. One of the objectives of the project is to involve these companies in its knowledge registry and to standardise procedures, to allow for data comparison. Another goal is to extend the research in order to include a greater number of African states in the research network, as well as including new diseases such as diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease, through financing which could be obtained from within the 7th Framework Programme.



Waiting/Registration/Consultation room in the Bagamoyo hospital (Tanzania), September 2009. © Eugenia Rinaldi

## Keywords

Data sharing; medical research; epidemiology; malaria; AIDS; tuberculosis; MEDISHARE; CINECA; Edulink Programme.



# The brain drain headache

Students, University of Juba, Sudan. African scientists are pushing for reform of the continent's education systems, which can help quell the brain drain. © Reporters

*How can the brain drain be stemmed, particularly from Africa to the developed countries? And what roles can those leaving play in the strategy? These two questions have yet to be resolved.*

**T**he Network of African Science Academies (NASAC) reminded the world's major powers at the G8+5 summit in Italy last July of the devastating impact the brain drain continues to have on Africa. In a press release issued a month before the G8+5 summit, NASAC underlined the fact that: "a third of African scientists live and work in developed countries."

African scientists have urged the developed countries to help Africa to rebuild its higher education system. They also remind them of the recommendations made by the commission set up by the former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair. In more specific terms, these recommendations involve the

release of US\$3bn over a 10-year period – "an imperative" according to the commission – to develop centres of excellence in science and technology and US\$5bn to fund universities in Africa. While this demand is recognised by the G8, it has so far been very cautious about committing itself financially.

The declaration also emphasises the need to create links between African scientists abroad and those still on the continent. Initial efforts include the meeting in August between Jean-Pierre Ezin, the African Union's Commissioner responsible for Science and Technology, and the African Scientific Institute (ASI). This networking organisation based in California recommends allowing African scientists overseas to contribute to the continent's scientific programmes.

## ➤ Risk of derailment

The ASI is not the only organisation calling for change. South Africa's National Research Foundation – administered by the African office of the International Council for Science (ICSU) – hopes to create a database of researchers and to source funding for joint projects. Initial funding is expected to

come from the African countries rather than overseas donors, says Sospeter Muhungu, director of ICSU Africa. Linda Nordling – former editor-in-chief of the online journal 'Research Africa' and journalist for 'SciDev' – believes Muhungu's words reflect an increasing concern about the unintended effects of engaging the diaspora. She said: "although African scientists abroad are full of good intentions, they could – using their connections to overseas funders – inadvertently hijack the African science agenda." ([www.scidev.org](http://www.scidev.org)).

The Nelson Mandela Institution's African Institute of Science and Technology (AIST) is one example of these growing concerns. AIST is one of the most ambitious collaborations between international donors and African scientists on and off the continent. The brainchild of senior scientists living mainly in the USA, it was supposed to be modelled on the Indian Institute of Technology, with a campus in each African region: north, east, west and central. **M.M.B.**

## Keywords

Brain drain; Diaspora; African Union; ICSU; ASI.





European Commission President, José Manuel Barroso, speaks at the opening of the 2009 European Development Days, Stockholm, Sweden. © Hegel Goutier

# European Development Days

## Stockholm, Sweden October 22–24, 2009

*Opened by Sweden's Princess Victoria, this year's European Development Days (EDD) event – the fourth edition – organised by the European Commission and the Swedish Presidency of the EU was particularly vibrant and spawned a plethora of new ideas. Time and place had a part to play in this. Hosted in the capital of one of the world's most open democracies, it came on the heels of the 2008 financial crisis and ahead of the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference in December 2009, signalled as a sink or swim time to save the planet.*

**D**ebate in the plenary session and in side events around the three core themes; climate change, global crisis and democracy and development created a rich pool of new ideas with the suggestion from one participant that next year's event to be hosted in Brussels, the capital of Belgium, be re-named 'European Re-development Days.'

There were some 5,500 participants from government ministries, international organisations, think-tanks, non governmental organisations and individuals many of whom promoted their work from stands in a 'Development Village'. "Developing days are going global", said Gunilla Carlsson, Sweden's Secretary of State for International Cooperation of the growing impact of the event. President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf; President of Sierra Leone, Ernest Bai Koroma; Prime Minister of Sweden, Frederik Reinfeldt; Managing Director of the World Bank, Dr.

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala; Vice President of the Club of Madrid, Mary Robinson, head of the IMF, Daniel Strauss-Khan and President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, were amongst those present (see: [www.eudevdays.eu](http://www.eudevdays.eu))

EC Commissioner for Development Karel De Gucht, interviewed in *The Courier* issue 13, urged all EU states to redouble their efforts to attain the EU's collective development aid spending target of 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI) by 2015. "We need to use development aid to get things right; to be less reactive and better at predicting", he said. President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, said the EC was providing a safety net for the most vulnerable countries under a special 'Vulnerability FLEX' instrument providing up to €500M to countries most hit by the crisis, plugging fiscal gaps and maintaining essential spending.





Downtown Stockholm. © Hegel Goutier

## ➤ Rice doubled in price

The effects of the financial crisis on one of the world's poorest nations, Sierra Leone, were evoked by the country's President, Ernest Bai Koroma. Sierra Leone still hovers at the bottom of the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Index. He told a plenary that the price of rice had doubled in less than a year. And the growth of the country which was 6.4 per cent in 2007 had shrunk to 5.5 per cent in 2008 and 4 per cent in 2009.

President of the African Development Bank, Donald Kaberuka, said the crisis had "undermined the efforts of Africans to manage themselves", wiping out 10 years of economic reform in six months and hitting hard countries like Botswana and Mauritius, both countries posting previously strong economic performances.

"The Bretton Woods Institutions are beginning to show their age; some say it is time to consider their retirement", suggested Otiye Igbuzor, Head of International Campaigns for Action Aid International. Dominique Strauss-Khan, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) founded after World War II to garner global financial stability, stated that "the IMF is going back to its roots" and said that the body is reducing the scope of demands it makes on countries and paying more attention to local conditions.

Dr Igbuzor hit out at tax evasion by multinational companies: "Robin Hood robs from the poor to give to the rich" he said. This

money, which he put at an annual \$106bn, half of Sweden's GDP, could be more usefully spent on developing countries, he suggested.

Muhammad Yunus, Nobel Peace Laureate in 2006 and Managing Director of Grameen Bank, called for a fundamental redesign of the international financial system which leaves out two-thirds of the globe's population. He said that the time had come to reject selfishness – with profit maximisation in favour of selflessness – favouring social business and non-dividend companies.

## ➤ Big business on trial

Big business was also on trial in a debate on Democracy and Development. Kumi Naidoo, Honorary President of CIVICUS, the World Alliance for Citizen Participation, called to account the big business in manip-

Muhammad Yunus speaks at the 2009 European Development Days, Stockholm, Sweden.  
© European Commission

ulating democracy. There were many calls at the EDD for the strengthening of civil society so it can play its full part in taking up opportunities to participate in the Africa-EU partnership. "Democracy without a civil society is a simulation", said Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund. Homage for one of the pillars of democracy, a free press, was marked in the prize giving ceremony for the EC's annual Natali awards for journalism (see separate article).

Calls for action on climate change came thick and fast. Dr Rajendra Pachauri, Nobel Peace Laureate in 2007 and Chairman of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), told a plenary debate on the subject that his organisation had evaluated that by 2020, 75-250 million people in Africa could be under "water stress" due to climate change.

Emmanuel Manny Mori, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, said his country comprised of 600 islands in the Western Pacific was "on the verge of drowning". He called for a change – lifestyles with less consumption of planet's resources. Raila Odinga, Kenya's Prime Minister, described the potent symbol of climate change in his country: the ice cap on top of Mount Kilimanjaro was shrinking, having reduced by 80 per cent between 1912-2009; it could entirely disappear by 2015.

Michèle Louis, who was Prime Minister of Haiti at the time of the EDD event, called for compensation for developing countries like her own who were bearing the damage caused by somebody else. She asked: "Is it going to be possible to achieve a globally agreed system to stop the causes of climate change and done to those suffering the consequences without having caused them?"

Carl Bildt, Sweden's Foreign Affairs Minister, said that the EU has taken a lead with a commitment to cut 1990 levels of emissions of greenhouse gases by 20 per cent by 2020. Jeremy Hobbs, Executive Director of the Non Governmental Organisation, Oxfam International, said: "There is no room for plan B. Failure in Copenhagen will mean loss of life". Hobbs called for the EU to make available a €110bn adaptation and mitigation fund for developing nations".

And for those worried about the carbon footprint of the holding of the EDD, President Barroso said it had generated €120,000 in carbon 'offset' funds. **D.P.**

## 'OVERCOMING FRAGILITY IN AFRICA'

by Okechukwu Romano Umelo

Launched at the EDD in Stockholm, the theme of the first ever 'European Report on Development' focuses on how the EU can best aid fragile states\* in Africa. 'Overcoming Fragility in Africa – Forging a new European approach' will contribute to the EU's understanding on how to react to fragile states said EC Director General for development, Stefano Manservigi, at the report's launch. The publication of an ERD is a new departure for the EC. It aims to generate new ideas on EU development thinking to assist EU policy-makers, including those in individual EC member states that have national development budgets.

Giorgia Giovannetti, the ERD Research Team Leader of the European University Institute in Florence said the report would "help fragile countries enhance

their resilience". She said that fragile states live in "acute insecurity" and lack the most basic services including access to safe drinking water. Their common characteristics include an inability to mobilise domestic resources, low levels of development, poor governance, highly concentrated exports and a dependence on natural resources and weak infrastructure. The report also says that the spill-over effects from a fragile country to its neighbours affect intra-regional trade and security. This 'bad neighbour effect', the report states, can add up to €160bn in losses for Africa annually.

\* The fragile countries which are the focus of the ERD are: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo (Republic), Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, São Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Togo, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

Read the full report at: <http://erd.eui.eu/>

## AFRICA: WORLD BANK HOVERS BETWEEN CONFIDENCE AND TREPIDATION

by Joshua Massarenti

What with the flood of private capital in free fall, prices of raw materials dropping, receding migrants' remittances and gloomy predictions on the volume of public aid for 2009, "Africa is feeling the full force of the economic crisis". This is what Shantayanan Devarajan, chief economist for Africa to the World Bank, confirmed to *The Courier*, reiterating that "all the efforts on the continent over the previous decade and the staggering growth they have produced may be wiped out by a crisis which the Africans do not feel responsible for". Figures released by Washington financial institutions on GDP growth (down from 4.8 per cent in 2008 to 1 per cent in 2009) and poverty (8 million more in poverty in 2009) are, according to Devarajan, "as worrying as the devastating

psychological impacts of the crisis on the Africans themselves. But for the moment, our priority is to help the worst off". Fortunately there is no shortage of good news: "We expected budgets to be in a dreadful state. To our great surprise, countries such as Zambia or Tanzania have succeeded in putting in place recovery plans which are much more prudent than the Obama stimulus package in America or those adopted by certain European governments. There is also Nigeria, which has followed through on its economic reform programme by removing fuel subsidies." Laudable efforts, then, "but they will not be enough. Without an improvement in the world economic situation, there will be no growth at all". The World Bank is hoping that the recent respective revivals of the Chinese and US economies will be consolidated in 2010.



Mount Kilimanjaro. © Reporters/Eureka Slide





Left: Mactar Silla, Chairman of the Association of Private Producers and Televisions of Africa, presents the top Africa category prize to Richard Mgamba. © Hegel Goutier

Center: EC Commissioner for Development Karel De Gucht with prize winners. © Hegel Goutier

Right: Commissioner De Gucht presents the overall *Grand Prix* award to Yee-Chong Lee. © EC Commission

# African continent headlines Lorenzo Natali Journalism Prize 2009

*Africa's reporting features strongly in this year's Lorenzo Natali prize for journalism. This European Commission (EC) competition was set up in 1992 to reward the authors of published stories across the continents which reflect a commitment to human rights, democracy and development, in honour of Lorenzo Natali, the European Commissioner for Development 1985-1989 who died in 1990.*

The winners from four continents Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific and Europe also share total prize money of \$60,000. This year's competition was jointly organised with two leading bodies defending press freedom, 'Reporters without Borders' and the 'World Association of Newspapers'.

At the awards ceremony held during the annual European Development Days (EDD) event in Stockholm, Sweden, October 22-24, Margot Wallström, EU Commissioner for Communications and Institutional Relations, said that the winning stories had recounted, "...uncomfortable truths in shedding light on the darkest corners of human behaviour yet offer hope for the future".

Yee Chong-Lee's report, *Sichuan Earthquake – One year on* – for China's *Now TV*, which exposes continued sub-standard construction in Sichuan province a year after a devastating earthquake killed some 50,000 people, won the overall *Grand Prix* award.

The top prize in the Africa category went to Tanzanian journalist, Richard Mgamba, for 'The Battle for Souls' published in the country's *The Guardian on Sunday*. It reveals the rocketing rate of Albino killings in Tanzania for organs, notably genital parts.

Second-placed Anas Aremeyaw Anas from Ghana went undercover for six months for his publication, *The New Crusading Guide*, to expose how Chinese girls are lured to work in Ghana's sex trade. Hiding his identity at the awards ceremony for fear of reprisal, Anas said that the traffickers had recently been handed down a sentence of a total of 42 years' imprisonment. In his article, *Orpillage – Du pain souterrain au prix de la témérité* (Gold-washing: underground dough for the foolhardy) published in *L'événement*, third-placed Moussa Zongo exposes the appalling conditions in gold mines in the North of Burkina Faso where 20 people have lost their lives since the beginning of 2009.

Overall prize-winners in the special television category were South African Johann Abrahams and Zimbabwean Godknows Nare for *Hell hole*, an investigation with hidden cameras into the conditions inside Zimbabwean jails broadcast by South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). The special radio prize went to Freddy Mata Matundu's and Larissa Diakanua's joint report, *Enfants dits 'sorcières': enfants en danger* ('Witch children': children in danger), broadcast on DRC's 'Radio Top Congo FM'.

*Raped by seven soldiers*, a report by Lucy Adams for Scotland's *Herald Magazine* on the women of the sexual abuse of women in

the DRC province of South Kivu, won first prize in the Europe category. **D.P.**

For how to enter for next year's competition see: [www.nataliprize2009.eu](http://www.nataliprize2009.eu)

## AMBASSADORS FOR DEVELOPMENT, AGED 16-18

The 54 finalists of the EC's Development Youth Prize 2008/9 also received their awards at the Stockholm EDD 2009. This annual prize is a poster and video competition for 16-18 year olds on a given topic. This year's topics were 'gender equality', 'children and youth' or 'cultural diversity', under the overall theme of human development in Africa. The 27 first prize winners-one from each EU member state – are to go on a five-day trip to Africa to visit EC-funded development projects and will have the opportunity to meet people of their own age. Back home, in sharing their experience with friends and family, they become 'ambassadors for development'.

For more information see: [www.dyp2008.org](http://www.dyp2008.org)



# AU-EU Strategy two years on...

*"The implementation of the Joint EU-Africa Strategy and Action Plan has not yet lived up to all its promises although there has been progress", said John K. Shikaiye, AU Commission Chief of Staff at the Joint Africa-EU Task Force meeting in Addis Ababa, 8-9 October ahead of a joint AU-EU Minsiterial Troika, 13-14 October.*

A stock-taking of where the Africa-EU Strategy is heading two years on from its launch in 2007 was carried out at the AU's headquarters in Addis Ababa at the beginning of October. Meetings of AU and EU officials in each of the eight partnerships of the strategy which preceded the Troika, were chaired by Gunilla Carlsson, Sweden's Minister for International Cooperation and Dr. Ali Treki, Libya's Secretary for AU Affairs who is current Chairman of the AU's Executive Council.

Shikaiye said that financial constraints hampered the implementation of the Joint Strategy and first action plan (2008-2010) of projects in the eight partnership areas, although many are underway, notably in the science and technology sector (see dossier in this issue).

Whilst the AU/EU ministerial communiqué noted the commitment of both sides to strengthening the strategy, it also called for more "buy-in" of African countries. On the funding front, the AU wants to see a "dedicated fund" for projects. The communiqué called for better mobilisation of all existing resources and a search of all avenues for new ones including from the private sector and other donors such as the African Development Bank (ADB), European Investment Bank (EIB) and World Bank (WB).

The lack of institutional 'capacity' within the AU to implement the partnership also came under scrutiny although the EC has pledged €55M of European Development Funds (EDF) for 'capacity building' including a staff exchange programme. Such projects are yielding results, say EC officials, despite cash flow problems



A young couple looks at a map of Africa and Europe at the site of the EU-Africa summit, Lisbon, 2007.  
© Reporters/AP

## ➤ Second action plan

A second 'Action Plan' is expected to be approved at the 2010 Africa-EU Summit and will attempt to rectify some of the difficulties. The joint communiqué called for scaled-up involvement of non-state actors in the strategy although some civil society representatives did participate in the October Joint Expert Group (JEG) meetings.

At a seminar, 'Citizens in the AU-EU partnership', held during the European Development Days (22-24 October) event in Stockholm, Klaus Rudischhauser, Director of General Affairs in the EC's Directorate General for Development, stressed that the strategy was not just a "government-to-government affair". A meeting of the European Economic and Social Committee

(EESC), the EU consultative body representing socio-economic interest groups, is to be held in Addis Ababa in May 2010. A member of Zambian NGO 'Women for Change – Zambia,' said at the seminar that dialogue must include women's voices: "There are 51 per cent women in Africa, lest we forget".

The political dialogue side of the strategy has been easier to implement. The Addis Ababa Ministerial meeting included talks on Sudan, Somalia, Great Lakes region, Guinea, Madagascar elections and Zimbabwe plus global issues such as climate change and the global economic crisis. **D.P.**

## THE STRATEGY'S EIGHT PARTNERSHIPS

- Peace and security
- Democratic governance and human rights
- Trade, regional integration and infrastructure
- Millennium Development Goals
- Energy
- Climate change
- Migration, mobility and employment
- Science, information society and space

## Keywords

AU-EU Africa Strategy; John K. Shikaiye; Gunilla Carlsson; Ali Treki.

# Action plan on track to build Africa-EU transport links

*Improved sea, rail and air links between Africa and Europe were at the hub of discussions on 'The future of Trans-European Transport Networks: building bridges between Europe and its neighbours', which took place in Naples, Italy, 21-22 October.*



Senegal's President Abdoulaye Wade and EU Commissioner for Transport Antonio Tajani at a joint press conference at the European Commission, 2009.  
© Reporters/AP



Merchant ships, on the horizon, have a long wait to enter Luanda harbour, Angola. © Debra Percival 2009

**T**he TEN-T Days Ministerial and experts' conference took stock of what's already on track and needs to be done to integrate land, sea and air transport to make the movement of people and goods within the EU easier to boost the economy of its 27 Member States. Organised by the Commission, the Italian Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, and the Swedish Presidency of the European Union, the event branched out to include the Balkans, Western Mediterranean and Africa as well as Norway, Switzerland, the Russian Federation and Turkey. Amongst the participants were the President of Senegal, Abdoulaye Wade, and the Africa Union's (AU) Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, Mahmoud Ahmed Ibrahim.

"We look to the East, but not enough to Africa", said EU Commissioner Antonio Tajani before heading for Naples. He said that the EU was already working together with African countries in setting up a partnership on civil aviation.

But a wider 'action plan' on transport projects, to prioritise bringing the conti-

nents closer, is now going to be drawn up by mid-2010 by the EC and its member states with African partners. It will build on the EC's July 2009 Communication, 'Connecting Africa and Europe: working towards strengthening transport cooperation'. Tajani said that an official from the EC's Transport Directorate would be dispatched to the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa and the seat of the Africa Union (AU), to set up an informal transport forum within the EU-Africa partnership (see separate article).

## > "Innovative funding"

But projects will require "innovative funding", said Tajani. He hinted that more finance would be sought from the European Investment Bank (EIB), as well as through project bonds and setting up public-private partnerships. Tajani also told journalists that he would also like to see revision of EU financial perspectives (2007-2013) for the purpose. The conference declaration called for sharing knowledge of the EU's own TEN-T programme with African partners to help the implementation of pan-African

corridors. Tajani said that a recent World Bank-EU study on Africa's infrastructure had put Africa's overall infrastructure needs at between US\$5-6bn per year.

The EC is already assisting the development of infrastructure within African countries and also between them. Its recent plans are laid out in the EC's 2006 paper, 'Interconnecting Africa: the EU-Africa Partnership on Infrastructure' ([http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/comm\\_pdf\\_com\\_2006\\_0376\\_f\\_en\\_interconnecter\\_afrique.PDF](http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/comm_pdf_com_2006_0376_f_en_interconnecter_afrique.PDF)). Funding for projects within and between African nations comes from existing national and regional programmes for the wider African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of states under the respective 9th (2000-2007) and 10th (2008-2013) European Development Funds (EDF). Additional financing comes from the ACP Infrastructure Trust Fund – of which a part is for transport – of which €108M under the 9th EDF, and since boosted by €300M under the 10th EDF. Funding for infrastructure development within and between North African nations; Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, is from various budgets under the 'European neighbourhood policy' including the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP) sponsored by the EIB. **D.P.**

For more information see: [www.ten-t-days-2009-naples.eu](http://www.ten-t-days-2009-naples.eu)

## Keywords

Antonio Tajani; transport; EDF; EU-Africa partnership; FEMIP; TEN-T programme.

# “For South Africa to succeed, our region and the whole of Africa must succeed”

View over Cape Town, South Africa. © M Percival

*These are the words of the Ambassador of South Africa to the European Union, Dr. Anil Sooklal, who reflects, in an interview with The Courier, on the broadening relationship between his country and the European Union (EU) in the wake of the second only SA-EU Summit held in Kleinmond, South Africa, 11 September.*



Dr. Anil Sooklal. © Hegel Goutier 2009

Although South Africa is a member of the Cotonou Agreement for ACP countries, political cooperation, development, economic and some other forms of cooperation are governed by the 1999 Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement (TDCA) under which the country receives €980M in assistance (2007-2013), the bulk of which is budget support. At the Summit, a €120M project; €100M from EC funding and €20M from the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), was signed to assist the pledge of one million jobs made by South African's President Jacob Zuma in his June State of the Nation speech. In addition, South Africa receives €900M of loans (2007-2013) from the European Investment Bank (EIB) which mainly go to infrastructure; a budget South Africa hopes will increase.

Three or four chapters of the TDCA were reviewed at the Summit in a mandatory five-year revision, but not trade. “We have bracketed the trade chapter for now because of our involvement in negotiations on an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)”, says the Ambassador. Some fellow countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC)\* have already signed an interim ‘goods only’ EPA with the EU. “The reason why we did not sign an interim agreement at the end of 2007 is that there were a number of “unresolved negotiating issues”, said the Ambassador. These include tariff alignment, the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) clause and rules of origin. “A major

concern is that the agreement undermines the South African Customs Union (SACU) and our regional integration agenda.” The fear is that cheaper EU goods entering fellow SACU countries - Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland - all of whom have signed an interim EPA, might now enter the South African market. He says this may eventually lead to a re-instatement of borders between other SACU countries.

Under the TDCA, 94 per cent of South Africa's exports will be able to enter the EU market duty-free in 2012 and 86 per cent of imports from the EU will be able to enter South Africa's market duty-free by that date. The Ambassador also says that any EPA agreed to at this stage by South Africa would be ‘goods only’. His country is not in a position to discuss services and investment at this time, he says, since the region first has to develop a common position around what are known as the “Singapore issues” (Services) and should not pre-empt the Doha Round discussions in the areas in the World Trade Organisation. Says the Ambassador: “Let us first harmonise in the region so we can have a proper agreement with the EU of equal benefit to us all.”

## ➤ Knowledge swaps

In addition, the Summit took stock of the 2007 SA-EU ‘Strategic Partnership’ which involves dialogue between the EU and South Africa on a whole range of issues: Migration, Health, Space, Energy, Information and Communication Technol-



ogy (ICT), Maritime Transport, Science and Technology, Trade, Development, Environment, Sustainable Development and Peace and Security.

The aim is to exchange expertise in such areas. "For example, in the area of energy, we have created two working groups; one on clean coal technology and one on carbon capture and storage", explains the Ambassador. Under the EU's 7th Research Framework Programme South Africa has been awarded €13M through calls for proposals to South African organisations.

The Summit also took stock of the global financial situation, climate change, the Iranian nuclear situation, the Middle East peace process and situations in Somalia and Darfur, and Zimbabwe. Says Ambassador

*“Let us first harmonise in the region so we can have a proper agreement with EU of equal benefit to us all.”*

Sooklal: "We have been criticised over our policy towards Zimbabwe. We could not afford to see a failed state – the impact on our country and its neighbours would have been too ghastly to contemplate. Zimbabwe is moving in a positive direction and we have to work to ensure that we have a prosperous and stable Zimbabwe."

He stresses that the SA-EU Strategy should feed into the Africa-EU Strategy (see separate articles in this issue on the AU-EU Troika, Transport and Science and Technology). "The Africa agenda is one of our key areas of foreign policy", says the Ambassador. South Africa is present in six out of the eight Africa-EU partnerships. But additional political impetus in the process is needed. The 'action plan' agreed had been left to the African Union's Commission - which lacks resources - and the EU Commission. "The regional communities have to have more of a role in advancing this

programme. Under the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the driving force is the regional economic communities. We believe that if we adapt the same model, we will find a faster pace of delivery", he says, adding that various African countries should "champion" selected partnerships to drive them forward. A lack of funding is also an issue and the private sector and civil society need to be brought on board to a greater extent, adds Ambassador Sooklal. "It is a programme about us, about the African continent, working with the EU", he says.

The Ambassador responds to news of protests in South Africa over a downturn in the economy: "Prior to the financial crisis, the South African economy was growing at about five per cent. We had an energy crisis at the end of 2007 and 2008 and this has been due to the fact that growth was going too fast and we did not plan well enough". He says that even prior to the global economic crisis, South Africa already put in place a 787bn\*\* rand programme to renovate infrastructure. The hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup is also expected to give the economy a boost.

"There is the developed South Africa that has been moved by the new opportunities created by democracy and is becoming part of the global mainstream and the second economy where there are major challenges", he says, including "service delivery".

"With the EC we have discussed regional policy and how it has worked and helped the smaller accession countries. We agreed with the EU Commissioner for Regional Policy, that they will run a workshop in South Africa next year to share their experiences with us and see how we can draw lessons from the EU experience, especially in terms of service delivery and local government", says Ambassador Sooklal. **D.P.**

\* The EU has signed a 'goods only' agreement in the SADC Region with: Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique and Swaziland (2009). Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland are SACU members along with South Africa and Namibia.

\*\* 10.84 South African rand = 1 Euro (15/10/2009, Bloomberg)



Work on the new rapid transport system for Johannesburg for the FIFA World Cup.  
© Hans Pienaar 2009



Cape Town water front, South Africa. © M Percival

## Keywords

Dr. Anil Sooklal; South Africa; Jacob Zuma; SADC; SACU; NEPAD; Africa-EU Strategy.

## Development NGOs concerned about new European priorities

*“European policies make developing countries poorer”, was the verdict of a report published by the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development on October 13 in Brussels. CONCORD is particularly concerned about the Commission’s proposals to adopt a more targeted approach, reducing the number of policy areas analysed in terms of their impact on development.*

The EU’s commitment to Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) began in 2005. The EU originally identified and committed itself to achieving coherence between internal and development policies in 12 areas – trade, the environment, climate change, security, agriculture, fisheries, the social dimension of globalisation, employment and decent working conditions, migration, research, the information society, transport and energy.

The food, energy and financial crises that have struck in the meantime have highlighted the growing interdependence of economies and the increasing importance of flows of capital other than public aid for developing countries. Taking all aspects into account, a communication published by the Commission on 15 September said it was necessary to focus on a few PCD priorities, restricting its commitment to the following areas: climate change, food security,

migration, intellectual property rights and peace and security.

### ➤ Clear departure

CONCORD has grave concerns about this new approach. A press release issued by the NGO said: “This document marks a clear departure from the Commission’s commitment to scrutinising the impact of its policies on the poor. Vital policy areas such as trade, which has massive implications for the lives of millions of poor people, have suddenly been dropped.”

“The EU cannot give with one hand and take away with the other. It doesn’t make sense for the developing world, and it doesn’t make sense for the EU. This incoherence between European policies means wasted EU money, and wasted lives in poor countries”, said Justin Kilcullen, President of CONCORD,

the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development.

“The European Union needs to think carefully about how policies in different areas affect the lives of millions of poor people outside the EU. Member States need to implement coherent policies and meet their aid commitments”, explained Rilli Lappalainen, Secretary-General of the Finnish NGDO platform Kehys, and a member of CONCORD’s Board.

“CONCORD calls on the EU and its Member States to ensure that all its policies that affect developing countries are coherent and have poverty eradication as their primary aim” added Justin Kilcullen. **M.M.B.**

### Keywords

CONCORD; NGO; Policy Coherence for Development; PCD.



# TRIALOG: matching the sides of the NGO triangle

*On joining the European Union (EU), Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the EU's 12 'new' Member States had little experience of development cooperation in the South. Set up in 2000, Vienna-based TRIALOG funded by the European Commission and Austrian Development Cooperation has been helping to link up the EU's NGOs in the North, South and East in "building platforms, networks, exchanging information", explains its policy officer in Brussels, Rebecca Steel-Jasińska.*



Map showing EU newcomers. © TRIALOG

Ten of the 12 'new' member states Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia gained EU membership on 1 May 2004, followed by Bulgaria and Romania on 1 January 2007. TRIALOG is also reaching out to EU candidate countries including Croatia, Macedonia and Turkey.

Although they do not have as much development experience, NGOs from the newcomer states do have unique experience in working on development projects in their own backyards such as in Belarus, Ukraine and also in Afghanistan. TRIALOG is filling the gap in integrating the NGOs of the new EU member states and accession countries into EU's NGO umbrella body, the NGO

Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD).

In 2006, a development 'fair' to match up NGOs from all corners of the EU and its neighbours with partners in developing countries, took place in Vienna. Another such event is on the cards for February 2010 (venue to be decided). TRIALOG's other activities have included strengthened policy dialogue and networking, training on EU policies and how to go about obtaining funding from institutions. It has also provided information on development policy for the respective presidencies of two member states; Slovenia and the Czech Republic.

Rebecca Steel-Jasińska explains that TRIALOG, and the national development

platforms of new member states that it is helping set up, still have their work cut out in raising public awareness of the need for action against poverty and equal relations between developed and developing countries in the EU's newest states.

## > ODA lagging

The 12 currently lag behind in the amount of Gross National Income (GNI) spent on development assistance. According to CONCORD's 'AidWatch' which tracks levels of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in all EU Member States, the EU's 12 new members are behind in their target of a collective 0.17 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI) to be spent on ODA by 2010 and 0.55 per cent by 2015, especially given that some of them, including Estonia and Latvia, have cut their respective national ODA commitments this year. This puts in doubt the attainment by the EU's 27 member state of a collective GNI commitment of 0.56 per cent by 2010 and 0.7 per cent by 2015.\*

Phase IV of the TRIALOG project (September 2009-September 2012) is to include the publication of a step-by-step guide to Policy and Advocacy, further development of the national platforms and the participation in a major conference of development NGOs scheduled to take place in November 2010 in Managua, Nicaragua. The event is expected to discuss the way forward for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and aims to develop a code of conduct for civil society and to sharpen its profile. **D.P.**

\* Statistics from 'Lighten the load – In a time of crisis, European aid has never been more important', CONCORD, May 2009.

## Keywords

TRIALOG; Rebecca Steel-Jasińska; CONCORD; ODA.



# Common Fund for Commodities comes of age

*The Amsterdam-based Common Fund for Commodities (CCF), now 20 years old, is alive and kicking despite never having played one of the roles for which it was conceived. We spoke to its Tanzanian Managing Director, Ali Mchumo, who took up the post in 2004, about how it is serving some of the poorest communities directly or indirectly dependent on non-oil commodities for their livelihoods.*



Ambassador Ali Mchumo. © Debra Percival 2009

It was originally planned as a mechanism to intervene in price volatility which hit the revenue and livelihoods in some of world's poorest countries. Ambassador Mchumo explains: "When former colonies became independent in the 1960s, the countries found that the international economic order was not very conducive and supportive to development of commodities. They were affected by the volatility of the prices of commodities, also by negative terms of trade with developed countries who sell industrial goods, in other words, the prices of commodities declined and the import of industrial goods grew so there was a mismatch".

The idea of a fund to stabilise prices for commodities such as tea, coffee, rubber and cocoa to buy buffer stocks which could be bought in a time of high production and sold during a time of lower production surfaced in the United Nations' Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The Fund was up and running by 1989.

"Even when it was being discussed in the UN, there were mixed feelings. Buffer

stocks were a non-starter, so what we have been doing since is to concentrate on the second objective: financing of commodity projects to enable farmers to increase their productivity and value of commodity, post-harvest quality control and also pest and disease control", explains the Ambassador.

## ➤ MDG focus

The CCF's current five-year action plan (2008-2012) is in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and foresees the link between commodity development and poverty reduction through increasing pre-harvest productivity, post-harvest processing, marketing and quality improvement, market expansion projects and price risk management. Projects can be funded for any of 37 commodities and three metals minerals: zinc, copper and lead.

The CCF is an inter-governmental body: its 107 ([www.common-fund.org](http://www.common-fund.org)) members each pay a one-off 'capital contribution' which is invested to finance the running of the body and also some projects. But its

main source of project funding is voluntary contributions which come largely from bigger countries including The Netherlands, Japan and Germany. In addition, the fund has non-paying institutional members including the EC, the African Union, the Common market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and Caribbean community (CARICOM).

About 42 per cent of projects financed to date are in Asia, 34 per cent in Africa, 22 per cent in Latin America and 2 per cent in others countries. Ambassador Mchumo explains that the unique thing about the CCF is its commodity rather than country approach. He explains that CCF projects are "demand driven", coming straight from producers.

One project bearing fruit for a handful of East and Southern African states including Mozambique, Uganda and Tanzania is the provision of better seedlings for cashew nut producers. It means higher yields, within three years, instead of six to seven.

And a project in East Africa is enabling sisal producers to get more from their production, not just by selling fibre, but also from sisal waste. “We are using sisal waste which is 95 per cent of the plant to produce gas which can provide electricity for rural use and also for fertiliser”, explains Ambassador Mchumo.

The EC is also contributing to CCF projects through its All-ACP Agricultural Commodities Programme. A West Africa seed cotton project for small holder cotton farmers in Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire and Mali (EC support in the range of \$US3.5M) means that farmers will be able to sell

uncontaminated cotton seed at high prices. In East Africa the programme is backing a project (EC contribution of \$US1M) to improve the efficiency of small-scale cotton farming. Ambassador Ali Mchumo says CCF’s focus is on Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the poorest in higher revenue developing nations.

### > ‘Warehouse system’

But can the fund do something more systemic about the commodity price vagaries which can have devastating effects on some of the poorest rural communities? The Ambassador says that the CCF is currently

rolling out a ‘warehouse system’. “Because of price volatility, we are piloting a scheme in some countries whereby we appoint warehouse management and the warehouse links with a local bank. The peasant farmer sells his produce in the warehouse and is able to get 60 per cent of the market value of the product, waiting for a time for the prices to increase. Our experience is that when peasants have the produce, they are always at the mercy of the middle men who want to take advantage of the peasants’ need for quick money to be able to pay school fees for their children. Through this system, we are showing the peasant farmer that he can get a better price – he doesn’t have to rush to sell and this protects him from the volatility at the local level: we wish we could do this at a global level.”

We asked Ambassador Mchumo whether governments can do anything to better manage the ups and downs of commodity prices. The EC’s recently published report, ‘Overcoming fragility in Africa: Forging a new European approach’ draws attention to how commodity price fluctuations have hit sub-Saharan fragile states during the 2008-2009 global economic crisis. It reads: “They are exposed to the crisis mainly through trade: the reduction in export earnings is accompanied by an adverse terms of trade effect reinforced by the excessive dependence on commodity exports of fragile Sub-Saharan African countries and the polarisation of their exports.”

The Ambassador replies: “We think it is possible through WTO negotiations on agriculture or non agricultural marketing arrangements but also by other international fora, provided there is a consensus by the big players.”

He says that the time has come for the CCF to not only do pilot projects but also fund more comprehensive projects that can have immediate results on the economies of countries. The CCF’s mid-December meeting in The Hague, Netherlands, to mark its 20th anniversary will also look for avenues to expand its financial resource base, says the Ambassador. He says that the CCF has almost 200 proposals from all over the world on its books waiting for funding. **D.P.**

### Keywords

Common Fund for Commodities; Ambassador Ali Mchumo; commodities; WTO; financial crisis.

Coffee shrub, Togo. © Reporters / BSIP





# “We can’t rely on the Berlin Wall any more”



Graffiti on the remnants of the inner Berlin Wall near central Berlin, Germany, 2009. © UPP / Reporters

*Twenty years after the event, Boubacar Boris Diop speaks about how the fall of the Berlin Wall was emblematic of another collapse, namely that of past deferral to Western values, and the necessity of a return to African identity. Meeting in Brussels with this major writer of sub-Saharan literature, who since 2003, has decided to write, not only in French, but also in Wolof, the language of his native Senegal.*

**S**heltering from the Brussels north wind, ensconced in a plush city-centre hotel bar – Boubacar Boris Diop dislikes the whiff of old cigarettes in nearby bars – the writer begins by telling us about his current project: looking at the question of identity. This is actually what

he came to talk about in Brussels, invited by the circle for Cooperation Education and Culture (CEC). “The main subject was Valentin-Yves Mudimbe, the near-worshipped Kinshasa writer who, since teaching in the US, has decided to write only in English”, he explains.

Mudimbe, in his 1979 novel, *L'Ecart*, tells the story of Ahmed Nara. Nara is an African ethnologist who ends up taking his own life when he finds himself unable to conclude his research on a population he has been asked to study, and whose mentality, owing to his own Western schooling that has equipped him with inadequate tools and frames of reference, is entirely estranged to him. “At the time”, explains Boubacar Boris Diop, “I identified with Ahmed Nara and the existentialism he symbolised à la Sartre and Camus. But 30 years later, the attachment is less obvious. You can sense the trickery and mimicry”.

## ➤ Sartre’s Boris

Today, the Senegalese writer claims his view is somewhat removed from those major

literary names, Sartre in particular, while having appropriated, nonetheless, the name of one of his protagonists in the *Chemins de la liberté* cycle, Boris, “the anarchist, the libertarian”, to add to his own “very common Senegalese family name”. Boubacar Boris Diop, pen name, was born.

To understand this ‘rage’ in relation to these allegiances, one has to unwind the thread of history. And ‘Boris’, as he is henceforth known, tells the story. First his childhood: “my love for stories goes back to my childhood, when my mother told stories to me, my brothers and cousins. I wanted to hear them again; I was very impressionable”. Boris went to school and then high school. “My father was a colonial official, who loved France, and was bursar at my high school in Dakar.” A school which for a long time bore the name of Joost Van Vollenhoven, who was born in Algeria to Dutch parents, and was Governor of French West Africa (FWA) in May 1917. Joost Van Vollenhoven, whose memory remains deep in the hearts of many a Senegalese for having refused to recruit Senegalese to the battlefields of World War I, resigned to go to the front himself, dying





Boubacar Boris Diop. © Marie-Martine Buckens

## BOOKS BY BOUBACAR BORIS DIOP

- *Le Temps de Tamango*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1981
- *Thiaroye, terre rouge*, (Théâtre) Paris, Éditions L'Harmattan, 1990
- *Les Tambours de la mémoire*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1991
- *Les Traces de la meute*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1993
- *Le Cavalier et son ombre*, Paris, Stock, 1997 (Prix Tropiques)
- *Murambi, le livre des ossements*, Paris, Stock, 2000
- *Doomi Golo*, Dakar, Papyrus, 2003 (in Wolof).
- *L'impossible innocence*, Paris, Éditions P. Rey, 2004
- *Nérophobie*, Essay, with Odile Tobner and François-Xavier Verschave. Les arènes, 2005
- *Kaveena*, Paris, Editions Philippe Rey, 2006
- *L'Afrique au-delà du miroir*, Éditions Philippe Rey, Paris, 2007
- *Les petits de la guenon*, Paris, Editions Philippe Rey, 2009 (free translation of Doomi Golo by Boubacar Boris Diop himself)

in combat in 1918. "He was a admirable figure", says Boubacar Boris.

### ► Berlin, the first shock

While waiting, he devours the books in his father's library, discovering his favourites: Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, Jules Verne and in particular Kipling's *Jungle Book*. After that he tackles the existentialists – Sartre, Camus and the others. In 1968, Senegal had its own 'May 1968'. At the time, one man stood out: Omar Blondin Diop. A graduate from the *Ecole normale supérieure* in Paris and cohort of Cohn-Bendit, he returned to Dakar in Senegal to pass on the egalitarian ideas that had driven May 1968. He was later to be arrested, imprisoned and then found dead by suffocation. Senegal, on the edge of chaos, would return to calm with the 'help' of France.

"Omar was the hero of my first book; it was at a time when everyone was a Marxist, or raved about Che, or raged against French

imperialism". "Still", continues Boris, "we stayed very close to France; it was a period of grudging Francophilia".

The first shock came in 1989 – the fall of the Berlin Wall. "We realised that Marxism and its opposite were only two versions of Western rationalism. There was no more Berlin Wall to rely on. We had to bring issues of our culture and history to the forefront. Rediscover Ancient Egypt. Loosen the shackles of shame."

### ► Rwanda, open wound

After that came Rwanda. "A group of writers of which I was one went there after the genocide, in 1998, as part of the 'Rwanda: writing to remember' project. I said to myself that if one could allow 10,000 Rwandans to get killed over three months, if no one had done anything, it was because no one really cared about Africa. That's when I decided to write in my mother tongue." He continues: "Literature written in another language

has a transitory status. I really believe that. If we carry on writing in the language of the colonists: English, French, Portuguese, we'll eventually come to a dead end."

Boubacar Boris Diop's next book will again explore the subject of Rwanda; to understand, despite everything. He's working on it from Tunis, where he currently lives. Tunis, halfway between Paris and Senegal? "But also not too far from my family." Boris, who's just turned 63, has two grown up children based in Canada. A literary son – "we don't speak much; instead we just play chess in the evenings" – and a mathematician daughter. And to relax – nothing like a good football match. "That's what gets me going; I like watching Barcelona and I'm a fan of their previous coach, Dutchman Frank Rijkaard!" **M.M.B and J.M.**

### Keywords

Boubacar Boris Diop; Senegal; Mudimbe.

Alfred Sayila\*

# African bees for development

Beekeepers in Botswana  
squeeze honey from combs  
using manual application.  
© Patrick Mulonga

*Climate change in Southern Africa is expected to further affect the honey and beeswax industries which due to a number of factors, are on the decline despite the adoption of modern beekeeping methods and technology in some countries of the region.*

According to Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) experts in Gaborone, Botswana, both excessive heat and downpours deter bees from foraging while heavy rains wash away pollen and nectar both essential ingredients of honey-making. Both excesses result in less breeding of bees. Other environmental factors like bushfires, deforestation, farming and industrialisation have been responsible for the destruction of bee colonies in the region. Speaking on the same matter, a forest technician in Zambia, Matthew Mulenga, said bushfires are the biggest factor in the annihilation of the region's bee colonies.

'Every single year, huge swarms of bees and colonies are destroyed as a result of these fires,' Mulenga disclosed. Many countries in

the region where bushfires and deforestation are not controlled for lack of effective forestry policies are observing the same trend.

The claiming of land for farming and industrial activities has also made bees abscond their natural habitat in search of new homes far away from human settlements. Since beekeeping depends on forests for sustenance in terms of habitat, hive materials and forage (nectar and pollen), the ceding of land to farming and human development has meant the extinction of certain tree species which provide ingredients for the bees to make honey. Huge populations of bees can be found in South Africa, Zambia, Tanzania, Botswana and other countries with well-organised and protected national animal parks.



*“Honey is a delicate product and requires proper handling right from primary production to secondary processing.”*



Beekeeper in full protective clothing extracts honey comb by removing a super frame from a beehive.  
© Reporters/Science Photo Library

Environmental issues present a lot of challenges to beekeeping in Southern Africa. Until the environmental and forestry bodies in the region become active in policing their areas, nothing much can be expected in the preservation of naturally bred bees for the region's development.

### ► The need for high standards

The beekeeping and honey industries also face marketing problems. For instance, the high standards set for honey and beeswax imports by some European countries and the United States have made it hard for many exporters in Southern Africa to penetrate their markets. Strict regulations on honey imports from the African region have made the majority of honey traders, who mostly deal in wild honey collected from bark hives after smoking with fresh leaves, unable to sell their produce to developed countries in the west. Conditions set by the European Commission (EC Codex Standard) include that African honey should have a distinct pleasant single flower flavour with no trace of any toxic reagents. It must neither be smoke-tainted, contaminated, nor laced with sucrose.

This has proved a tall order for many African exporters of honey and beeswax who depend on wild varieties. Sindiso Ngwenya, Secretary General of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), admitted that the region's beekeepers do not presently have the capacity to meet the import demands of some European countries. This means that the great majority of them will continue to have their commodities rejected on the European mar-

kets, hence depriving them of livelihood. He hoped that European countries would relax some of their conditions in the spirit of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), signed by some of the countries of the region.

European Union representative in Zambia, Derek Fee, says importers cannot be asked to compromise on quality. He advises African countries to help beekeepers in their areas to develop their industries to the highest level possible using new technology in the breeding of bees and processing of honey products. "Honey is a delicate product and requires proper handling right from primary production to secondary processing," he says. He adds, however, that Southern African honey products will continue to be in high demand in Europe because of their natural quality and taste.

### ► Pushing exports

Only a small number of exporters - usually those working with foreign agents who understand the overseas markets - are the ones who have found outlets for their produce. Every month, over 30 million tonnes of honey and 19 million tonnes of beeswax from Southern Africa find their way to European markets. Britain is said to be one of the largest consumers of honey from the region, importing between 25,000-34,000 tonnes every year. Germany is next in line with 10,000-18,000 tonnes.

All in all, exports of honey and beeswax from Southern Africa to overseas markets are expected to grow in volumes in the next few years especially as the majority of bee-

keepers adopt new methods of beekeeping and honey processing. There also seems to be a relaxation of import conditions in some European countries who accept honey with lower value provided it meets certain criteria. This will definitely push up exports from the region.

Although there are no concrete facts on income earned from honey and beeswax exports, the region is said to plough in more than US\$46bn every year. The figure could be higher because of the improvement in quality and production in the past few years. Now that the two sub-regions are working towards the integration of their trade activities through the unification of COMESA, SADC and the East African Community (EAC) with a common Free Trade Area and Customs Union, honey and beeswax exports in the region will be greatly helped.

With a population of about 527 million, the three trade groupings which represent 26 countries in Africa offer a robust and vibrant market for honey and beeswax produced. In fact, a unified regional trade and customs system will put both importers and exporters within the reach of each other. But the unification of the three trade cartels is not currently on the horizon because of political preference, bureaucracy and insufficient capital.

\* Journalist from Zambia.

### Keywords

Honey; beeswax; SADC; COMESA; EPA.

A report by Hegel Goutier

# Seychelles

## Almost a national emblem: Beauty, liberty, security, hospitality – and *farniente*

Just like the five coloured arrows of the original Seychelles flag speeding towards the future, the motto of this archipelago country could well have comprised these five characteristics. How, then, to avoid lapsing into stereotypes? A country of extreme beauty, with a population whose friendliness is rarely matched, added to the fact that its politics are evolving within a Westminster-style system. A system that has been functioning seamlessly since the socialist drifts of the 1970s. Moreover, income per head is now closer to that of the rich countries than to that of its neighbours, which at least guarantees its inhabitants a relatively comfortable lifestyle; good education, health

care, longevity and security. In fact, in the latest rankings of the human development index of the UNDP, Seychelles comes 57th out of 182 countries, putting it among the well developed countries. Indeed, it is the only African country to feature in this category apart from Mauritius, which follows in 81st place. It is also one of the safer countries of the world, with a negligible amount of crime as well as an absence of dangerous animals and natural hazards.

Seychelles mixes modernity with a proximity to nature, human rights and is committed to a high level of equality between men and women.

One of the country's surprises is a social security system that even covers treatment abroad as part of its health insurance for every citizen.

Social relations and solidarity amongst the population foster a strong sense of togetherness. This is reinforced by a President who spends many evenings listening and sharing ideas with his citizens in all four corners of the country, putting himself up for criticism and even local sarcasm which is not lacking in bite.



## ➤ A replica Garden of Eden

One could say there's no such thing as paradise – and that would be another cliché – except that a 19th Century erudite English general, General Charles Gordon, took it upon himself to map the Vallée de Mai, Praslin Island, – a replica Garden of Eden, as depicted in Genesis. Today it is a natural heritage site of UNESCO.

A country smiled upon by the gods? Not quite. But you do have to go looking for something untoward. Having said that, this 'Eden' has been hit by the financial piracy resulting in a global financial crisis which created a slowdown in Seychelles' economy, the postponement of various major projects and a sharp dip in the national currency, which faltered before recovering, but still led to an increase in an already high cost-of-living. The only defensive move by Seychelles' business community was to drop prices to continue attracting customers in tourism, from mid-range to the luxury category (mass tourism never having been developed – by choice – in the country). Tourism, one of the two major mainstays of the economy seems, so far, to have had a narrow escape. Optimism, albeit cautious, seems to be returning.

## ➤ Against the financial hijackers and Somali pirates. A sigh of relief.

Another crisis came in the form of real life pirates from Puntland, who are scouring the Indian Ocean waters. As part of the plans to vanquish this new threat, the major powers – whose fishing fleets have been some of the first victims – have urged Seychelles to play a role in the fight against piracy, which is somewhat beyond the means of this small republic, given the risks to its security, quality of life and democracy. Although the pirates have hardly ventured into Seychelles' waters, their forays nevertheless had a psychological effect on the island. There was a concern that ill-informed tourists would draw an over-hasty parallel between the words 'piracy' and 'Seychelles'. This has meant that Seychelles have had to invest in communication to keep the sector buoyant. Results are so far promising so far. Tourist numbers remain stable and investors, who had frozen, or halted, certain major infrastructure projects have either relaunched them, or have committed to doing so in the near future. For now, the danger is over but it has still been felt.

## ➤ A *créolité* of language and human relationships

Seychelles is a hymn to *créolité*, the perfect integration of cultures and lifestyles, the marriage of ethnic heritage, the permeability between communities making a kaleidoscope of each one, each contributing its own special something, rather than being a homogenous melting pot. Seychelles' society is a continuum of appearances. Its *créolité* is also social, one in which the relations between social and cultural classes appear more fluid than elsewhere. A party at the foreign affairs ministry to mark the minister's departure was an opportunity to observe the ease of contact between people from ministers to service staff.

Relations with foreigners go far beyond traditional stereotypes, whether positive or negative. Visitors enjoy a genuine friendliness usually reserved for families, with *tu\** being quickly established, in addition to spontaneous generosity. This is perhaps the country's greatest asset, among many. The local *créolité* is the antithesis of folkloric uniformity. Only the Creole language is the same for all and is enriched by additions from French, English, Indian and African languages.

Indeed, a *Seychellois* will not be at a loss for words when speaking to the visitor he stops at a turn in the road to enquire about his impressions of the country – never begging or expecting anything in return. It is a display of his openness – an urge to communicate and overcome insularity. Perhaps, of all Seychelles' wonders, this spirit of empathy is probably the most precious of all its charms.

\* **Puntland** is a region in northeastern Somalia, whose leaders declared it an autonomous state in 1998.

\*\* 'Tu' is used when addressing a familiar person in French.

### Keywords

Seychelles; Charles Gordon; Vallée de Mai; Praslin; pirate; Puntland; Somalia; Indian Ocean; *créolité*; Hegel Goutier.



## History

# A well-tempered suite

**T**he history of Seychelles is one that is relatively unmarked by tensions – even during its most unstable periods. Slavery, for example, did not produce the atrocities seen elsewhere, neither did the struggle for independence, nor, in fact, the nationalist coup d'Etat during the republic's early years. In more recent times, since the re-establishment of a multipartite regime, five elections have now taken place in transparency. The only shadow in this, perhaps, is that the opposition has never won an election. Perhaps because they are too weak, or perhaps, as occurs in many small countries, the government looks favourably upon those who support it.

Seychelles seems to have remained unknown until around 850 A.D. when Arabic manuscripts made reference to them. At the turn of the 16th century more precise reports were made about these small islands. An island group to which Joao da Nova bequeathed his name in 1501, this before they were renamed Farquhar, an explorer's name. In 1502, Vasco de Gama renamed them the Amirante Islands and the Portolan charts subsequently made reference to Ganaa, (today's Mahé) and to other names, among them *Sept frères* or *Sept sœurs*.

### > Early mixing

These islands have long served as a stopover for ships headed for India, in particular for pirates relocating to the Indian Ocean following numerous misadventures in the Caribbean. Around 1770, the French began to settle there, followed by former African slaves liberated and abandoned by English sailors. This marked the beginning of the mixing.

In 1756, the French officially took hold of some of the archipelago's islands, which were renamed Séchelles in 1758 in honour of Jean-Moreau de Séchelles, Louis XV's financial auditor, who never in fact set foot there. Later, in the wake of the French Revolution, as part of this conflict, on 16 May 1794, the English occupied Mahé and subsequently the other islands, all of this later included in the Treaty of Paris. British rule was formalised on 21 April 1811, and the governor, Nisus Barthelemy Sullivan, was sworn in.



Downtown Victoria. Seychelles' political system is evolving towards a Westminster-style system. © Hegel Goutier

Séchelles became Seychelles. But the hearts and minds of the *Seychellois* remained resolutely French, while adapting to British forms of government. This dual identity was to remain. After the abolition of slavery in 1833 and its entry into law two years later, Seychelles did not follow Mauritius, who had called in scores of Indians to accomplish manual work and as a consequence suffered severe ethnic

tensions. The 6,500 former slaves – from a population of 7,500 inhabitants – now played a key role in Seychelles' burgeoning economy, with cocoa, coffee, cloves, vanilla and turtle. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 paved the way for European steamboats to refuel with coal at Mahé. The capital, Victoria, developed into a charming town.

### > Liberation under the aegis of pragmatism

At the outset of English colonialism, Seychelles was transferred to Mauritian rule. Then on 9 November 1903, the country distanced itself from its custodian to become controlled by the British Crown. Initial political stirrings against colonial rule eventually came from the Tax Payers Association, not from political organisation. A significant sign of pragmatism. The slump which resurfaced during the Second World War disappeared before the conflict's end, thanks to the patchouli oil, which brought in huge earnings. It was 1944 that the Colonial Development Welfare Act was adopted and The Seychelles social security system was created. The Seychellois had signed up *en masse* during World War II, and, seven years after its end, still numbered 1,400 in the British forces stationed in the Middle East.



Seychelles, a population with a rich mix from early on. © Hegel Goutier



In 1964, two political parties were born. First, the Seychelles People's United Party (SPUP), a Third-World independence party, with France-Albert René as their leader. Second, the Seychelles Democratic Party (SDP) wished to retain colonial status and endeavoured to improve the quality of life, with James Mancham at the helm. Universal suffrage was introduced in November 1967. The first electoral issues consisted in setting up a legislative council, the ratification of a constitution and the election of ministers to serve alongside the governor. Each subsequent vote strengthened local autonomy. The 'moderate' SDP party came out victorious, as in the parliamentary elections of November 1970, and its leader, James Mancham, became Prime Minister.

1973 saw the first mass demonstrations for independence. Backed by the UN and the OAU, Seychelles finally became an 'autonomous colony' in 1974. The two political parties were reconciled and after the 1974 elections, James Mancham became Prime Minister, with his former rival France-Albert René, as Minister. The institutional conference of 1976 in



Felicity Islands. In the 19th century Seychelles' economy based on cocoa, coffee, cloves, vanilla and turtle was burgeoning.  
© Hegel Goutier© Copyright

London set the date for independence at midnight on 29 June 1976. At the time, Seychelles had a population of just 47,612

inhabitants. In the coalition government in place since independence, James Mancham was president of the Republic and France-Albert René, Prime Minister.



Mahé Island. © Copyright

In 1977, a coup d'état was mounted against Mancham (who was in London at the time) by his PM, with the SPUP as a single party and the West now a 'designated enemy', in contemporary parlance. The opposition was silenced but nevertheless tolerated. It began a counter-coup with South African mercenaries, who had been subjugated with the help of Tanzania. The multi-party system was eventually restored in 1991. A new constitution, following initial rejection, was ratified by referendum in 1992. A year later, the instigator of the coup d'état, France-Albert René, was re-elected, only this time democratically. He remained until he resigned in 2004, having reached the maximum age of service. His vice-president and heir apparent, James Alix Michel, succeeded him temporarily, his position confirmed by his re-election in 2006. **H.G.**

### Keywords

Séchelles; Seychelles; James Mancham; France-Albert René; James Alix Michel; Hegel Goutier.

## Economy

# Success of reforms follows the spectre of bankruptcy



Danny Faure, Seychelles' Finance Minister. © Hegel Goutier

**T**oday's mood in both the government and private sectors is one of relief, if not real optimism. Yet, it is only a short time ago that Seychelles was feeling the full force of the global financial crisis, having already been hit earlier by the oil and food crises.

As Danny Faure, the country's Finance Minister, apprehensively explained: "Our country has been severely affected by both the oil and food crises since the beginning of 1998 and this has caused significant foreign exchange problems. Seychelles' monetary reserves only covered three days' imports, so we were unable to make payments on our international Eurobond obligations. The result? Seychelles was downgraded to the 'selective default' ranking in September 2008".

On 21 October 2008, President Michel made a solemn public address to the nation announcing that he had requested the assistance of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and put into place a tough economic regime, but promised this would deliver success. Danny Faure said: "We made a commitment to take measures to control the convertibility of the Seychelles rupee, reduce foreign debt (which had reached 170 per cent

of GDP by 21 October 2008 – the highest level anywhere in the world) and to put the economy back on track. Today, we are feeling the benefits of these actions. For example, the monetary reserves have increased to three months of GDP, and, in April 2009, we obtained debt cancellation of 45 per cent from the Paris Club".



Central Bank of Seychelles. © Hegel Goutier

The IMF and Seychelles government had forecast a 25 per cent fall in revenues from tourism, but the projection is now only 15 per cent. The outlook has since improved, thanks in particular to a major international marketing campaign. In terms of tourist numbers, there will only be a 4 per cent decline this year. Investors are also returning to the sector.

Jennifer Morel, deputy governor of the Central

Bank, explained that the strengthening of the currency had exceeded expectations. "The rupee is in a very strong position at 10 to the dollar as opposed to 17 at the height of the crisis. This actually creates a disadvantage for export industries, like tourism." However, she said that as the market determines the value of the currency, it should stabilise at around 12 to 13 rupees to the dollar.

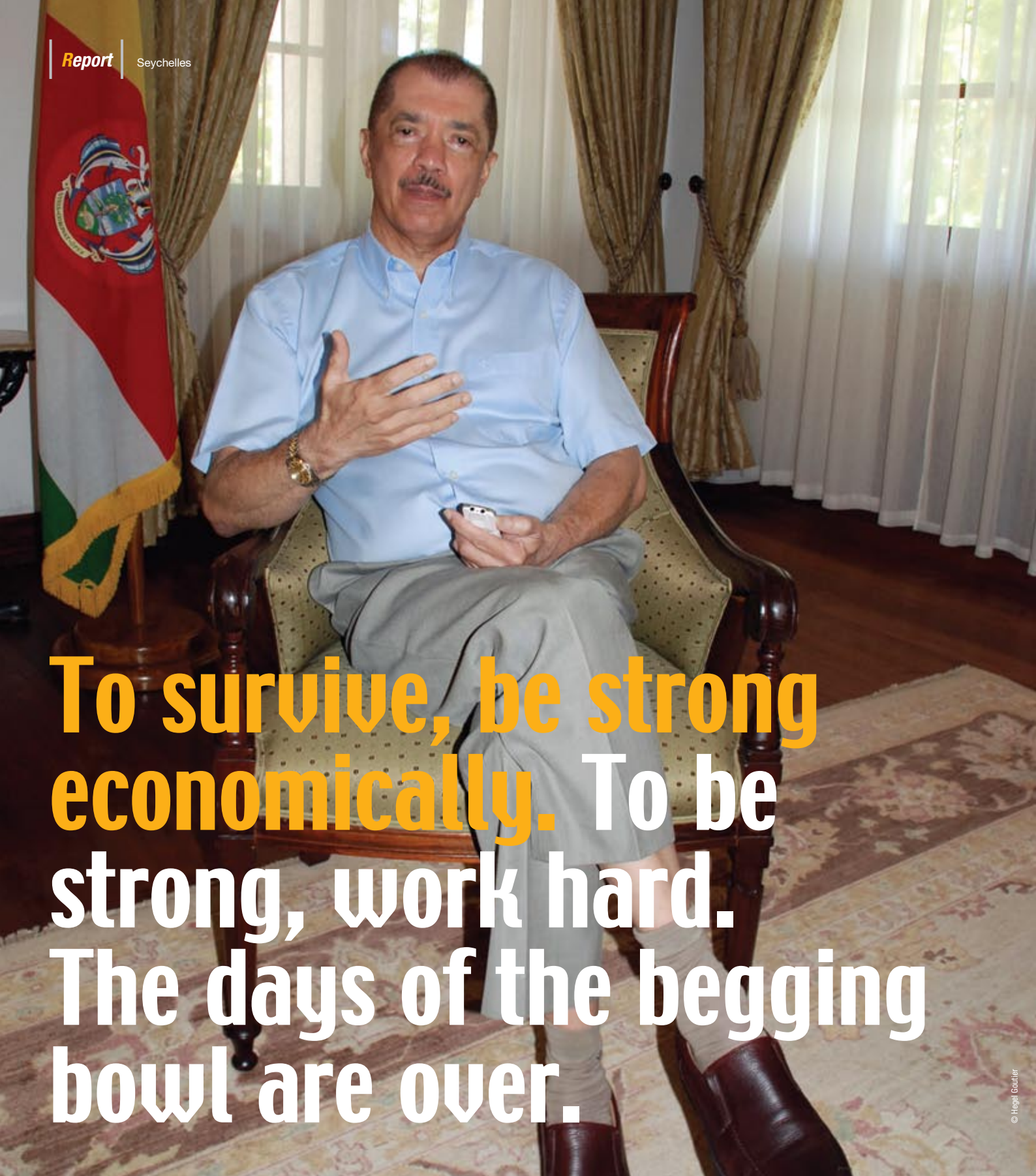
Vaithunasamy Ramados, Head of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, expressed his optimism. He welcomed the reforms which, in his view, have improved governance, "because the system has become more rigorous, in particular with regard to the granting of social security benefits".

Sylviane Valmont, CEO of the Small Enterprise Promotion Agency (SEnPA), paid tribute to the government for taking measures to mitigate the impact of the reforms on small businesses, which largely depend on imported goods. She was pleased that businesses with up to a maximum of five staff do not pay taxes on turnover of less than 250,000 rupee. **H.G.**

### Keywords

Seychelles; Danny Faure; Jennifer Morel; Vaithunasamy Ramados; Sylviane Valmont; SEnPA; Hegel Goutier.





**To survive, be strong economically. To be strong, work hard. The days of the begging bowl are over.**

© Hegel Goutier

### **Interview by Hegel Goutier**

*When The Courier met with the President of the Republic of Seychelles, James Alix Michel, he had just wound up a series of informal meetings with citizens, putting over an image of a rather out of the ordinary president, but especially of a country with an accessibility and ease of contact between the citizens and those in power.*

**European Union (EU) affairs were also on the president's mind; the new EU Ambassador was filing his credentials and President Michel was also in discussions with European countries over piracy in the Indian Ocean. The president was also very taken up with the unfolding economic crisis and its effects on Seychelles which are currently manageable, he told us.**

*How is Seychelles coping in the wake of the global economic turmoil?*

President Michel – Seychelles was not spared the impact of the world economic crisis. In the past, we have also felt the effects of the fuel crises. When fuel went up, the price of food went up. Seychelles had a very high debt. Since independence, our policy is to have a very high standard of social development. We provide our children with free education and equal opportunity and free health care. We also have a housing programme which enables our citizens to obtain housing at a subsidised rate and we have a programme to develop our social infrastructure. Because of the success of our development, what I call a 'development paradox' emerged. We were penalised and could not get access to grants and to subsidised financing. We had to go for commercial loans and this was very costly. This made our situation unsustainable when the fuel, food and financial crisis hit the world and subsequently Seychelles. This is why I decided to implement comprehensive economic reform with our partners; the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), the African Development Bank (ADB)\* and the European Union (EU). One year on, most of our partners are surprised that we have been able to overcome the worst.

We have also negotiated with the Paris Club and are in the process of negotiating debt forgiveness and reduction with our bilateral partners in such a way that our debt can become sustainable in the future.

*But it seems that the price paid for the reform is a new poverty in the country, including the emergence of prostitution.*

I would not say there is poverty in Seychelles. When we implemented the reform, we knew it was going to hit the most vulnerable. This is why we were very firm with our partners; the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) that we had to have a safety net to help the less fortunate and the most vulnerable so that those affected have access to welfare. However, one thing that has made it easier for us to implement reform successfully is that there are jobs in Seychelles; there is no unemploy-

ment as such. Our tourism arrivals have not been too adversely affected. We launched a very aggressive tourism marketing promotion programme. The hotels continue to provide employment, the tourists continue to come and some of the investments that had started up in the sector continue.

So, there is no poverty as such. Only, you have some mothers who have to stay at home to look after the children and families with many children who are assisted by the welfare agency. In Seychelles, like most of the countries, we have been hit by the problem of drugs. We started a very intensive campaign to deal with it and have arrested a number of the traffickers; they are behind bars now. We are also running an anti-addiction programme to help those affected by the scourge. Drugs bring other problems, like prostitution, theft and so on. These have now been addressed at community level. I affirm that these social ills are not really a result of the economic reform programme.

**‘The solution to piracy is Somalia itself. It is a failed state. The international community must find the ways and means to establish a proper state with rule of law in Somalia. As long as the status quo remains, we will always have piracy.’**

*To what extent is the country affected by the piracy crisis?*

It came as a surprise to Seychelles itself. Due to the fact that Somalia is far away from our islands, we did not think that the pirates would come close to home. We have a big economic zone. We have given fishing licences to the EU and other countries which provide us with benefits in terms of

employment and manufacturing; we have, for instance, a major canning factory. When the pirates moved further South with the good weather earlier in the year the fishing fleets moved south; this really affected our earnings from the fishing industry. We also had some setbacks with the yachting industry. But we have taken action. I called on the international community to help Seychelles in patrolling its waters including the EU's *Atalanta* forces, forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), Indian and Chinese patrols and the patrol boats from the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The Americans have now arrived with Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV). And we are now in a better position with our own forces. The fishing boats are now returning; they have military personnel on board who are able to protect them. Things are getting back to normal and we hope we will be able to contain any further onslaught.

*Some of Seychelles' partners have hinted that the country should take more commitments over the imprisonment of pirates and their eventual requests for asylum. Are they being too demanding?*

I think our partners have to realise that as a small island state, we are in a difficult situation. We have neither the infrastructure nor the resources to provide, as Kenya has done, a facility for pirates to come here to be prosecuted; to be sentenced. We cannot put ourselves in the situation of having hundreds of Somali pirates coming here to be prosecuted or incarcerated. In addition, when they cannot be prosecuted, what do we do with them? We have spoken with the EU about our position. In spite of our desire and commitment to support the fight against piracy, we have a problem of logistics, a problem of resources, which the EU and other countries must understand. The solution to piracy is Somalia itself. It is a failed state. The international community must find the ways and means to establish a proper state with rule of law in Somalia. As long as the status quo remains, we will always have piracy.

*Where does Seychelles currently stand in geopolitical terms given your new friends in Asia and South America?*





State House, Victoria. © Hegel Goutier

Military boats, Mahe. "We have taken action against piracy." © Hegel Goutier

My concept of diplomacy today in Seychelles is one of active economic diplomacy. To survive in the new global environment, you need to be economically strong and to be economically strong you have to pursue an active policy of economic diplomacy. So we are friends with everyone. I want to be a partner of other countries because the days of the begging bowl are over. Partnership

is a win-win situation. Today, we are an open democracy with good governance. It makes it possible for us to develop further partnership with all the countries of the World. We belong to regional organisations like the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and we have an important role to play in all these organisations. We are also members of other international organisations and we are taking the lead in something very important to humanity; climate change and environment. Because

we believe in it; it is our future, the future of our tourism industry and the future of humanity.

*Where do you see Seychelles going?*

I believe in active democracy. I believe that a good president should be in constant touch with the people. It is the second time that I have been round the districts to meet with members of the public during this, my second term in office (*Ed: these are planned gatherings in large venues*), listening to them and hearing their complaints views and ideas and asking for their contributions, especially how they see our country in the future. This gives me ideas, so I can better plan the country's future. Every Saturday (*Ed: informally*), I also go round, visiting projects and meeting and talking with people. For me, it is part and parcel of a democracy to let people express themselves and meet their president; to talk and discuss. I have received a wealth of contributions from members of the public. This has enriched my own vision of Seychelles where there is democracy, rule of law, good governance, and transparency. This country is a country where people work hard. You create wealth only if you work hard. Then you share the wealth among the population. My vision is of a prosperous Seychelles in which everyone participates and from which everyone benefits.

\* All notes by the editor: in parenthesis and in italic



"To survive, you need to be economically strong." © Hegel Goutier

## Keywords

James Alix Michel; IOC; SADC; COMESA; Hegel Goutier.



From left to right: Alessandro Mariani, Head of Delegation of the European Commission to Mauritius, Seychelles and Comoros, Barry Faure, Ambassador of Seychelles to European Union  
© Hegel Goutier

# Seychelles-EU

## co-operation

***Alessandro Mariani , the newly-appointed Head of Delegation of the European Commission to Mauritius, Seychelles and Comoros, presented his credentials to the President of the Republic of Seychelles on Tuesday 6 October 2009. He gave an exclusive interview to The Courier on the occasion.***

*Ambassador AM* - I came here to present my credentials to the President of Seychelles. Moreover I had the opportunity to meet with the Vice-President, the Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Transport, the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Special Adviser to the President in charge of climate change, the Ambassadors of the European Union (EU) member states, the Speaker of the National Assembly and the Leader of the Opposition.

I also signed the addendum to the country strategy paper. We have increased our support by €2.5M (from € 5.9 to € 8.4 million) and have restructured our cooperation with Seychelles moving from a project approach to

general budget support. This general budget support operation is going to be submitted already to the European Development Fund (EDF) Committee by the end of this month (October).\*

### *Priorities*

My priorities are of course to consolidate and further improve our relations with Seychelles. We want to relations to focus on politics, security, development, trade and many other issues like climate change and energy. Regarding budget support, three pillars had to be put in place by the country: a reform programme and policy reform; macro-economic framework; and a reform programme in public finance management. On





From left to right: Alessandro Mariani, Head of Delegation of the European Commission, James Alix Michel, President of Seychelles. © Hegel Goutier

all points, there was close coordination with development partners like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and EU Member States. All three pillars are now in place and we can move ahead with general budget support.

Climate change is another priority. Look at the recent speeches by President Barroso of the European Commission and James Michel, the President of the Republic of Seychelles, to see the common spirit, the common vision, and common ideas. In trade terms, Seychelles has been a very active member in the Economic Partnership Agreement negotiations. On 29 August, Seychelles signed the interim EPA in Mauritius, and would like a full and comprehensive EPA as soon as possible. Another important area of cooperation is fisheries which is an extremely important sector of the economy here. There is an agreement covering the period up to January 2011.

*Seychelles is expecting to benefit from the EC's 'Vulnerability Mechanism'. Is there any decision from the Commission yet?*

As you know, the 'Vulnerability FLEX' is for countries that have suffered from a number

of shocks linked to last year's global crisis. It is clear that a country like Seychelles experienced negative impacts. The proposal for Seychelles is around €9M, which is a very sizeable amount of additional financial resources. Should there be a positive decision by the end of October, we would be immediately in business for the preparation of an initial disbursement of €8M out of the €9M by the end of this year.\*

*Will Seychelles have the opportunity of benefiting from the 'other facilities' available?*

I had the opportunity to present two facilities to the Government of Seychelles: the energy facility, focused on renewable energies, and the water facility. Both of them are of great interest to Seychelles which has a number of project ideas that could eventually fit these two facilities. I was informed that a couple of submissions for water facility funding in the past did not progress to the point of being finalised. Stakeholders in Seychelles are now pretty convinced that there is an opportunity for joint work involving possibly also the European Investment Bank.

*Regional cooperation*

Some very interesting EU-funded regional

projects have been approved this year, among which one in the fisheries sector and one for the small islands states' development.

The RecoMap programme, which is being implemented, has been acknowledged by Minister Morgan as one of the most successful interventions the country has implemented to combat coastal erosion. The Minister also congratulated the EC for the fisheries development programme and underlined that Seychelles is 100 per cent together with the EU in the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

*EU commitment vis-à-vis piracy*

Seychelles is grateful to the EU for its anti-piracy mission. The Government of Seychelles had in fact asked the EU to consider the extension of the 'Atalanta' mission to the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Seychelles. The mission was also prolonged to cover the period up to December next year. The EU and other countries are participating on the basis of a UN resolution.

\* Decisions adopted in the meantime

## Keywords

Seychelles-EU cooperation; Alessandro Mariani; Hegel Goutier.

# Flexibility displayed in cooperation between the European Union and Seychelles

Great flexibility was recently shown in the cooperation between the European Union and Seychelles as the priorities defined in the strategy document (a practically sacrosanct set of guidelines on EU-ACP cooperation) have just been completely overhauled at the request of Seychelles.

It could be viewed as a bit of a gamble, but Laura Zampetti, desk for Seychelles at the European Commission, is delighted that Seychelles has reached agreement with the European Union and international financial institutions on adapting its aid. In the case of the EU, it is the use of funding from the 10th European Development Fund (2008-2013) that will change. The Commission had to adjust its cooperation strategy in record time. As a result, almost all of its future aid will be used to support Seychelles' budget.

Laura Zampetti believes this flexibility was made possible thanks to the combination of the following factors:

- the proactive approach of Seychelles, which introduced reforms of economic governance after the oil crisis and even before;
- the early preparation of its case to the international institutions, approaching the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), the European Union and the African Development Bank (ADB) almost simultaneously;
- the Seychelles model, a political democracy supported by advanced social policy which could have been put in jeopardy by the economic and financial crisis the country was facing.

The final, more specific factor is the foresight shown by Seychelles in introducing a plan for the reform of the mechanisms for protecting its social policy (free education and healthcare, allocation of resources to the most in need, long maternity leave etc.)

Viviane Fock-Tave, Seychelles' national authorising officer for the EDF, was delighted that budgetary aid is more relevant and more in line with the country's require-

ments, despite the release-of-funds procedures still being too unwieldy, and that the adjustment is set to provide a better and faster response to crisis situations.



Dance-theatre *Kastor* directed by Raymond Clarisse. Financial reforms conducted by Seychelles included a mechanism to protect education, healthcare ... © Hegel Goutier

## TERMINOLOGY: EDF AND BUDGET

In the language of cooperation between the European Union and the ACP countries, funding is provided from the European Development Fund (EDF) and from the European Union budget, amongst other sources.

**EDF:** The EDF is made up of amounts decided on a voluntary basis by each EU Member State for five-year tranches, which finance each ACP country's National Indicative Programme, each region's Regional Indicative Programme as well as an all-ACP programme. The EDF is managed by the European Commission on behalf of the EU. It contains fixed and flexible elements for the ACP countries and regions. The latter are awarded based on the beneficiary's performance criteria in terms of use of aid, or

reserved for mechanisms such as V-Flex (vulnerability-FLEX – see interview with the Ambassador, Alessandro Mariani which Seychelles has an opportunity to access.

**BUDGET:** this term indicates the European Union's budget adopted annually by the budget authorities: the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. The Commission utilises some funds for projects or facilities, such as the Energy Facility, the Water Facility and the Global Climate Change Alliance Facility. As *The Courier* went to press, Seychelles had an opportunity to obtain €2M from the Global Climate Change Alliance Facility, which is primarily earmarked for small island states, but firstly had to prepare a strategy of adaptation to climate change.



## GOVERNANCE – MOVING TOWARDS CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

Amendment of the Seychelles constitution has moved a step closer. The Judiciary Panel, chaired by Francis McGregor, President of the Seychelles Court of Appeal and Judiciary, has delivered its conclusions to the Chairman of the Constitution Review Committee. To prepare his report, Mr. McGregor held working meetings with constitutionalists and various institutions in Seychelles and abroad, including with the European Parliament's Constitutional Affairs Committee in Brussels, to exchange experiences on the constitutional process in Europe and Seychelles.

McGregor emphasized that comprehensive expertise is available, covering the constitution adopted by Seychelles when it became independent, to the potential amended version. He explained that one of the members of his panel is also the Chairman of the Review Committee and another was the Chairman of the Constitutional Committee when the multi-party system was introduced 15 years ago. He is very glad to be able to call on this expertise as it is vitally important.

Francis McGregor, President of Seychelles' Court of Appeal. © Hegel Goutier



Military boats, Mahé. © Hegel Goutier

***In inviting partners from many countries to join in combating piracy originating in Puntland (Somalia), Seychelles finds itself at the centre of a coalition that it sometimes finds difficult to contain within the limits of its expectations. First of all, the country has been more the victim of communication about piracy than of piracy itself. Although they do enter the territorial waters of Seychelles, the pirates have only rarely approached its coasts. Nevertheless, they did seize a Seychelles vessel, holding its crew of seven Seychelles' sailors hostage for three months. It was only at the cost of a great deal of energy and resources that Seychelles was able to secure their release.***

A call from the United Nations to its members to lend their assistance to the fight against piracy in the Indian Ocean has met with a positive response on the part of the European Union and some of its Member States, especially those that benefit most from fishing agreements between the EU and Seychelles (e.g., France, the UK, Spain) as well as certain other countries (United States, China, Russia, Japan). The European Union has coordinated its forces under the name 'Atalanta'. The EU, through the person of the British High Commissioner, its local representative Matthew Forbes, signed a 'Status of Forces Agreement' with Seychelles on 8 November. Additionally, a defence cooperation agreement was

signed with Belgium and on 10 November Seychelles signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Kingdom, that foresees joint military operations, including trial and possible imprisonment in Seychelles for pirates captured in the country's territorial waters.

As to the controversial question of the right of asylum for supposed pirates against whom there is little or insufficient evidence to convict, Seychelles has still not given an undertaking, considering the danger too great for a small country of 90,000 inhabitants to accommodate a large number of persons who could be the source of trouble.

# combat Somali piracy



## A present-day hero in the war against pirates: Captain Roukou

At 18:00 on March 27, Captain Roukou put ashore his cruise passengers from the Indian Ocean Explorer and a Seychelles hostess on Assumption Island, in the Aldabra Group, the ultimate Seychelles paradise and a UNESCO world heritage site. Captain Roukou was looking forward to a calm, three day passage to Mahé, the main island of Seychelles, to enjoy a well-earned holiday, now that the cruise season was at an end. He had heard talk of the Somali pirates but was not concerned. "We were not afraid, it was fine weather, the sea was calm", he told *The Courier*. "We never imagined they would dare." When the first officer saw them they were already throwing grapnels. By the time Captain Roukou had arrived in response to his call they had boarded the vessel. It was 23:40 on 27 March.

His ordeal was about to begin. "They asked where the tourists were on the ship. I told them there weren't any. Then they asked were there tourists in the vicinity. I told them there weren't any. That is when they started firing shots next to my feet and around my head. They brought all the other crew members up on deck so they could watch me being mistreated." Captain Roukou was

praying that the pirates would not start questioning other crew members as he could not be sure that one of them wouldn't crack. Because there were in fact three tourist vessels cruising in the vicinity, no more than a few minutes away. One had 15 persons on board, another had 16 tourists and 10 crew members, and the third had more than 200 passengers. The pirates then had Captain Roukou talk with one of their accomplices in Somalia who offered him a large sum of money if he told them where the tourist boats were located. But still he claimed he knew nothing and continued to suffer the ill-treatment. When they arrived in Puntland a man who called himself Alfrena, no doubt the pirates' leader, came on board and without further ado aimed a pistol at the captain's head. If it wasn't for the intervention of the latter's interpreter who placed himself between the two men that would have been the end of the captain. Captain Roukou and his first officer were then disembarked and held prisoner for 13 days. During that time, they continued to incur the pirates' wrath before being brought back on board where the captain was again held while also being used to tell the Seychelles' authorities to convey the very high ransom being demand-



Captain Roukou. A present day hero who saved the lives of hundreds of tourists. © Hegel Goutier

ed in exchange for the hostages' lives. The pirates claimed to be generous, no doubt because Seychelles is poor, and demanded just US\$4M.

Several times Captain Roukou thought he was drawing his last breath, until the day they were informed they were to be freed, with just 30 minutes notice of their release. A nine-hour car drive to Adado, a small airfield in Puntland, a light aircraft to Nairobi and then a Seychelles Air Beechcraft and they were finally home. To be welcomed by the President in person and a cheering crowd. Like any democratic country in such a situation, Seychelles has not confirmed paying a ransom but the country behaved with dignity. Few developing countries have shown such commitment to the lives of each and every one of its citizens, however modest. While Captain Roukou returned a hero, a man who no doubt saved the lives of hundreds of tourists by risking his own.



## Wavel Ramkalawan

Opposition leader

# Time to put an end to partisan politics

*When the Seychelles National Party (founded by Wavel Ramkalawan by merging three minor political movements) fielded candidates in the 1998 elections it won just one per cent of the vote. In 2006, less than a decade later, Ramkalawan, an Anglican priest and charismatic speaker, won 45.7 per cent of the vote. Although this did not make him the outright election winner, it did make him the uncontested opposition leader. An opposition leader that the President of the Republic of Seychelles had just requested to meet in a high level forum. But at the time The Courier spoke with him he had just declined the invitation.*

Why?

Wavel Ramkalawan: The President and I have had this kind of face-to-face meeting in the past. It was before the reforms were announced and I believe he wanted a seal of approval from the opposition. We had discussed various subjects but there had been no action. For example, the President told me on one occasion that he wanted to appoint two roving ambassadors and that we would each pick one. I proposed former President Mr Mancham. President Michel welcomed my proposal but this appointment was never announced because he claimed his party rejected it and he was powerless. On the one hand he says we must work together

for the country, on the other he shows no respect for the opposition.

What do you recommend?

In the districts, Members of Parliament are elected, but the local administrator is appointed. It depends on whether or not the MP is from the governing majority whether he is consulted on decisions concerning the district by the administrator or not. So I feel that the administrator should be elected. The MP could be the person in charge of the district, the equivalent to a mayor. There must not be, as at present, an appointed election commissioner, but an election committee, possibly consisting of independent figures. In a small country it is easier to influence a person than a group.

What about the government's economic choices?

In October 2008, the government changed its economic programme completely and, without wanting to boast, adopted the opposition's programme – liberalisation, an opening up, the convertibility of the rupee. These were measures set out in our manifesto for the 2006 presidential elections. We are very



Wavel Ramkalawan, a charismatic Leader of the opposition.  
© Hegel Goutier

pleased to see this, but the second part of our programme must now be implemented, which is to protect the social system through liberalisation and pay attention to the situation of ordinary people whose suffering the government seems to have forgotten. We are seeing an increase in poverty and even the appearance of prostitution. Doctors say that there is an increase in cases of depression. The transition to liberalisation has not been managed well enough to enable people to adapt. There must also be measures to safeguard the reforms so that parliament can play its controlling role.

Also, there must be an end to partisan politics. And no more interfering as happened with the President's supposedly non-political foundation that adopted his 'JjSpirit' presidential campaign logo but seemed to favour members when it came to handing out jobs. **H.G.**

### Keywords

Seychelles; opposition; Wavel Ramkalawan; Seychelles National Party; Hegel Goutier.

## GOOD GOVERNANCE PRIORITIES

An important part of the resources from the 10th EDF allocated to Seychelles in the framework of its cooperation with the EU is dedicated to these good governance priorities:

- Prison management and rehabilitation, including promotion of counselling and rehabilitation of prisoners. Civil society organisations will be more involved in this area.
- Police Training Academy supporting state

and non-state policy-making bodies in governance, in particular human rights (including gender) concepts, practices and development of procedures.

- Non State Actors with specific capacity building activities.
- Technical Assistance and support to the Attorney General's Office to review human rights. Other stakeholders like civil society organisations may be consulted during the review.

# Culture

## Cultural cauldron

*Such cultural dynamism, so many artists of every discipline – musicians, sculptors, playwrights in a country with a population of just 90,000 – that's extraordinary, as is the success a number of them enjoy abroad. This artistic vigour covers many artistic fields and the Creole Festival, a cultural and intellectual event held at the end of October every year, is both a testimony to and celebration of this wealth. Meanwhile the Creole Institute headed by Mrs. Penda Choppy and the College of Art and History are bursting with creativity throughout the year.*

A symbol of this creativity is the small miracle of the record sales achieved for a single release in mainland France by the music group Dezil [www.dezilonline.com](http://www.dezilonline.com), four very young and talented Seychelles musicians: Sandra, Martin, Juan and Michael. Before them, Patrick Victor became a household word in his own country and far beyond its borders for music of a quality that makes him a kind of tropical Jacques Brel, the late Belgian singer, of the French-speaking world.

Testimony to his fame is the homage paid to him by the young, highly imaginative artist Raymond Clarisse, whose name is also surely destined to be known far beyond the shores of the Indian Ocean. Still in his early twenties, he is an actor, musical director, playwright, television producer and choreographer. He was just 16 when he set up his dance and theatre troupe. With his choir, the Mahe Chamber Choir that he set up five years ago, he recently adapted the musical comedy *Kastor*, created by Patrick Victor 25 years ago. This was after studying

theatre and film in Wales where Raymond's many activities included a year of directing the Elizabethan Madrigal singers (known as MADS), the oldest choral society at Aberystwyth University, Wales.

Marie-Thérèse Choppy, playwright and specialist on Seychelles culture, uses her creolité to explain the melting pot of cultures that constitutes Seychelles. In theatre and musical comedy she shows with passion how the music and dance of Moutia and Sokwe, part of the country's African heritage, can be considered as proto-theatre and a school of creativity as they have always portrayed events drawn from all fields of life.

### Places to visit:

ICCS (International Conference Center), a living space with exhibitions and concert hall whose entrance lobby displays an original creation, a faux naive sculpture based on shells by the US-Seychelles artist Lucy Hickerson, entitled "Mermaid's nightmare".

The Creole Institute, for the beauty of the building and its intellectual legacy. Also, if you get the chance to speak to her, for its

Director Mrs. Choppy who is familiar with all the art and artists of her country.

### Recommended reading:

Glynn Burrridge *Voices* Nighthue Publications, Seychelles 2000

### Recommended listening:

- Dezil *Welcome to the paradise*, Sony BMG [www.dezilonline.com](http://www.dezilonline.com)
- Ion Kid (member of the group Dezil) *Ou*, Production Jimmy Savy, Seychelles
- Jean-Marc Volcy – Music available at the Madir Music Productions website: <http://www.madir-music.com/>

### Further Information:

Seychelles Heritage Foundation / Fondation du Patrimoine des Seychelles, Patrick Nanty, Directeur /Chairman, La Bastille, P.O. Box 3008, Tel : +248 225 240

Nature Seychelles – [www.natureseychelles.org](http://www.natureseychelles.org)  
**H.G.**

### Keywords

Creole Festival; Creole Institute; Penda Choppy; College of Art and History; Dezil, Marie-Thérèse Choppy; Hegel Goutier.

## TOURISM – A DREAM DESTINATION

You really need to see as much as possible in a country of such incredible beauty. The three largest islands – Mahé, Praslin and La Digue – are an absolute must, and it is well worth visiting two or three of the coral islands, if you can find the time.

There are, truly, so many simple pleasures to enjoy:

**Mahé.** The small capital city of Victoria is both bucolic and modern at the same time. On Sundays in Anse Royale, the whole island comes together and all types of people casually promenade and enjoy the opportunity to take their ease. Sandra and Michaël from the band *Dezil* rub shoulders with Jennifer Vel, the country's youngest Member of Parliament.

**Praslin.** Even though it features heavily

in all the tourist guides, you will, nevertheless, be overwhelmed by its beauty. The Vallée de Mai, a magnificent nature reserve on Mahé, is an extraordinary example with its 'forbidden fruit', including the *coco de mer*, commonly known as 'coconut buttocks', which has become the symbol of Seychelles.

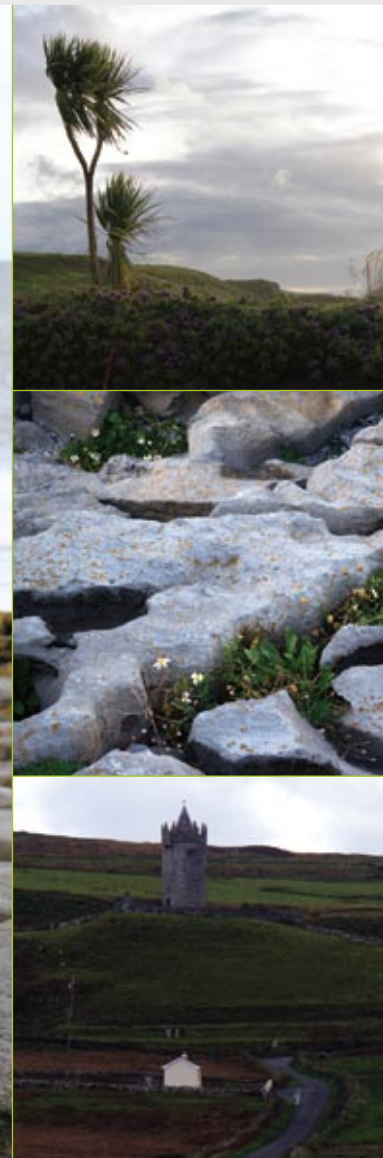
**La Digue** is the ultimate dream destination. Who could fail to enjoy exploring every nook and cranny. Moreover, the locals just seem to appreciate you for who you are. The owner of a small hotel, Kot Babi, personifies hospitality on the island. He previously worked as a chef to celebrities, including the family of the Shah of Iran. From time to time he prepares the most delicious dishes for his guests which would normally cost more than the relatively inexpensive price of his rooms.





Marie-Martine Buckens

# Shannon, where Irish history is repeating itself



Cliffs of Moher-Doolin, County Clare.  
© Marie-Martine Buckens

**T**he Shannon region, around the mouth of Ireland's mythical river, epitomises the challenges the country must overcome to return to the days of its 10-year economic boom. Thanks to tax relief for high-tech companies and European funding, this period saw the emergence of the 'Celtic Tiger', which was looked upon with both envy and scepticism by the other EU members.

Today, the Celtic Tiger is wounded and will certainly take some time to heal. Nowhere more so than in Limerick, the region's main town, where local people were left shell shocked by the defection of *Dell*, the computer manufacturer, when it decided to relocate to Poland in a fickle attempt to find cheap labour.

Reeling from this blow and with little relief provided by the overwhelming 'yes' vote by the Irish people in the latest

referendum on the Lisbon Treaty, the region is taking stock. The outlook is far from gloomy with a young population, a university of international standing and an airport with great potential. Finally, there is the contribution of immigrants who are being called upon to help build this new economy. While some have recently decided to return home, their presence is nevertheless symbolic in a country where only those unable to emigrate stayed. This region has still not forgotten the Great Famine of 1847, which forced the Irish to leave their homeland in their droves, mainly for the USA.

A history that remains close to Ireland's heart and explains why, 150 years on, the fight against hunger remains the priority of the national policy on development cooperation.

And it is in Limerick itself where the government's overseas aid office has its headquarters.

# From the 'Wild Geese' to the European Tiger

*At the end of a 344km journey, the Shannon, the longest river in the British Isles and one of the most magnificent in Europe, flows into the Atlantic Ocean after a final meander around Limerick. The capital of the Shannon region, Limerick encapsulates the history of Ireland (Eire in Gaelic). How can this history be told? It is tumultuous and tragic, with its rebellions against occupying forces and its emigration, and goes back to around 10 BC and the beginning of sustained occupation by the Celts.*

One thing is certain: protected by its isolation, Ireland is the only country in Western Europe never to have experienced Roman conquest or Germanic invasion. This is why the Celts, settled on the island from the first millennium B.C., were, over many centuries, able to develop an original civilization, remodelled from the 5th century onwards by the influence of Christianity introduced

by the monk, Patrick, who became Ireland's patron saint.

## > Covetous eyes on the island

Saint Patrick and the other monks were intelligent enough to adapt the religion to ancient Celtic beliefs. The monasteries in Ireland were centres of art as well as of evangelization. Their copyists excelled in

illumination. A good example is the Book of Kells, a masterpiece of medieval religious art kept at Trinity College in Dublin. The monasteries' wealth attracted the attention of the Vikings. After plundering the country, they settled in certain areas of strategic importance, which developed into the main cities. These include Limerick, a fact to which the castle of King John still bears testimony. In 1014, Brian Boru, the King

Castle of King John, Limerick.  
© Marie-Martine Buckens





of Munster, defeated the Vikings, marking the end of their expansion. They eventually settled permanently, adapting to Celtic customs.

### ► The Treaty of Limerick and the first imposed immigration

It was the turn of the English to attempt to assert their supremacy on the island in the 12th century. Despite their attempts at segregation – preventing Anglo-Normans from mixing with the Irish – the charm of the Irish won through again. Then came a more severe form of colonisation or ‘plantation’ by English immigrants. This was followed by the brutal ‘pacification’ of Englishman Oliver Cromwell, who, from 1649, sent entire regiments to Spain and Portugal, civilians to the West Indies as slaves, and confiscated the land of the Catholics. In 1685, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes led many Huguenots to escape to Ireland where the new King of England, the protestant William III of Orange, defeated the deposed Catholic King, James II, at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, and then laid siege to the Irish army in Limerick. The Treaty of Limerick allowed the besieged, nicknamed the ‘wild geese’, to leave for France.

In 1800, the Act of Union abolished the Irish Parliament. This sparked a rebellion, led by Robert Emmett, which was violently put down. Emmett was hanged but the speech he made at his trial inspired future generations of nationalists. In Limerick, the Catholic lawyer, Daniel O’Connell, known as the Liberator of the Irish people, was elected Member of Parliament for County Clare in 1823. In 1829, he saw through the adoption of the Act of Catholic Emancipation allowing Catholics to sit in parliament.

Separatist movements began to spring up. 1902 saw the birth of a new revolutionary party, Sinn Féin (Ourselves alone). From 1919 to 1920, the IRA (Irish Republican Army), under the leadership of Eamon de Valera and Michael Collins, fought a war of independence. In December 1920, the island was partitioned into Southern Ireland – containing 26 of the 32 counties of Ireland, including the seat of parliament in Dublin – and Northern Ireland – containing 6 of the 9 counties of the province of Ulster – the parliament of which was in Belfast.

After the bloody war of independence, Ireland finally enjoyed peace and relative prosperity, albeit suffering economic

hardship and high levels of emigration in the 1930’s, 40’s and 50’s; its entry to the European Economic Community in 1973 gave access to a wider market and drew benefits from the common agricultural policy and European structural funds. Emigration has now stopped, but the country only has a population of 4 million (5.5 million

for the entire island), whereas the total number of people of Irish origin worldwide, the Irish diaspora, is estimated at 60 million. **M.M.B.**

### Keywords

Shannon; Saint Patrick; Limerick; O’Connell; Celtic Tiger; EU; Great Famine.

## THE GREAT FAMINE OF 1846–1848

In 1846, the appearance of mildew – a fungus – on the potato harvests, the staple food of Ireland’s peasants, caused a major famine. In contrast to what happened during the famine of 1780, the Irish ports remained open under pressure from protestant traders. While entire families starved to death, convoys of

food, belonging to the landlords, left for England under army escort. The history of the Great Famine is recounted at the museum of Roscommon, on the boundary of the Shannon region. Ireland lost half of its 8 million people through death or emigration.

## WEARY, THE CELTIC TIGER FINALLY SAYS ‘YES’

On 3 October 2009, the Irish people finally voted in favour of the Lisbon Treaty, with 67.13 per cent supporting the proposal, 15 months after the ‘No’ vote which left the European Union’s draft constitution hanging in the balance. This decision is essentially explained by the economic downturn which hit Ireland last year. This recession, the worst Ireland has experienced since independence, has severely affected the economic progress achieved by the country since the early 1990s, a boom which saw Ireland become known throughout the world as the ‘Celtic Tiger’. Economists believe the decline in growth may reach 8 per cent in 2009, with another sharp dip in 2010. The economic aspect of Ireland’s membership of the European Union, which was not part of the debate in 2008, was at the centre of the campaign in the second referendum. Ireland currently has the largest budgetary deficit in the EU. The collapse of the Irish banking system was narrowly avoided in September 2008 thanks to a US\$400 billion government guarantee covering all bank deposits. The govern-

ment also took on the debts of dubious property developers by creating a ‘bad bank’. Ireland has been a major beneficiary of European funding during its 35 years of membership, and it still received €500M from the EU budget in 2008.



St. Mary's Cathedral Cemetery, Limerick.  
© Marie-Martine Buckens

# A long-standing sense of solidarity



Peter Power. © Marie-Martine Buckens

*"The eradication of world hunger is not only the cornerstone of our aid programme, but a key element in our foreign policy", Peter Power, Secretary of State for development, explains to us. Ireland has certainly not forgotten its own past in this regard. The Great Famine of the 1840's "is part of our DNA", asserts the head of the Irish Aid Agency, and this is the feeling among all those we met in Shannon.*

The Agency moved to Limerick in 2008, following a huge government relocation programme. It is a city Peter Power knows well, having grown up there. In total, 70,000 from County Limerick either perished or made the crossing to the USA during the great famine. "In 2006, we set up an expert group to advise the government on policies to fight world hunger". The group – made up not only of distinguished academics and specialists but also Bono, activist and singer fronting Irish band U2 – made its recommendations in 2008. "Last September", continues Peter Power, "our prime minister (called 'Taoiseach' in Gaelic) Brian Cowen, with support from Ban-Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, decreed that the fight against world hunger had to be our priority in cooperation policy. It's a fight which the Obama administration also sees as key, and I'm delighted to see that the US has decided to lead the way."

## ➤ Priority to agriculture

More specifically, the Irish government has decided to earmark 20 per cent of its budget to revive agriculture in the third world countries where the Agency works - nine in total, seven of which are to be found in Africa. Agriculture had been somewhat neglected by the Agency, which, until now, had concentrated its activities on combating HIV/Aids, good governance, humanitarian aid, health and education. "The fight against hunger really needs to become a central priority for all countries", insists the head of

*'Famine is in our DNA,'*

the Irish Aid Agency. "The only thing lacking is political will". In order to convince his partners, Peter Power nominated Kevin Farrell in 2009 as special envoy to deal with this issue. A 'big hitter', he is well aware of the problem: from 1989-2008 he worked on the United Nations World Food Programme

(WFP) and has held key posts dealing with the Great Lakes crisis, also in Uganda and Somalia, and not forgetting Zimbabwe, where from 2002-2008 he implemented one of the WFP's biggest schemes to tackle the food crisis ravaging the country. **M.M.B.**

## Keywords

Irish Aid Agency; Peter Power; ODA; fight against hunger.

## NEARLY 0.6 PER CENT OF GNP EARMARKED FOR AID

The Irish government's budget for aid has been constantly on the rise since 2000. Official development assistance (ODA) totalled €900M in 2008, i.e. an increase of 90 per cent in real terms as against 2003. In percentage terms of its gross national income (GNI), this signals an increase from 0.39 per cent to 0.58 per cent, a performance welcomed by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD, which underlines that this 'good performance' puts Ireland 6th among the 22 DAC members in terms of GNI and 17th in terms of net volume of ODA. In spite of this, the financial crisis has had an impact. At the end of 2008, the Irish

government decided to make cutbacks in the ODA budget, followed by further reductions in 2009. "The current budget has seen a total reduction of €195M in the first quarter of 2009, namely 21.8 per cent of the overall total. Despite what the government says, these cuts go way beyond what would be considered appropriate or proportionate", were the sombre words last April of Hans Zomer, director of Dóchas, the platform bringing together the main Irish development aid NGOs. The NGOs themselves, as well as the OECD, fear that such cuts run counter to Ireland's claim to dedicate 0.7 per cent of its GNI to development aid by 2012.





John O'Shea, Head of GOAL, meeting Sharon Commins at her arrival in Dublin. © Marie-Martine Buckens

# The unfailing support of the Irish people

*Providing aid for the poor is a top priority for Irish development NGOs. These organisations, as well as Catholic missions, of which there are many in the land of Saint Patrick, have unanimous political backing. This explains the level of financial support they receive, with almost 20 per cent of public aid going to development, which, according to the OECD, is the highest contribution of any European country.*

There was jubilation in Ireland on 13 October 2009. Thirty-two-year-old Sharon Commins, from Dublin, and 42-year-old Hilda Kawuki, from Uganda – employees of the Irish humanitarian relief organisation, GOAL, kidnapped in Darfur at the beginning of July – were both released. “Hilda and Sharon have suffered a traumatic ordeal, but happily both have had the strength and courage to come through it”, said John O'Shea, Head of GOAL, after the women were freed. The NGO, which has a long history of helping the ‘poorest of the poor’ and those affected by humanitarian crises, works in northern and southern Sudan in order to provide first aid to (often displaced) women and children, including access to drinking water. The NGO also operates in Kenya, providing aid for families displaced following the violence which erupted after the 2008 elections, as well as assistance for the inhabitants of the shantytowns in Freetown, capital of Sierra Leone, vulnerable families in Uganda and Zimbabwe and

street children in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. New healthcare programmes have been implemented in Ethiopia, where GOAL has been working since 1984, in response to the food crisis that has affected more than 6.4 million Ethiopians since 2008.

A week before the release of the two GOAL staff, another leading Irish NGO, Concern, paid tribute to its founder, Father Aengus Finucane, who died at age 77 on 6 October. This Limerick-born priest set up the NGO with other missionaries in 1968 after working in the Biafra region of Nigeria during the civil war.

## ► Biafra – the first famine on television

“Father Aengus Finucane had an absolute commitment to the poorest of the poor”, said Tom Arnold, chief executive of the NGO Concern. In an interview broadcast on the organisation’s website, Arnold explained why the founders of Concern won the hearts

of the Irish people. He said: “The civil war in Biafra led to a major famine, which was broadcast on television. Television only appeared in Ireland in 1961, and for many Irish people, Biafra was what was known as the ‘first famine on television’. There is also another reason for Ireland’s commitment to Africa. At the time, many Irish missionaries worked in Africa, and in particular in Biafra. Almost every community in Ireland knew someone who was already there as a priest or as a nun. The shocking images gave rise to an extraordinary outpouring of generosity and led to the establishment of Africa Concern, which later became Concern”. Tom Arnold added: “The Great Famine had a huge impact on the Irish psyche and is one of the reasons why the Irish have shown such extraordinary empathy with poor people in other parts of the world”. **M.M.B.**

## Keywords

NGO; missionaries; GOAL; Concern; Father Aengus Finucane; Tom Arnold.

# "The region faces huge challenges, but has some tremendous assets"

*Limerick, one of the frontrunners of Ireland's 'economic miracle' of yesterday, the Shannon region is feeling somewhat groggy today. Maria Kelly remains optimistic all the same. Limerick Chamber of Commerce's young and dynamic 40-year-old CEO sees opportunities in this crisis. She said: "It will make us stronger and force us to reassess our values".*

The decision taken at the beginning of 2009 by *Dell*, the world's second biggest computer manufacturer, to stop production at its flagship plant in Limerick, has had a disastrous impact on the entire region. This is because it is not just the *Dell* plant that has been hit, but all the region's sub-contractors and businesses – the entire local economy of a region already reeling from the financial crisis. *Dell's* redundancy scheme is set to affect around 2,000 staff. The computer manufacturer had proclaimed itself Ireland's second largest private company and the country's leading exporter, contributing 5 per cent of national GDP. Last September, European Commission President, José Manuel Barroso, visited Limerick to announce the approval of a €14.8M grant as part of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund. This grant is intended to help workers made redundant to find new employment. The Irish government is also to release funds.

Maria Kelly explained: "In total, €23M will be made available to assist ex-employees.

Limerick. © Copyright

But *Dell's* decision will nevertheless eventually result in an overall loss of 20 per cent of the jobs in the region. The real impact will be felt in 2010". On top of this, the property bubble has also burst. This has had a devastating effect on the Shannon region, which includes the counties of Clare, Limerick, North Tipperary, South Offaly and North Kerry, with half a million inhabitants in total. Maria Kelly added: "In 2006, the level

of construction work and related activities in our region was the highest in the country." In Ireland, more than 90,000 new buildings were constructed in 2006 thanks to government and banking facilities. Now the bubble has burst. **M.M.B.**

## Keywords

Maria Kelly; Chamber of Commerce; Limerick; Dell; Shannon Airport.

## FOCUSING ON EXCELLENCE IN SHANNON

Maria Kelly remains defiant. Reflecting on the situation, she said: "If you were to compile a list of what investors are looking for, our region would make others green with envy. While we might not have all of the right ingredients, we certainly have most of them". Firstly, there are human resources – an essentially young population, universities and technical institutes of great standing and with good infrastructure. In a year's time, Limerick, Ireland's largest city after Dublin and Cork, will be linked to the country's other major cities by motorway. The region is centrally located, as is Shannon airport, situated 20 km from Limerick. It

dates back to 1936, when the government decided to establish it as the first transatlantic airport. Its runway, the longest in Ireland, enables it to accommodate the Airbus 380. It was designed to allow NASA space shuttles to land in the event of an emergency. But most importantly, the airport recently opened a transit area for dealing with immigration and customs matters. Maria Kelly said: "We are the first, along with Canada and the Bahamas, to introduce this system of pre-clearance, which allows companies to deliver goods directly to recipients". She added: "Also, let's not forget the region's great potential in terms of tourism".



# The heartbeat of Irish music lies in Ennis

*Bands that play traditional Irish music are slowly abandoning the pubs to perform at concert venues. Especially at Glor. This cultural centre in Ennis, the main town in County Clare, has established itself as the nation's leading traditional music venue within the space of eight years. But Glor's ambitions do not end there.*



Katie Verling, Director of Glor Theatre. © Marie-Martine Buckens

If you stop at one of the pubs you often pass on the way into a village, you will almost certainly see the words “live music this evening” chalked up on a display board. Musicians who play the banjo, flute, accordion, violin or Celtic Harp meet to perform for an hour or more. You can count yourself lucky. The days when the congregation, quickly followed by the priest, would all head for the nearest pub after Sunday mass to swap hymns for Irish ballads are becoming a distant memory.

“It is regrettable, but that’s the way it is”, says Katie Verling, Director of Glor. “Our society has become sophisticated and we have adopted urban values. Today, we primarily see the countryside as a place to enjoy on Sundays, but no longer as somewhere to live. And we now buy a ticket to go to a concert.”

Performances at Glor, whether music or dance, are always well attended. Katie Verling continues: “It is a niche audience, but a very lively one. We also host big stars, like Christy Moore, the Irish folk singer.” In this period of economic downturn, the funding provided by the government and County Clare (one quarter and three-quarters of Glor’s funding respectively) is set to be reduced. A creative approach is therefore required to fund the centre’s projects, which, in addition to music and dance, cover the full spectrum of the arts.

## ➤ Returning to the community

Katie Verling says: “I am determined to gradually break down the barriers to accessing culture. At the moment, most customers

are still middle-class people. However, we all contribute to paying for culture as taxpayers. We therefore have a moral responsibility to make it as accessible as possible.” How can this be achieved? By opening Glor’s doors to all the local community’s activities, which is actually the approach Glor adopted from the outset.

But Glor has not stopped there. Katie Verling explains: “Recently, we formed a partnership with the famous Gaelic Athletic

Association.” This association, which is the national governing body for hurling and Gaelic football – two sports close to the hearts of every self-respecting Irishman, ahead even of rugby – celebrated its 125th anniversary this year and asked Glor to organise a big concert. **M.M.B.**

## Keywords

Glor; Katie Verling; traditional music.

## POETRY ON THE AGENDA IN LIMERICK

Poetry is still vivacious in Ireland, as proved by the annual Festival of Poetry in Limerick. Here is a recent poem by Terri O’ Mahony published by the Arts Office of Limerick City Council:

### *Immigrant*

*Ink black, polished skin, soul eyes, staring with the eyes of a cat,  
poised to leap away from, or into, the abyss of bureaucracy.  
Forms signed, with a signature of incomprehension,  
only to please the face of officialdom, peering through a hostile glass,  
smeared with the breath of a myriad of silent faces.*

*A stranger in this green land, this green and promised land,  
words, so few, slowly pulsing from lips parched with foreign sunshine,  
now moistened with rain, unceasing rain-  
He asks for work, only to work and be absorbed into the melting pot  
of those who have come before him,  
who paved the way for his industry.  
He turns away, a bright yellow and green butterfly,  
Winging his way to employment.  
His step is light, his hands, strong with white-tipped finger-nails,  
Pulling impatiently at the multi-coloured shirt,  
A giant amongst men, striding towards acceptance.*

# From Gaeltachts to Angela's Ashes



Main photo: Birds-eye view of the Moyross Estate by Sean Lynch.  
Insert: Falcon used to for the video.  
© Marie-Martine Buckens

*From the Aran Islands, bird sanctuary and home to Gaelic, to Limerick, setting of Frank McCourt's memoir and biopic *Angela's Ashes*, the Shannon region epitomises Ireland's literature and natural beauty.*

Located in the far west of Ireland, the Aran Islands, windswept and difficult to reach, have charmed many mainlanders, not least Irish writer and dramatist, John Millington Synge. In 1899, he described his arrival: "A dreary rock appeared at first sloping up from the sea into the fog". Synge stayed for four years on what is seen as one of the last *gaeltachts*, or enclaves where the Gaelic language and Celtic culture are best preserved. The Oileáin Árann, as the 1,600 inhabitants call them, are a string of three islands containing several Iron Age forts perched on top of spectacular cliffs, which are home to thousands of birds. The islands have also produced two great names in the rich history of Irish literature, Liam O'Flaherty, born in 1896, and Máirtín Ó Direáin, the great poet of the Gaelic language. In 1934, Robert Flaherty shot a documentary on these islands, which, 70 years on, is still one of the great works in cinematic history. *Man of Aran*, which won an award at the

Venice Film Festival, remains an impressive portrait of everyday life on these islands between 1931 and 1933.

## ► The 'Eldorado' of solitude

Returning to mainland Ireland, as you leave the tiny port of Doolin, small winding roads take you to the magnificent Cliffs of Moher, before reaching an almost uninhabited, moonlike landscape – the Burren, a karst – an area of irregular limestone in which erosion has produced fissures, sinkholes, underground streams, and caverns – geological formation extending to the Aran Islands. The Burren is a site of unequalled biodiversity, where nature lovers are working flat out to repopulate colonies of peregrine falcons and other birds of prey, which were decimated by pesticides in the 1960s.

And it is three peregrine falcons, with a mini video-camera attached to their backs by the artist Sean Lynch, which enable you to see

a darker side of the region – the Moyross estate on the outskirts of Limerick, where petrol bomb attacks and gangland feuds have earned the entire city of Limerick the sobriquet of 'stab city' in the press. By showing Moyross, ultimately an area like many others, from the air, Sean Lynch encourages his audience – including many schoolchildren who are going to see the film at Limerick's Art Gallery – to see it in a new, less intimidating light. It is a district where Frank McCourt might have lived. Or rather 'Frankie', who, in his memoir *Angela's Ashes*, tells the story of his youth in the poorer parts of Limerick, where his mother, abandoned by a husband who was always drunk, was forced to beg for money. Frankie finally left the misery of Ireland, where social exclusion was widespread, at the beginning of the 20th Century. **M.M.B.**

## Keywords

Aran Islands; Frank McCourt; Synge; Burren; Sean Lynch; *Angela's Ashes*.



Sandra Federici

# Silvia da Bragança, a multicultural artist



Silvia da Bragança discusses her work. © Sandra Federici

*Maputo is a city which offers an extremely interesting landscape of contemporary African art, with museums and educational institutions which, in spite of the difficulties they face, offer a framework of reference for artists. These institutions include the National Museum of Art, the National School of Visual Art and the newly-opened Instituto Superior de Artes e Cultura, as well as foreign cultural institutes (Franco-Mozambican, Portuguese and Brazilian) that offer international art, performing art and literary events of a very high level.*

**R**enowned older artists, for example Malangatana, Chissano and Shikani, represent a point of reference (as well as a point of confrontation) for younger artists in Mozambique. *The Courier* met one of the most qualified older artists: Silvia do Rosario da Silveira Bragança. Born in Goa, she lives in India, Portugal and Mozambique, and dedicates herself to education and research in the field of art, taking part in exhibitions and workshops.

Silvia speaks to us about her exciting life: “I came to Mozambique in 1967, after receiving a letter from my three nephews who had lost their mother – my sister – at the age of 31. I came to take care of them. I continued my studies in art, and I have always worked on educational programmes and supported the activities of our National Museum of Art”.

But Silvia has another focus in her life, her husband, Aquino da Bragança whom she married in 1984, who is from Goa and is one of the greatest intellectuals of his generation. Aquino is known above all as the mythical intellectual of the Mozambican revolution, the advisor of FRELIMO’s leader Samora Machel, and the diplomat who travelled around the world raising political support for the revolution against Portuguese domination. Unfortunately, Aquino da Bragança was travelling with President Samora Machel on the aeroplane that crashed on 19 October

1986, in circumstances that were never clarified, prematurely taking the life of a president who was the focal point of all the hopes of the young Mozambican nation.

“I held my first solo exhibition in Mozambique in 1971 and I then exhibited in Luanda, Lisbon, Porto, Goa, Portugal, Romania, New York, Barcelona, Russia, Stockholm, Angola, etc. My experiences in three continents – Asia, Europe and Africa – have made me a multicultural artist and have inspired me to address themes related to war and peace, oppression and freedom: themes that reflect universal human values.”

Through Silvia we met the young artists of the Muv’art Association, which organises artistic and cultural activities in one of the spaces of the National Museum of Art, in partnership with organisations from other African and European countries. She shows us “*Máquina come Mundo*”/2008 – a work of art that was created to contest some negative aspects of globalisation, and which was exhibited with other Muv’art authors this year.

Silvia is a cultured and sophisticated artist, whose art is characterised by the use of different materials, and the integration of written poems as decorative elements in the portraits.

Her art is political in the noblest sense of the term. In 1993 she organised a retrospective

of 100 works of art in the Centro do Estudos Brasileiros, in Mozambique. One of these works of art was offered to Nelson Mandela by President Joaquim Chissano. “I was proud to represent Mozambique in a collection of art that united 177 female artists in *Women of the World 2000* (USA New York, Maryland, Canada and Stockholm; 2002-2003).”

“I never stop experimenting. I also practiced art therapy, particularly with my mother who started to paint in her old age and exhibited until her death at the age of 95. Recently I have concentrated on investigating the correlation between art and mathematics and I have created experimental images on the computer.”

Silvia also continues to keep the memory of her late husband alive. She set up the blog <http://aquinobraganca.wordpress.com>, and a few days ago she published a book entitled *Aquino de Bragança. Batalhas ganhas, sonhos a continuar*. Silvia da Bragança is one of the treasures that Maputo never ceases to offer to those who are truly passionate about art.

## Keywords

Bragança; contemporary art; Mozambique; Muv’art Association; FRELIMO; National Museum of Art.



*The Last Flight of Flamingo*, directed by João Ribeiro, Fado Filmes. *Queleh*, directed by Abraham Haile Biru, Arizona Films. *Viva Riva*, directed by Djo Tunda Wa Munga, Formosa Productions.

Catherine Haenlein

# The EU-ACP Films Programme: Supporting the Cinematographic and Audiovisual Sector

***The Secretariat of the ACP Group of States has announced its support for 24 cinema and audiovisual projects for €6.5M.***

The results of the call for proposals for the EU-ACP Films Programme, which was launched and is run by the Secretariat of the ACP Group of States, were announced in a press release issued on 29 September 2009. The ACP Group and the EC noted that “the response rate of both ACP and EU professionals was very satisfactory” and stated that they were “delighted to support these quality projects”.

For the first time, the EU-ACP Films Programme, funded by the 9th EDF (European Development Fund), is being run directly by ACP states. Building on the success of previous programmes, which have supported the work of such directors as Ousmane Sembène, Mama Keïta, S. Pierre Yameogo and Jean-Michel Kibushi, the EU-ACP Films Programme seeks to enhance the capacity of ACP professionals to create and distribute their images, thereby promoting cultural identity, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. In this way, the programme also aims to create specialised jobs and make a sustainable contribution to economic and social development, in line with the Cotonou Agreement.

The funding has been subdivided in order to concentrate on three specific areas. The first area focuses on ACP production and the emergence of filmmakers in countries

whose governments are less involved in cultural policy. The second area centres around the promotion, distribution and visibility of ACP productions, and the creation of professional networks. The final area is concerned with professional training.

The production projects include feature-length films, documentaries and TV series, many of which are underpinned by the issues affecting these countries. *Un homme qui crie n'est pas un ours qui danse*, for example, a project by Goï Goï Productions involving a partnership between four states, portrays a country torn apart by contradictions in the context of civil war and global upheavals. The distribution projects focus on setting up professional networks and enabling new forms of dissemination. An interesting example is the *Africafilms.tv Mobicine* project by IDIMAGE, based in West Africa, which seeks to digitize African productions in order to make them accessible online. The training projects cover artistic, technical and managerial techniques, audiovisual technology and digital editing.

In addition, the EU-ACP Films Programme is currently implementing a legal assistance service due to the realisation that many ACP film professionals have problems with the legal and contractual aspects of the business. Various services will be made available

online, including a practical guide with models of production and distribution contracts, a legal Q&A service for those seeking more specific information, as well as training sessions and the participation of the programme at events and festivals.

The first meeting between the beneficiaries and the EU-ACP Films Programme will take place at the ACP Secretariat in Brussels from 15 to 17 December. Negotiations for programmes for the 10th EDF are underway, which will hopefully enjoy an increased budget.

For a complete list of the beneficiary projects and for further information on the programme, please visit [www.acpfilms.eu](http://www.acpfilms.eu) from 15 November.

## Quick facts

Applications received: 130  
Beneficiaries: 24-12 production projects,  
6 distribution projects, 6 training projects  
Total funds awarded: €6.5M  
Countries involved: 40

## Keywords

ACP Films Programme; cinema and audiovisual projects; production; distribution; training.



Elisabetta Degli Esposti Merli

# Denise Colomb: a humanist look

Curated by Nol Bourcier, 'Denise Colomb and the West Indies. From Legend to Reality, 1948-1958' takes its inspiration from the photographer's idea and plans in 1999 to organise a future exhibition on the West Indies. But Denise Colomb died on 1st January 2004 – at the age of 101 – and could not carry out her planned exhibition.

Born Denise Loeb, she changed her name to 'Colomb', a name which evokes the great explorer who discovered America, and which recalls the French word meaning 'dove'.

And for Denise Colomb to take pictures was really an everyday exploration into humanity: as a bird she flew over human daily actions and customs with a poetic realism.

The exhibition at Jeu de Paume entitled 'From Legend to Reality' is a retrospective of Colomb's work that shows a selection of the pictures she took in Martinique, Guadeloupe and Haiti between 1948 and 1958.

Between these emblematic dates (the first celebrating the centenary of the abolition of slavery, the second celebrating the first decade from the end of the colonial era) she photographed the reality of the West Indies. Her report depicts a kind of reality which did not exactly reflect the public's legendary ideas of these countries. Without political preconceptions she captured shots from everyday life and increased people's awareness of the gap between legend and reality.

Women talking in the streets, men drinking around a table, children playing in a yard, but also social inequalities and the contrast between the poverty of the majority and the ostentation of the privileged few: Denise Colomb observes people and the way in which she observes them reflects the style of her contemporaries, including Robert Doisneau, Édouard Boubat and Willy Ronis.

As Willy Ronis said: "When I go out with my camera I do not go in search of the Holy Grail. I do not feel invested with any



Denise Colomb, *Buveurs de punch, Martinique, 1948.*  
© Ministère de la Culture - Médiathèque du Patrimoine, Dist. RMN



Denise Colomb, *Mesdames Solfanor et Maugée, 1948.*  
© Ministère de la Culture - Médiathèque du Patrimoine, Dist. RMN

message for anyone, nor do I perceive any transcendental vibration... I have no need to lift my eyes to the heavens for some sign, nor do I feel the emergence of any kind of spiritual approach; my eyes are occupied by scanning my surroundings as well as the image captured in the viewfinder."

These words explain very well the kind of approach photographers such as Colomb use in their work. She offers just a look. Not judgements: she leaves these to her audience.

She first travelled to the West Indies in 1948 with Aimé Césaire, who invited her to join him on an ethnography mission.

Ten years later the *Compagnie Générale Transatlantique* asked her to promote the exoticism, beauty and charm of the West Indies. Although the aim of this job was to promote tourism, time and again the pictures she took reflected the less attractive aspects as well.

During this second trip she took colour photographs that are exhibited here for the first time. But she also took pictures of tropical landscapes that she described as an "inextricable chaos" in which "the most diverse species clash, intertwine and devour each other", in a sort of surrealist vision of reality.

Finally we cannot neglect to mention the part of the exhibition which presents a series of photographs which came about as a result of an error which occurred during the development process: the images show a kind of reticulation (web pattern prints) which gives a veiled effect to the subjects.

The exhibition was produced in cooperation with the Médiathèque de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine (Department of Photography), in partnership with *Africultures*, *Azart Photographie*, *Polka Magazine* and *Tropiques FM*, and will be open until 27 December.

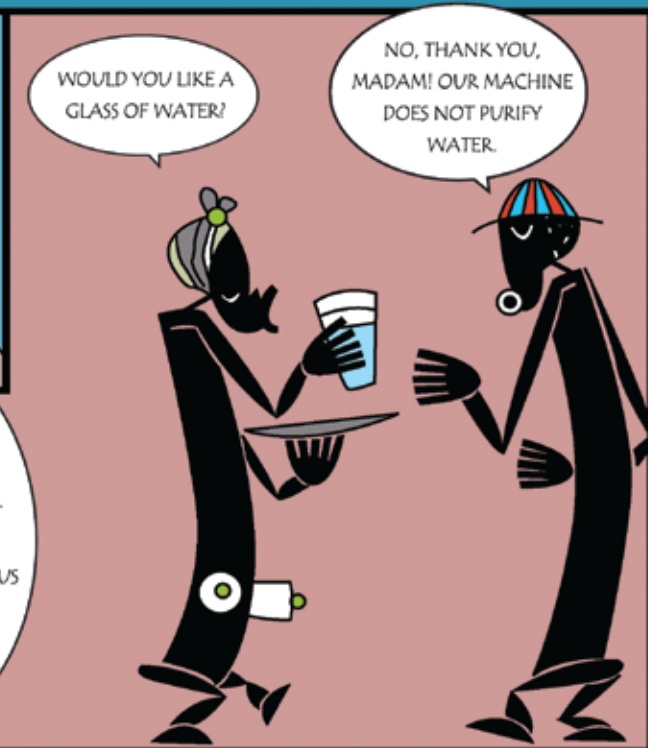
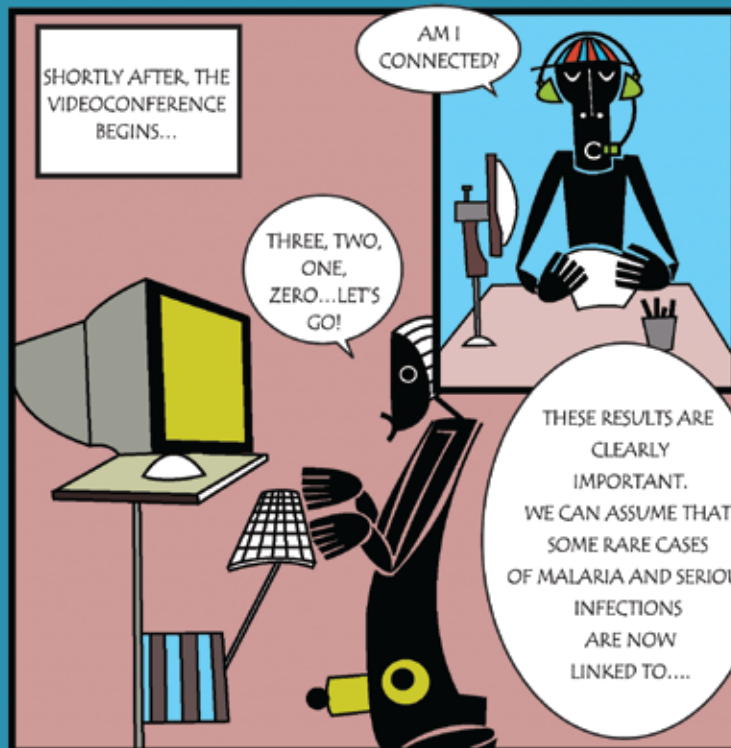
## Keywords

Denise Colomb; West Indies; Aimé Césaire; Photography; Jeu de Paume.

SUMMARY: THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE AFRICAN UNION HAS ALREADY STARTED TO BEAR FRUIT. RESEARCHERS HAVE JUST OBTAINED THE EQUIPMENT REQUIRED FOR NEW RESEARCH.



IN LABORATORY 2



\* Miagotar Japhet, cartoonist from Cameroon.



# Words from Readers

*We are interested in your point of view and your reactions to the articles. So do tell us what you think.*

Dear *Courier* editorial team,

Further to the article in *The Courier* No. 12 on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), I am afraid that the (Cohen) plan currently on Obama's desk will be unable to make a significant difference to the DRC problem. All informed commentators are of the same opinion; that the DRC is surrounded by a number of scavengers, namely several of the Western powers. With Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, the DRC already has management structures in place (regional organisations), where it can enhance its cooperation efforts, and is already showing willingness to move in this direction. [...] Mr Cohen's plan appears to neglect the responsibilities of the Western powers in this regard. The latter need to reinforce good governance in all of the above countries [...] In sum, the search for answers to the DRC crisis should be led on three levels: national, regional and international, and not only with neighbouring countries, which are mere pawns in the

game while those who could really make a difference are far from the region. This does nothing other than to hide the real face of the problem. Thank you for publishing this article, which has prompted this reply.

Yours faithfully, as ever,  
**Patrick Issa Kalenga**

Dear Sirs,

I would like to congratulate you on this magazine, which is both stimulating and of high quality.

Without fail, it provides a rich source of ideas and information which deserve to be communicated on the widest scale possible.

Kind regards,

**Susanne Lauber Fürst**  
MA Sc. Biology, Attorney-at-law  
(Switzerland)

Hi. I would like to congratulate you on your excellent work. I found the magazine very useful in my studies as I am following a European Studies course.

Yours faithfully,  
**Elena**

## CORRIGENDUM

A factual error appeared in the Samoa report, issue no 12. On page 37, paragraph 2 it was stated: "In 1929, however, Tupua Tamasese Mea'ole, one of the two Fautua to the New Zealand Administration, was shot at during a peaceful demonstration in Apia." It was not Tupua Tamasese Meaole who was shot at, but TUPUA TAMASESE LEALOFI III.

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## Agenda

### JANUARY-MARCH 2010

#### January 2010

- Until 11/7 **Exhibition: L'Art d'être un homme - Afrique, Océanie**  
Musée Dapper, Paris, France

#### February 2010

- 1-3/2 **Pacific Colloquium on Gender, Culture and the Law**,  
Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

- 8-12/2 **4th Africa Conference on Sexual Health and Rights**  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
For more information, visit:  
<http://www.africasexuality.org/>

- 24-26/2 **Energy 2010: Solutions for Africa - Conference & Exhibition**  
Sandton Convention Centre, South Africa  
For more information, visit:  
<http://www.energyafricaexpo.com/>

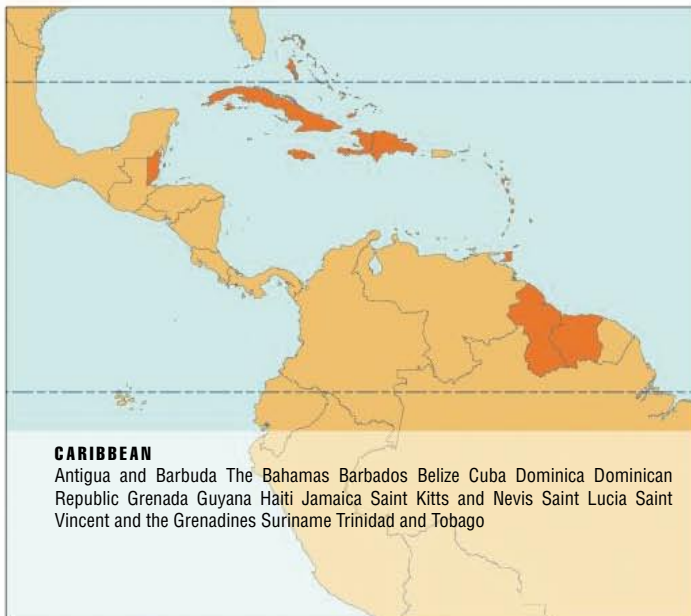
- 27-28/2 **Commonwealth National Women's Machineries (NWMs) Meeting**  
New York, USA

#### March 2010

- 3-5/3 **Second all-Africa Carbon Forum**  
Nairobi, Kenya

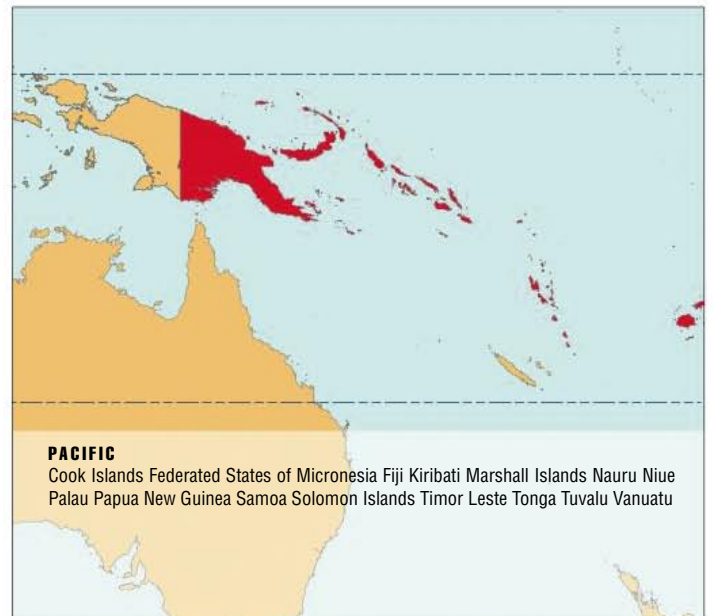
- 14-16/3 **Ministerial Meeting EU-Latin America and Caribbean Countries: "Digital Content for a Digital Society"**  
La Granja de San Ildefonso, Segovia, Spain

# Africa – Caribbean – Pacific and European Union countries



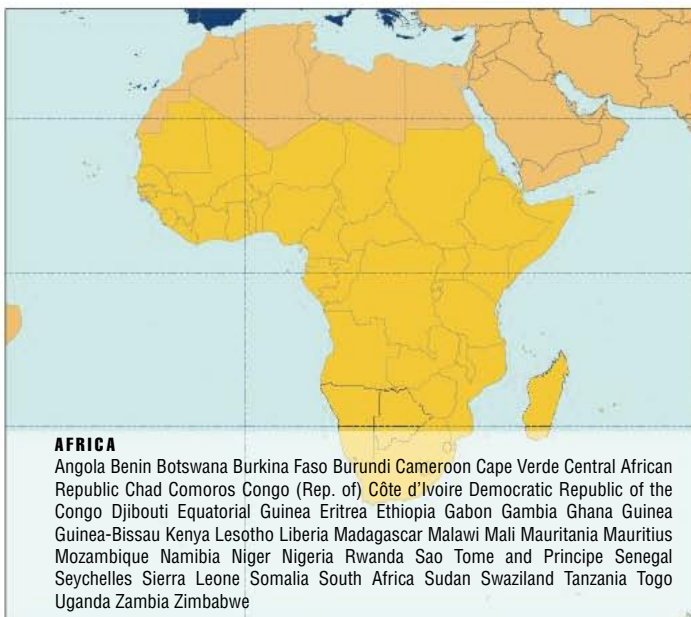
## CARIBBEAN

Antigua and Barbuda The Bahamas Barbados Belize Cuba Dominica Dominican Republic Grenada Guyana Haiti Jamaica Saint Kitts and Nevis Saint Lucia Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Suriname Trinidad and Tobago



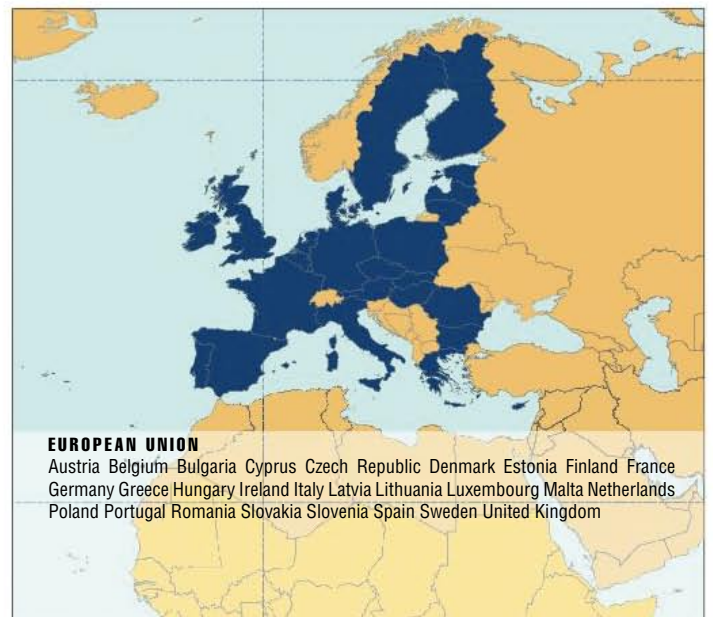
## PACIFIC

Cook Islands Federated States of Micronesia Fiji Kiribati Marshall Islands Nauru Niue Palau Papua New Guinea Samoa Solomon Islands Timor Leste Tonga Tuvalu Vanuatu



## AFRICA

Angola Benin Botswana Burkina Faso Burundi Cameroon Cape Verde Central African Republic Chad Comoros Congo (Rep. of) Côte d'Ivoire Democratic Republic of the Congo Djibouti Equatorial Guinea Eritrea Ethiopia Gabon Gambia Ghana Guinea Guinea-Bissau Kenya Lesotho Liberia Madagascar Malawi Mali Mauritania Mauritius Mozambique Namibia Niger Nigeria Rwanda Sao Tome and Principe Senegal Seychelles Sierra Leone Somalia South Africa Sudan Swaziland Tanzania Togo Uganda Zambia Zimbabwe



## EUROPEAN UNION

Austria Belgium Bulgaria Cyprus Czech Republic Denmark Estonia Finland France Germany Greece Hungary Ireland Italy Latvia Lithuania Luxembourg Malta Netherlands Poland Portugal Romania Slovakia Slovenia Spain Sweden United Kingdom

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