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HAVEN'T TRANSLATED INTO GREATER PARTICIPATION IN
POLITICS

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UP FOR SCRUTINY

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DIGITAL ECONOMY CHALLENGES AND ALTERNATIVES

ENVIRONMENT: IS EASTERN AFRICA'S DROUGHT THE WORST
IN RECENT HISTORY? AND ARE WORSE YET TO COME?



Top **25**
Most Powerful
Women in the
C-Suite Impacting
Business 2022

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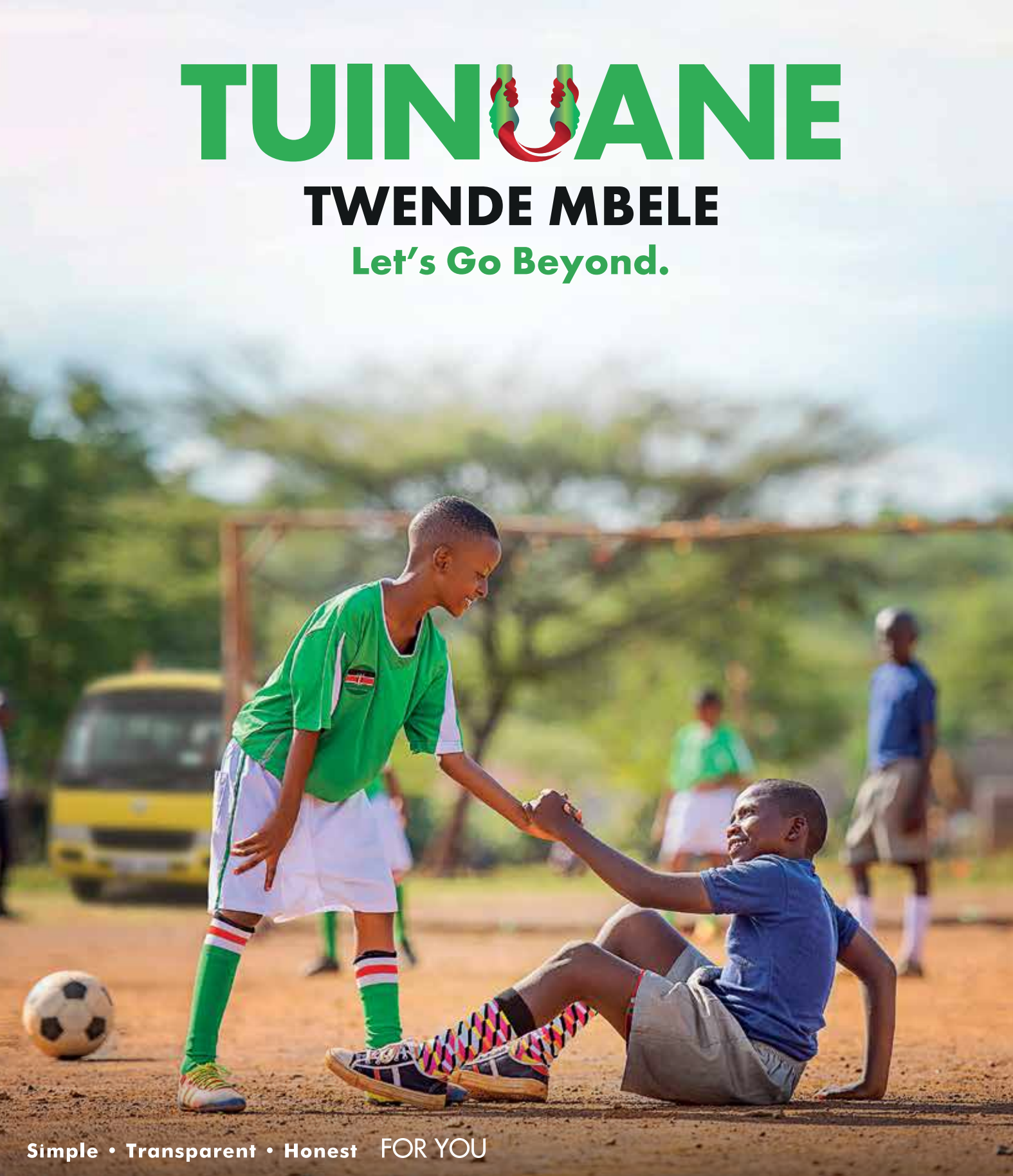
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The Selection Criteria and Ranking Process of Top 25 Most Powerful Women in the C-Suite Impacting Business 2022

■ 4



SECTOR REPORT

Morocco - a top fertiliser producer - could hold a key to the world's food supply

■ 110



OPINION

Kenya and South Africa offer insights into digital economy challenges and alternatives

■ 122

NOMINEES

- 6** Jeddidah Thotho - MD: Bata Shoe Kenya PLC
- 10** Rita Kavashe, MBS, AoEC-MD/CEO: Isuzu East Africa
- 16** Carole Kariuki - CEO: KEPSA
- 20** Vivienne Yeda - DG: EADB
- 28** Jane Karuku - CEO: EABL
- 32** Kathure Nyamu - MD: NCBA Investment Bank
- 36** Annastacia Kimtai - Retail Director: KCB Bank Kenya
- 40** Elizabeth Wasunna Ochwa - Director - Business Banking: ABSA Bank Kenya Plc
- 44** Teresa Njoroge - Founder/CEO: Clean Start
- 48** Nancy Muhoya - Country Managing Partner: EY KENYA
- 52** Anne Muraya - CEO: Deloitte East Africa



Lina Githuka - MD: KWAL

She is a driven professional who has been steering social-economic transformation and social justice reforms in Kenya and across the African continent through strategic leadership for over a decade.

■ 12

Nancy Matimu - MD, Multichoice Kenya

Upon her assumption of office as the first-ever woman CEO of Multichoice Kenya in 2019, she took charge with a clear business turn-around strategy in mind.

■ 24



56 Hope Murera - MD: ZEP-RE

64 Patricia Ithau - CEO: WPP Scangroup Plc

68 Rebecca Mbithi - MD/CEO: Family Bank

72 Rebecca Miano - MD/CEO: KENGEN

80 Eva Ngigi-Sarwari - Country Manager: VISA Kenya

84 Catherine Muraga - MD: Microsoft Africa Development Center

88 Gwen Kinisu - CEO: Prudential

90 Nasim Devji - MD: Diamond Trust Bank

94 Alice Kilonzo-Zulu - MD: Ecobank Rwanda

96 Lizz Ntonjira - Global Communications Director: AMREF Health Africa

Jane Kimemia-Nechi - CEO, Optiva Capital Partners

Optiva Capital Partner's strategy has revolved around their vision of being the partner of choice in providing solutions to clients, that accords them and their families in global access, world class education opportunities, preservation and welfare of families across generations.

■ 76



Melba Wasunna - External Affairs Manager, Base Titanium

My workstream ranges from leading policy discussions with key partners such as national and county government, to monitoring political and legislative developments, to ensuring the proactive management of issues that may impact our freedom to operate, to managing the company's engagements with external stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations, think tanks and research institutes, the media, and the local community.

■ 60



Why factory jobs for Ethiopian women haven't translated into greater participation in politics

Until the war in Tigray started in November 2020, Ethiopia was a favoured investment destination. It had experienced strong economic growth for the previous decade.

■ 104

NEWS FEATURE

100 South Africa could produce a lot more renewable energy: Here's what it needs

104 Why factory jobs for Ethiopian women haven't translated into greater participation in politics

SPECIAL FEATURE

108 The African Union at 20: some reason to cheer, but lots of work ahead

SECTOR REPORT

114 Cotton breeders are using genetic insights to make this global crop more sustainable

COMMENTARY

118 Wole Soyinka's life of writing holds Nigeria up for scrutiny

122 Kenya and South Africa offer insights into digital economy challenges and alternatives

BEYOND BUSINESS



Road deaths: Why matters have only got worse over the past 100 years

In the early days of motoring in the US, transport historian Peter Norton tells us, people were angry. In the four years following the end of the First World War, more Americans were killed on roads than had died on the battlefields in France.

■ 130



LAST WORD

Harnessing the Strength of Women Leadership to solve the challenges of the 21st Century

The Iron Lady is a 2011 biographical film drama based on the life and career of the former UK Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, as portrayed by American actress Meryl Streep.

■ 134



Is eastern Africa's drought the worst in recent history? And are worse yet to come?

Large areas of Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya are currently in the grip of a severe drought. An estimated 16.7 million people face acute food insecurity. That's more than the combined populations of Austria and Switzerland.

■ 126

The Selection Criteria and Ranking Process of **Top 25 Most Powerful Women in the C-Suite** Impacting Business 2022



years, we have seen more women rise to the top levels of companies across the world. This is because an increasing number of companies are seeing the value of having more women in leadership, and they are proving that they can make progress on gender diversity.

A 2016 study by the Peterson Institute for International Economics, surveying 91 countries, found that organizations with women in the C-suite were more profitable. This is supported by a 2018 McKinsey Report, Delivering through Diversity, which showed that companies in the top-quartile for gender diversity on executive teams were 21% more likely to outperform on profitability and 27% more likely to have superior value creation.

There is also evidence that corporate boards with women are better able to shift business focus from short term profit to longer term growth as women leaders are more collaborative and skilled in balancing interests of multiple stakeholders. Data continues to show that women are accelerators for economic growth, new market value, profits, reputation and development goals like ending hunger, poverty, inequality, and tackling climate change.

Our own 2022 Top 25 Most Powerful Women in C-Suite impacting business resonates with Rita Kavashe's theme and for the first time, the list features leading African women working beyond the country's borders. One is from outside the country and working out of Nairobi, Kenya.

In this issue, whose theme is celebrating Top 25 Most Powerful Women in the C-Suite impacting business 2022, one outstanding female leader, Rita Kavashe, consented to write the LAST WORD, our column wrapping up the publisher's thoughts of the month. Rita's seminal article is titled: Women in Leadership. This fascinating piece provides a glimpse into the evolution of women in leadership and the significant strides achieved across public and private sector spheres over the last century and into the 21st century.

Rita adds that in the last couple of



The 25 women mainly CEOs and a few holding level two C-Suite positions that is equivalent to Deputy CEOs, are at the helm of organizations, firms and functions where these women continue to excel in their performance, displaying phenomenal corporate leadership styles, human transformation, empathy and high degree emotional intelligence. Thanks to

The most important criteria are the ability to effect and manage change and transformation of both the people and organizational culture.

their leadership styles, the effects are felt within and without the country's borders.

The most important criteria are the ability to effect and manage change and transformation of both the people and organizational culture. Perception of creating critical mass felt by social impact scored highly, especially leadership on ESG and other SDGs with major societal impact.

Transforming organizations and service delivery were weighted highly, leading to higher ranking. Industry leadership and executive coaching training and practical skills were also ranked highly.

Those women CEOs that go out of their way in ensuring gender mainstreaming and opening doors for their young sisters, also scored highly. Conference

presentation and panel discussion were also rated highly. These 25 outstanding women on the spotlight this year are extraordinary women who are leading from the front, coaching and transforming their organizations, the employees under them and other stakeholders dependent on them, with human dignity and humility, one day at a time. They deserve to be celebrated, having shown others how to climb the corporate ladders while demonstrating great and leadership as head of various organizations and functions in companies.

Size of organization or profitability were not considered, as we view these as factors beyond the control of those found to be most eligible.

Read on and share your comments. We listen and observe. ■



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#1

Jeddidah Thotho

BATA SHOE KENYA PLC

MD

What do iconic East Africa brands Bata, Isuzu, EABL, KEPSA, KWAL, EADB and DSTV have in common? At the helm of the corner suites at these brands are a rare breed of some of the most talented powerful women. One of the new generation of women CEOs is the ostentatious, confident and stylish Jeddidah Thotho.

Since opening its Kenya office doors in Limuru just over 80 years ago, Bata has become a recognised heritage brand with over 2,200 employees in its Limuru Factory, 115 retail stores and 18 depots across the country. From the inception, Bata's Managing Director office has been a preserve of men.

In a new beginning and a first for the country, Kenyan born female leader Jeddidah Thotho was appointed the first female MD on February 2020, strait from her commercial director C-Suite.

Jeddidah Thotho is a corporate finance graduate of St Mary's University in the USA. She credits St. Mary's University for aiding in her success. "The background, the



In a new beginning and a first for the country, Kenyan born female leader Jeddidah Thotho was appointed the first female MD for Bata Shoe Kenya PLC, on February 2020, strait from her commercial director C-Suite.

foundation, the value systems and the rigour of the university education I got at St. Mary's has got me to the space I occupy at this particular time," she quips.

Armed with a wealth of experience after 11 years with Sears Holdings Corporation in the USA, Jeddidah moved back to Kenya in December 2010 and immediately interviewed for senior executive positions. Initially, she worked for Deacons in top executive positions, a fashion retail company franchising brands out of South Africa. Later, an American investor - Liberty Eagle Holdings, wanted her help with bringing fashion brands, like Mango and fast-food brands like Pizza Hut and Subway, into East and Central Africa.

Bata Shoe Kenya PLC, recognising her talent and potential, had head-hunted her at the dawn of 2019. She joined Bata, as the commercial director, leading retail teams to sell shoes through different channels including retail stores, depots, wholesalers, export markets, various sectors/institutions of the Government of Kenya and E-commerce platforms. >>





Jeddidah Thotho is a highly accomplished and innovative senior-level executive with over 20 years of critical skills and experience, including a long-term career with a Fortune 100 company. She sits as an Executive Board Member at Bata Shoe Kenya PLC, Kenya Associations of Manufacturers and Famous Brands.

>> Freshly promoted to Managing Director shortly before the advent of the Covid-19 Pandemic in 2020, Jeddidah quickly prioritised employee safety, instituting handwashing and social distancing in factories where workers needed to sustain daily work.

She also prioritised the safety and wellness of customers in stores by adding sanitisation, having sales associates wear masks and implementing social distancing. Bata then began sewing masks for its employees and sharing the extra masks

with the local community around Limuru and its environs. They converted chemical drums into handwashing stations in firm's neighbourhoods and donated more than 100,000 shoes to health care workers and their families throughout Kenya.

To maintain the business amid the Covid-19 Pandemic, Bata restructured its human resource architecture, operations, and the retail store footprint. During this time, Bata increased its online presence, revamping its website and boosting its customer service on social media.

Through Jeddidah's leadership, Bata has expanded rapidly into the export markets of Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, DRC Congo, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, and Ghana.

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Growing up, Jeddidah always wanted to be a leader and has held leadership positions from a young age. She attended Loreto High School, Limuru, where she was a games captain. In the USA, whilst pursuing her degree, she was a hostel leader, so it was only natural when she relocated back home to continue excel in various leadership roles.

As a role model to her daughter and son, Jeddidah hopes to inspire the next generation, especially young girls, to know that a less-than-stellar school grade does not spell the end of a successful career. "There are many opportunities in life to discover your passion," she opines. "Work hard, be smart, leverage your networks, and things will work out. You will have a successful career regardless of gender, race or age."

With this philosophy, Jeddidah has mentored hundreds of young girls and women to design the careers that they want, as they search for meaning and purpose in life and career paths.

Jeddidah also mentors others, "her children", to whom she imparts wisdom. She aspires to create transformational change in society and states that as a leader, she has a fountain of knowledge to deliver. She acknowledges her personal responsibility to make a difference and inspire others.

In her space, one experiences business social impact, sustainability, business advisory, women empowerment and leadership insights. According to LinkedIn, Jeddidah hopes that she serves as an inspiration to young girls to be the best version of themselves. ■



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#2

Rita Kavashe

MBS, AoEC

ISUZU EAST AFRICA

MD/CEO



Other than in her most known occupation at the helm of Isuzu East Africa, the leading East and Central African Vehicles Assembler, Rita Kavashe has all along been on a mission to mentor young girls and fellow women succeed in their career choices, from high school to post high school career choices through well-structured mentorship models. She is guiding many others in their entrepreneurship journeys, while preparing those in C-Suite to be board-ready. Those who prove capable have been recommended to a number of boards of blue-chip corporations and global brands.

A graduate of Moi University (Bachelor of Education), University of Nairobi (Master of Business Administration, MBA) and the Harvard Business School (Leadership Program), Rita is a trained teacher turned corporate honchos and executive coach whose passion is helping other women realize their ambitions and career goals. Not limited to women empowerment, Rita continues to develop her top management, including men through tailor made executive programmes as part of her human resource development, capacity building and succession planning. As a result, Isuzu East Africa boast a pool of one of the best people resources in sub-Saharan Africa.

She quips, with her usual amiable and loud laughter, 'Over the years, I have mentored hundreds of young girls and women to their definitions of careers successes and through them, reach thousands of others.'

In putting into practice her qualification as a Certified Executive Coach, Rita has mentored many



World marathon record holder and Isuzu D-Max Brand Ambassador Eliud Kipchoge (L) with Isuzu EA MD Rita Kavashe present the endorsed one-year partnership agreement at a ceremony held at Isuzu EA Plant on October, 22, 2020.

top executives who have been able to triple their personal equity, negotiate better remuneration for themselves and moved confidently through their career paths.

Others have ascended to very good employment and reached positions they never dared to dream off, the spin off being the ability to make the best of their life others. Others, like yours truly have become transformational leaders in their own life with exceptional integrity and ethics, in belief and in practice. As a Certified Executive Coach, Rita specializes in crafting coaching offerings that are thoughtfully tailor made to meet specific expectations, precise needs and individual goals.

Rita has partnered with organisations like women on boards in support of women empowerment and preparations to be board ready.

Most of her lessons have been geared at the process of intentionally shaping and transforming fellow women in their career paths, one step at a time. Rita loves helping mentees achieve otherwise hard to accomplish goals.

Rita's true grit is best exemplified by her ability to oversee the business operation of the largest automotive assembler in East Africa where she provided leadership when the majority shareholding changed from General Motors to Isuzu Motors, steering the company through a smooth transition to Isuzu East Africa.

Currently, Rita occupies that premier space as one of the most sort after industry thought leaders in matters Automotive Policy, Local Vehicle Assembly, Road Safety, Corporate Governance, Transformational Leadership, Effective Board Leadership and Business Sustainability.

Rita is a much sort after personality the AFRICA CEO FORUM, an annual gathering of decision-makers from the largest African companies, as well as international investors, multinational executives, heads of state and governments and representatives of the main financial institutions operating on the continent, founded in 2012. She is a respected business leader within the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) space, which was inaugurated in 2018. ■

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#3

Lina Githuka

KWAL

MD

Steering a business through a period of rapid change and transformation is a daunting challenge that Lina Githuka, the Managing Director of Kenya Wine Agencies Limited (KWAL), is no stranger to. She joined KWAL as a Commercial Consultant in 2016, a time when the business was going through the process of privatization after close to five decades of being a state-owned enterprise (SOE).

Lina joined KWAL as part of a team of seasoned business leaders that were tasked with the responsibility of managing the organization's transition into a private enterprise. She initially worked as the Commercial Director in 2017 and was 18 months later tapped to serve as the Managing Director after a very competitive recruitment process, making her KWAL's first female MD.

"Our mandate as a leadership team was to re-engineer business processes and systems, enhance capability development and embed new ways of working with the team to improve performance and turnaround the business," she says. Five years later, the results speak for themselves. In the period between 2017 and 2021, KWAL's volumes doubled and its earnings increased more than tenfold, she notes.

KWAL's commercial success under Lina's leadership has been driven by a combination of factors, including investments behind its flagship brands, improvements in its route to market capabilities, and an increase in overall operational efficiencies.

Lina also took the bold step of renovating KWAL's brand portfolio, a big bet that can pay off handsomely but also backfire if not well managed. For example, the 2018 repositioning and relaunch of Kibao, one



of KWAL's flagship vodkas, helped reestablish the brand's appeal in the market. Kibao was recognized globally as one of the Top 100 fastest growing spirit brands (IWSR, 2019).

Sh 4 billion Capital expenditure

One of the clearest signs that a company's shareholders and Board of Directors have full confidence in an MD or CEO is when they task them with the responsibility of overseeing a big-ticket investment. Under Lina's leadership, KWAL is undertaking its largest investment in more than three decades, underscoring the faith the company's board have in her.

The organization, renowned for brands such as Caprice Wine, Kibao Vodka, Viceroy, Amarula, Cellar Cask, Nederburg, Kingfisher, Altar Wine and Yatta Juice, among others, is investing up to Sh 4 billion in a new manufacturing facility in Tatu City, Kiambu County.

The new Greenfield factory will enhance KWAL's production capacity as well as help localize manufacturing of imported brands in its portfolio, like 4th Street and Drosty-Hof which are currently



sourced from Distell Group, the South African brewer and distiller that owns a majority stake in KWAL.

Increasing local production will enable KWAL to realize efficiencies amidst the current supply chain challenges and ensure consistency of supply, enabling it to compete more effectively. It will also support the organization in growing its exports business in the East and Central Africa region, while creating numerous skilled jobs at the site and in its value chain.

KWAL also launched cider production at its Enterprise Road premises in 2019, underlining its strategy to grow its local manufacturing capacity. The line cur- >>



>> rently produces Hunters Gold, Hunters Dry, and Savanna Cider – a very popular cider brand in Kenya.

Strong track record

Lina's successful stint at KWAL builds on her strong track record in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector, where she has served in senior roles in portfolio management, brand marketing, trade marketing and business development.

She started her career at Unilever Kenya in 1994 as a management trainee, a year after graduating from the University of Nairobi (UoN) with a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in Economics and Sociology. It is at Unilever that Lina discovered her passion for building and managing brands, creating value for consumers. She worked at Unilever for six years.



Never one to shy away from challenging but rewarding opportunities, she left Unilever and accepted a job offer at British American Tobacco (BAT) as the Group Brand Manager for Eastern Africa. Her flair for brand management and her unrelenting work ethic made her stand out and she was soon identified for an international assignment role at BAT's London Head Office in 2004, where she worked as a Senior International Brand Manager managing global brands. She later joined BAT South Africa as a Consumer Director.

Lina spent the tail end of her 16-year career with BAT in Kenya, where she took on several senior commercial roles with responsibility for the East and Central Africa market. She also served as the first local and the first female to take over the role of Head of Marketing for East and Central Africa for BAT.

Lina has attended numerous executive programmes internationally and regionally, the most recent one being a Senior Leadership Programme at the University of Stellenbosch Business School. Outside of work, Lina provides mentorship to young ladies through the Global Give Back Circle (GGBC) and the Women on Boards Network (WOBN). She is a proud alumnus of Precious Blood Riruta. She is an independent Board Director at Population Services Kenya and a committee member on the KAM Women in Manufacturing (WiM) caucus.

"My career journey has been rewarding and meaningful despite the challenges I have had to overcome. Over the years, I have come to appreciate that leadership is indeed a privilege, and an opportunity to impact not only business performance but people's development. I want to inspire young talent, especially females, to be gutsy and stop at nothing to achieve their dreams." Notes Lina while reflecting on her career. ■

// My career journey has been rewarding and meaningful despite the challenges I have had to overcome. Over the years, I have come to appreciate that leadership is indeed a privilege, and an opportunity to impact not only business performance but people's development. I want to inspire young talent, especially females, to be gutsy and stop at nothing to achieve their dreams."

#4

Carole Kariuki

KEPSA

CEO



Carole Kariuki's main strength is her passion for work, acumen, wit, zeal and focus in whatever she undertakes to do. She is indefatigable.

Without a doubt, KEPSA is where it is today, as Africa's foremost business think tank and high-level lobby group thanks to Carole Kariuki's singular leadership style and poise.

Among KEPSA's achievements under her stewardship are the sensitization and complete engagement on the national budgetary process; vigorous engagement with the National Treasury to facilitate the implementation of the Credit Guarantee Scheme to support MSMEs; formation of technical committees between KEPSA and KRA to continuously assisting in solving the tax administration issues as they emerge and ironing out any gray

areas; deeper engagements with National and County governments and individual ministerial agencies to facilitate better business environment both for FDI and local investors, to providing necessary input through well thought out advisories on the formation of various task forces to engage the government, the private sectors and the general public.

Carole's daily KEPSA menu additionally includes meeting important business delegations wanting to thumb their footprints and engage with Kenyan businesses; co-hosting important local, regional and global conferences to advance business interests and create a conducive atmosphere for trade and industry; and a myriad of other daily routine and strategic tasks. While being sometimes referred to in whispers, Carole Kariuki is never deterred or obstructed as she delivers



Carole's daily KEPSA menu additionally includes meeting important business delegations wanting to thumb their footprints and engage with Kenyan businesses; co-hosting important local, regional and global conferences to advance business interests and create a conducive atmosphere for trade and industry; and a myriad of other daily routine and strategic tasks.

sions, business special groups, the diplomatic community, organized NGOs and foreign visitors to the country looking for networks and business opportunities. Carole Kariuki's KEPSA is where the dance starts.

Within the first six months of 2022, Carole has shuttled all over the globe, as part of government or business delegations as well as in her private capacity when sort out. From New York to Washington; From London to Paris. From Marrakech, Morocco for the fourteenth US-Africa Business Summit and back in East Africa in time for the 22 Ordinary Summit of the East Africa Community Heads of State all in span of two weeks.

In New York, Carole presented to the UN general assembly on Mkenya Daima success on peace building as a model for the world on business and peace building and peace efforts financing.

Marrakech, Morocco, Ms Kariuki was a speaker on the success of KEPSA as an inclusive business organization for all levels and types of business and its success in integrating MSMEs into the organization, making KEPSA a global case study.

while imprinting her name in bold through her thoroughness in execution.

Taking over as CEO when KEPSA was a mere lopsided big business body frowned upon by ordinary Kenyans, today men and women trip over themselves for a ringside position next to Carole, to serve as either an advisor, director, or board sector chair. She has made and given the board sector chairs enviable recognition that mimic those occupied by Cabinet Secretaries (CS) in their respective sectors and disciplines. KEPSA Sector board chairs are regularly consulted and sought after by all and sundry, including the government, parliament, judiciary, independent constitutional commis-



Carole Karuga, CEO of KEPSA and Amb Ole Thonke at the Danish Business Network (DBN) in March 2021, where she was the guest speaker.

>> While away on national duties, Carole's fingers remain firmly on the deck, as she coordinates the various national initiatives and appearances where KEPSA's presence and contribution is expected. For instance, the important Mkenya Daima initiative on peace, transparent and credible general election engagements. These important responsibilities and duties are typical must do for this diminutive and razor-sharp transformational leader. One clear pointer has been giving clear leadership on local and global KEPSA initiatives and work-

While away on national duties, Carole's fingers remain firmly on the deck, as she coordinates the various national initiatives and appearances where KEPSA's presence and contribution is expected.



KEPSA CEO Carole Karuga and Absa Bank Kenya's MD Jeremy Awori with the signed MOU.

ing with champions. Of note, is her penchant on matters gender mainstreaming for the last 12 years that culminated with the Private Sector Gender Award alongside the President Gender Award being won by HE Uhuru Kenyatta.

Carole Kariuki continues to recognize and place many business executives and leaders using her inherent skills, gifts and talents through secondment to various boards of state-owned enterprises (SOE) where these men and women are able to influence and improve the decision making, policy formation and executions to ensure improved performance, economic and social transformation and growth in these spaces. In return, her own good deeds have recently been recognized by new board appointments as a director in Jubilee Health, Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE), the crown being her appointment by HE President Uhuru Kenyatta as Chair of Vision 2030 Delivery Board.

Through her writing columns in leading business newspapers especially the Business Daily, preparations of specialized and well researched reports, conference presentations in relevant and thematic areas, national panel in person or media discussions and workshop leadership, Carol Kariuki fires the numerous engine cylinders that enable Kenya explore its past while creating its future. In this way, she is one of the CEOs who help the country renew its buried potential.

Global highlights under her belt include speaking on behalf of the Africa private sector during TICAD 6 Nairobi 2016 in the presence of 42 heads of state and governments, and including heads of multilateral institutions like the World Bank and the AFDB, among others.



Global highlights under her belt include speaking on behalf of the Africa private sector during TICAD 6 Nairobi 2016 in the presence of 42 heads of state and governments, and including heads of multilateral institutions like the World Bank and the AFDB, among others.

Local highlights include leading the private sector in partnership with the government in mobilizing over Ksh. 6 Bn in cash and kind for national initiatives.

Carole Kariuki holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Economics and Sociology from the University of Nairobi and a Master's Degree in Public Administration and International Affairs from Bowling Green State University, Ohio, USA.

On December 12 2021, HE President Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta bestowed on Carole Kariuki the national honour of the Elder of the Burning Spear (EBS) in recognition for her distinguished service to her country.

In life, Carole Kariuki is inspired by the following words of Congressman John Lewis, "You are a light. You are the light. Never let anyone—any person or any force—dampen, dim or diminish your light. Study the path of others to make your way easier and more abundant." ■



KEPROBA CEO Wilfred Marube, (right), KEPSA CEO Carole Karuga during the signing of MOU On February 9, 2021 at the KEPSA office in Nairobi.

#5 Vivienne Yeda

EADB

DG

Vivienne Yeda is an experienced professional banker and international business lawyer who currently serves as the Director General of the East African Development Bank (EADB).

Moody's and Global Credit Rating, two leading international credit rating agencies, in 2022 affirmed the EADB's investment grade rating, assigning it a "stable outlook". This signifies continued stability and bright prospects for the Bank. It is noteworthy that in Africa, there are only two countries (Botswana at A3 and Mauritius at Baa3) that are rated investment grade by Moody's. Five multilateral development banks also rated investment grade by Moody's (ADB rated AAA, AFC rated A3, TDB rated Baa3. BOAD and Afreximbank are both rated at Baa1).

During her tenure as CEO at the EADB, Ms. Yeda has been passionate about social and economic development and is involved in the coordination and allocation of significant resources to various development initiatives in the East African member states.

EADB has evolved to become a trailblazer in private equity investment and financing of SMEs which had previously struggled to raise capital from commercial banks as well as other projects in the real economy. The Bank has also been a sturdy partner in member states' development projects that require long-term capital and has built an expansive loan portfolio in a diverse range of sectors in East Africa, including agriculture, education, tourism, real estate, and energy, just to name a few.

In Kenya, one notable project benefiting from EADB's funding is the SME finance project which supports SMEs through local partners. In this project EADB has partnered with banks to support more than 1000 SMEs that provide than 6000 jobs.

Other sectors in Kenya which EADB is supporting include education; funding universities to develop robust internal information technology (IT) infrastructure, and construct faculty buildings and hostels. The Bank supports secondary schools in Kenya to construct student hostel blocks and attendant facilities in order to increase student enrolment by adding extra



streams. In the health sector, the Bank funds hospitals that offer affordable health care in densely populated communities. Under housing, the bank partners with housing finance institutions to implement affordable housing schemes. The Bank recently funded the construction of more than 200 affordable housing apartments in Nairobi.

In Uganda, where EADB is headquartered, the Bank is active in the SME sector under its Rural Finance Enhancement Program, targeting SMEs in the agricultural sector in rural areas. Through partnerships with other institutions the bank has funded over 5,000 SMEs thereby creating a number of employment opportunities in rural areas.

Other sectors of the Uganda economy in which EADB is active include Agriculture and Agro-processing, manufacturing, education, commercial real estate and Transport. In the agriculture and agro-processing sector, there are several large-scale projects in the sugar sub-sector. These companies support more than 20,000 small-holder out growers' schemes. The Bank supports green field projects and recently funded the establishment of the only medical gloves manufacturing plant in the region.

The EADB is supporting education in Uganda by funding a number of education and tertiary institutions to provide education to increase number of learners. EADB is funding business centres and the transport sector by financing acquisition of aircraft for private operators which has transformed private air travel in Uganda.

Tanzania has a diverse portfolio with funding to the energy sector, government, and large-scale social housing in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma. Several institutions in Tanzania are beneficiaries of EADB's investment in private equity to support businesses and the financial sector.

In Rwanda, EADB supports Medium Enterprises in a variety of sectors through its partnership with various institutions. Through these partnerships, enterprises in various sectors namely energy, education, tourism, transport, and manufacturing are funded; thus, creating employment oppor-



Director General of East African Development Bank Vivienne Yeda speaks during the 30th Annual Awards Gala hosted by The Africa-America Institute at Gotham Hall on September 22, 2014 in New York City.

tunities. Overall, the Bank continues to finance many different projects in the East African region, underscoring the commendable pace at which EADB is supporting development.

EADB METAF Programme

The EADB Medical Training and Fellowship Programme (METAF) launched in August 2016, is a response to the acute shortage of neurologists and oncologists in East Africa. The Programme is designed to equip medical practitioners and doctors with skills to undertake research especially in communities and areas where access to qualified medical specialists in these fields is limited. Financed by EADB, the METAF programme is managed in partnership with the British Council (BC) and the Royal Council of Physicians (RCP), as the technical partner.

Premised on the British Council's expertise in managing training programmes and the RCP's expertise in training and developing improved medical care across the globe, the programme is designed to deliver a high impact sustainable training model employing twin approaches of hosting short-term clinical trainings within East Africa and long-term fellowships tenable in the United Kingdom. Between 2016 -2020, the METAF pro-

gramme provided short clinical training courses in neurology and oncology to more than 500 doctors from East Africa. At the end of 2019, the British Council estimated that over 3,000 clinical staff in East Africa benefitted from the knowledge gained on the clinical courses through mentoring by course participants.

Extractives Training

The Extractive Industries annual seminar is organized by EADB and facilitated by global law firm, DLA Piper. It is designed for public sector lawyers, judges, and law professors and academics involved in negotiating complex transactions and drafting agreements for or on behalf of Governments in extractive sectors and other large-scale projects to enhance legal skills in this branch of the law.

Launched in Kigali Rwanda in 2014, these are short intensive training workshops that bring together senior public-sector lawyers, legal academics, and Judges. The programme has hosted short training courses successfully in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda. By the end of 2021, more than 300 public sector lawyers and legal academics, judges, State Counsel from Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania and Burundi had benefitted from the training programmes. >>

>> Stem Programme

The EADB Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) University Scholarship Programme is a multiple fast-track 12-month training course offered to experienced teachers and lecturers from member states. The programme offers scholars the opportunity to pursue a graduate degree in the STEM fields at Rutgers University. This Programme is delivered in partnership with the Africa-America Institute (AAI), and is coordinated and implemented by Rutgers University, New Jersey. At the end of 2019, 16 scholars, all teachers from government schools in East Africa benefited from the pilot phase of the programme.

Career

In her over 20-years career, Ms. Yeda has negotiated and structured facilities for sovereign borrowers including governments, Central Banks, and Regional Economic Communities, and undertaken several projects with private sector borrowers. Prior to her role as Director General at EADB, Ms. Yeda was the African Development Bank Resident Representative and Country Manager for Zambia.

Ms. Yeda has been recognized internationally for her outstanding contributions in banking and business leadership. In 2014, she was awarded the “African Banker of the Year Award” by the African Banker magazine and Business in Africa Events (BIAE). In the same year, she was named “Business Leader of the Year” by the Africa-America Institute at an awards ceremony held in New York in recognition of her contribution to “development banking, finance and business in Africa for over 20 years.” She was also at this time conferred the “Africa Female Economic Champion Award-Banking” and inducted into the Global Women Leaders Hall of Fame 2014 at the Africa Middle East Asia Women Summit 2014. In 2021 she was nominated for the African Banker of the Year Award as one of the eight finalists. As Chairman of KPLC, she was listed as one of the 2021 and 2022 Top 25 Most Influential Chairs of Board Impacting



Vivienne Yeda, Director General of East African Development Bank with Junger the KfW-Development Bank Kampala office.

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Business curated by the Business Monthly East Africa magazine and among the Top 25 Most Influential CEOs Impacting Business 2021 and 2022 from her role as the Director General of EADB.

Passion

Ms Yeda has great passionate about education, service and leadership, having pursued multiple post-graduate degrees from some of the world’s most prestigious universities. After obtaining her Bachelor’s degree in Law from the University of Nairobi, she proceeded for a Master’s in International Finance and Law at University College London, where she pursued multiple disciplines in law and finance at the institution’s affiliated colleges, including the London School of Economics and the University of London School of Oriental and African Studies. She earned her MBA from Edith Cowan University, Australia.

Her skills, knowledge and experience in law and finance have enabled her to excel in leadership. She served on the Board of the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) between 2011 and 2015. In 2020, she was appointed the Chairman of Kenya Power and Lighting Company PLC, where together with the new management, she is leading the electricity distributor through a transformative process to improve service delivery. ■



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#6 Nancy Matimu

MULTICHOICE KENYA

MD



In 2021, Nancy Matimu was nominated as one of the most influential CEO for her role in leading Kenya's largest video entertainment company in enriching the lives of the communities they operate in.

All these was made possible by her transformational leadership. Since taking over leadership of the MultiChoice Kenya (MCK) business, she has turned it around.

Upon her assumption of office as the first-ever woman CEO of Multichoice Kenya in 2019, Nancy Matimu took charge with a clear business turnaround strategy in mind: Multichoice Kenya had to more than ever entrench its pole position as the undisputable number one brand within the video entertainment space. That went according to plan and it was time to unveil a new milestone.

Early in 2022, Nancy and her team set the stage to develop and adopt an updated Undisputed Number One Strategy (UNOS). Beyond the updated strategy, it was important to promote the power of the MCK corporate culture and work ethic, review and adopt updated routines and templates as well as promoting execution excellence. The strategy continues to evolve and bear results.

The business that Nancy leads continues to bag numerous awards due to her transformation. In 2021, MultiChoice Kenya won the Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) Excellence Awards for their Showcase event's creativity in unveiling new content during a pandemic year. After scooping 4 KUZA Broadcasting Awards in 2021 sponsored by Communications Authority in Kenya, MultiChoice this year took an additional 4 awards. This demonstrates commitment and hard work.

Nancy has focused on evolving the work-ethic and organizational culture using cross leadership framework and redefining a DNA dubbed SEPETTUKA that was anchored on speed, energy, passion, excellence, trust and teamwork whilst promoting Multichoice Group behaviours. Secondly,

she set out to strengthen an already successful business model with a robust focus on customer experience, excellence and regionalization. Other factors of success have been distribution excellence, brand and communications excellence, digital platforms deepening and cost optimization. This has led to a highly-engaged workforce, accelerated rate of customer acquisition, significant shift in brand consideration, NPS and growth in customer satisfaction. To date, these initiatives, have born immense fruits

Nancy has enhanced the DSTV and GOTV brand visibility, expanding the distribution network by more than doubling the points of sale across the country, and upgrading existing customer service to state-of-the-art call centres.

'Since we improved our self-service platforms on *423#, MyDStv and MyGOTV apps, customers are able to buy decoders and full kits, change packages, pay the subscriptions, and clear errors amongst other services at their convenience wherever they are', Nancy states in a recent press release.

Nancy further directed her efforts towards upgrading and refreshing the branches look and feel to deliver a fresh modern, digital, open and collaborative experience. She has strengthened the quality of partnerships with market-renowned players across sales, marketing and operations agencies to elevate the quality of execution in the marketplace.

Heading to three years since her journey with MCK begun, Nancy has through a highly-engaged and energized leadership team significantly improved the working environment and culture at Multichoice Kenya, grown the brand positioning, and improved the financial health of the Kenya business within this very short span of time.

"Previously, our business opera-



Nancy Matimu (center) Multichoice Kenya MD, signs a football during the start of the 2020-21 football season on DSTV and GOTV at LPL

tions were centralized in Nairobi as the main hub. However, it became increasingly apparent that to grow faster and connect better with our customers and distribution partners across the country, it was critical to redesign the operation model and set up the company for success.

"We divided the country into 5 regions with substantive hubs supported by heads of regions. This way, we regionalized our operations to widen our footprint for a greater reach. We also set out to create presence through dealers and accredited agents across all key towns. Today, we are present in every key town

in just about all sub-counties of our country", reveals Nancy in an earlier interview where Multichoice Kenya was celebrated, recognized and ranked as number 3 among the Top 25 Brands Transforming the Lives of Kenyans 2021.

Despite the fact that her appointment came just before the wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic that affected the organization's momentum, Nancy strategically managed to enhance MultiChoice Kenya's market leadership position evermore.

"This has been possible, thanks in great part to our highly >>



Nancy has focused on evolving the work-ethic and organizational culture using cross leadership framework and redefining a DNA dubbed SEPETTUKA that was anchored on speed, energy, passion, excellence, trust and teamwork whilst promoting Multichoice Group behaviours.



>> engaged employees, accredited dealers who are now moving more volume and connecting more customers than ever, accredited installers and agencies that make our world-class video entertainment service available to more Kenyans. Many homes are now enjoying the quality entertainment we offer on DStv and GOtv,” adds Nancy Matimu.

Further, the company has been on a journey to further expand its DTT GOtv network with 5 sites have already added in Nanyuki, Bomet, Nyahururu, Busia counties and soon in Voi sub-County.

In a nutshell, Multichoice, as a service brand, is quickly spreading to where the customers are. “We are listening to our customers to address demand, understand their changing lives, the pressures they face and what matters most to them. We are committed to understanding

“We are committed to understanding patterns in the marketplace, using trends, data and clear consumer insights to put customers at the heart of all the decisions that each of us make every day in the organization because we know it is the power that fuels our growth in a hyper competitive world,”

- Nancy Matimu, MultiChoice Kenya MD



patterns in the marketplace, using trends, data and clear consumer insights to put customers at the heart of all the decisions that each of us make every day in the organization because we know it is the power that fuels our growth in a hyper competitive world,” reveals Nancy.

On the commercial side, Nancy has recently steered her team to revamp DStv Business packages to ensure different industry sectors like hotels, pubs and clubs, offices, guest houses and serviced apartments are able to grow their businesses with better cashflows and profits. “We understand that every business has unique needs and we have made it our business to ensure our commercial partners entertainment needs are considered and incorporated in our improvement decisions, based on their feedback. We have simplified and revamped DStv Business

packages to connect customers to profits no matter the business size,” says Nancy.

When not handling matters MultiChoice, Nancy dedicates her time to serving on the boards of local and global firms. She is a member of the global board of trustees for Education sub-Saharan Africa (ESSA) where she serves as the Business Engagement Lead.

As Nancy continues to make significant strides in the digital economy, she was recently recognized as an honoree in the Top 100 Most Influential Women in Africa 2020 Edition that are advancing positive transformation on the continent for excellence in leadership and performance, personal accomplishments, commitment to sharing knowledge, breaking the status quo and being an accomplished African Woman.

Nancy has had an illustrious 15-year career, having led and driven growth through transformation of businesses, capacity building in brand, products and innovation as



MultiChoice Kenya MD Nancy Matimu handing over the company's PPEs donation to Health CS Mutahi Kagwe.



Nancy Matimu (right), MultiChoice Kenya MD at the the opening ceremony of Multichoice Branch in Nakuru.

well as sales and operational excellence, in her previous tours of duty, that have included top local and global brands.

Nancy holds a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree in Strategic Management from Strathmore University Business School (SUBS), a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies from Kenyatta University (KU) and a Post Graduate Diploma in Marketing from the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) in the UK. She is also a graduate of the Advanced Management Program (AMP) and Chief Executive Program (CEP) from Strathmore, IESE and Lagos Business Schools. Nancy has also pursued executive education courses with INSEAD, Duke University corporate education and Harvard Business School. ■

#7

Jane Karuku

EABL

CEO



Jane Karuku's distinguished career with East African Breweries Limited (EABL), the largest and most profitable alcoholic beverage company in the region, started in 2014 when she was appointed to serve as a Non-Executive Director. Shortly after in 2015, the seasoned executive was appointed as the Managing Director of Kenya Breweries Limited, EABL's Kenyan subsidiary. She served in this position for seven years until 2021 when she was promoted to Group Managing Director and CEO of EABL, making her the first female executive to

ascend to this position in the company's 100-year history.

Founded in 1922, EABL has in the past century built an extensive network of breweries, distilleries, and distribution facilities across East Africa.

The Group is headquartered in Kenya, where it operates through Kenya Breweries Limited. It has subsidiaries in Tanzania (Serengeti Breweries Limited) and Uganda (Uganda Breweries Limited) and works with distribution partners in South Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo to serve customers and

consumers in these markets.

EABL has a diverse portfolio of more than 40 brands that range from beers, spirits, and adult non-alcoholic drinks. It also imports a wide range of international alcoholic brands produced by its majority shareholder Diageo, the British alcoholic beverage maker renowned for global brands such as Johnnie Walker, Guinness, and Smirnoff. Overall, EABL employs over 2,500 people directly and many thousands more indirectly through its vast distribution network. It also has an extensive network that supports more

than 60,000 farmers who supply it with raw materials such as barley and sorghum.

As the senior-most executive at EABL, Ms. Karuku has the weighty responsibility of overseeing the Group's expansive operations and bringing to life its stated ambition to be one of the best performing, most trusted and respected consumer products companies in Africa.

Impressive results

Ms. Karuku oversaw a remarkable recovery in EABL's financial and operational performance in 2021 after a contraction in 2020 attributable to Covid-19 related restrictions and curfews. EABL grew its net sales to Sh86 billion in 2021, the company's audited financial statements indicate. This represented a 15 per cent year on year jump from Sh75 billion in 2020. Its noteworthy that the company was in 2021 able to surpass its pre-pandemic 2019 net sales of Sh83 billion, underlining the successful turnaround it was able to achieve over this period.

EABL was able to shake off the effects of the Pandemic in 2021 largely due to the agile thinking that included the launch its own ecommerce platform dubbed "Party Central" to increase reach to consumers.

At EABL, sustainability is chiefly understood to mean the company's responsibility towards society. The entire value chain from farmer to consumer is regarded and promoted under the motto of "from grain to glass".

The Group published its inaugural Sustainability Report in 2021, condensing its key sustainability achievements in 2020 and 2021. Some key highlights in the report include a \$5 million 10-year fund to help pubs



East Africa Breweries Limited Group MD and CEO, Jane Karuku tries out an excavator as the operator Lydia Wahu looks on at the ground breaking ceremony of a micro brewery set to be put up at the EABL Ruaraka headquarters in Nairobi.

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and bars recover from the Covid-19 disruptions. In its bid to impact local communities, EABL also has a bold ambition to source up to 80% of all its raw materials locally.

Illustrious career

Ms. Karuku's success at EABL adds to her long list of achievements in other fields, including the NGO space. Prior to joining EABL, she was the President of Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) one of Africa's largest grant-making organisations in the food security and agricultural development sector.

>>



L-R: John Musunga, KBL MD; Jane Karuku, EABL Group MD and CEO; Anne Joy Michira, acting Marketing and Innovations Director EABL and Eric Kiniti, Group Corporate Relations Director, as they cheer EABL's and Tusker's 100 years.

>> She also served as the Managing Director East and Central Africa at Cadbury's for 13 years before the chocolate maker was acquired globally. She has had a stint at Farmers Choice and at Telkom Kenya, where she was the Deputy Chief Executive.

Ms. Karuku holds a Bachelor's degree in Food Science and Technology from the University of Nairobi, graduating in 1985. She earned her MBA in Marketing from the University of California, in 1992.

She has served on several boards including Absa Bank (formerly Barclays) and is currently a Trustee of United States International University-Africa and Precious Sisters, an organisation that empowers bright and underprivileged girls through education. She is the immediate past chair of Kenya Vision 2030 Delivery Board.

On the values that drive her, Ms.

Life has taught me that success is embedded in being disciplined, besides finding the right fit in terms of a workplace and life balance."

- Jane Karuku, EABL's Group Managing Director and CEO

Karuku has stated in past media interviews that discipline plays an important role in her life. "Life has taught me that success is embedded in being disciplined, besides finding the right fit in terms of a workplace and life balance," she once stated. ■



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#8

Kathure Nyamu

NCBA INVESTMENT BANK

MD

As the Managing Director of NCBA Investment Bank, a wholly owned subsidiary of NCBA Group PLC, Kathure Nyamu has the responsibility of overseeing the success of the investment bank's offerings in advisory, security brokerage and wealth management services. NCBA Group PLC is a highly respected financial services group listed on the Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE). Ms Nyamu is one of the first women CEOs to have been hosted on the Trading Bell Show.

Kathure has been instrumental in driving NCBA Investment Bank's strong performance in recent years. NCBA Group's 2021 Annual Report indicates that the Group's investment banking subsidiary recorded revenues of Sh580 million in 2021, a 33 per cent increase from Sh435 million in 2020. Profit before tax grew by a staggering 68 per cent from Sh202 million in 2020 to Sh 340 million in 2021.

Investment banking is a fiercely competitive industry and NCBA Investment Bank's strong growth in recent years is a testament to the world class leadership Kathure has been able to bring to the table.

Ms Nyamu, a seasoned corporate finance professional, honed her leadership prowess over the past twenty-five years. Prior to her appointment as Managing Director of NCBA Investment Bank, she was the Chief Executive Officer at CBA Capital Limited, a wholly owned investment banking subsidiary of the former Commercial Bank of Africa Limited (CBA), which merged with NIC to form NCBA Bank Kenya PLC. She held this position between 2014 and 2019. She also served as the Head of Investment Banking at CBA between 2008 and 2014.

Among her peers, Ms Nyamu is a respected specialist in mergers and acquisitions, privatizations, valuations and finance raising, wealth management, business strategy, corporate finance and securities brokerage, with more than 28 endorsements from leading clients. In this industry, she is a leading thought leader.



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A strong brand

NCBA Investment Bank's wealth management solutions are tailored towards meeting clients' long-term and short-term financial needs.

The Investment Bank's solutions in this area include a bespoke private wealth solution geared towards high-net-worth individuals and institutions, known as NCBA Wealth; and Collective Investment Schemes solutions, comprising the Kenya Shilling denominated NCBA Fixed Income Fund, the NCBA Dollar Fixed Income Fund, the NCBA Equity Fund.

The Investment Bank also has unit trust solutions for the more sophisticated investors which comprises the NCBA KES Fixed Income Basket Note Fund and the NCBA Dollar Fixed Income Basket Note Fund. The assets under management in NCBA Investment Bank's collective investment scheme reached Sh18 billion in 2021, a 43 per cent increase from Sh12.5 bil-



lion in 2020, according to data from the Capital Markets Authority. This makes NCBA-IB one of the fastest growing fund managers and the second largest collective investment scheme in market with 29 (and growing) licensed fund managers.

Professional firms

Before joining investment banking, Kathure worked as a Corporate Finance Executive at PwC from 2004 to 2006, a Senior Corporate Finance Consultant at Deloitte Management Consultants between 2001 and 2003, and as an Auditor Senior at Deloitte between October 1997 and March 2001. Her successful stint with the leading professional services firms enabled her to build the knowledge, skills, experience, and networks to excel in investment banking.

She holds a Bachelor of Commerce (B. Com) degree in Finance from the University of Nairobi (UoN) and is a >>



The NCBA team led by NCBA Investment Banks's MD, Kathure Nyamu at Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE), during the listing of the bank's maiden Medium Term Note (MTN).



>> graduate of the Advanced Management Program (AMP), an executive education from Strathmore Business School (SBS). The AMP is a joint program with Lagos Business School (LBS) and IESE Business School in Barcelona, Spain. Ms Nyamu is also a Certified Investment and Financial Analyst

Kathure has been instrumental in driving NCBA Investment Bank's strong performance in recent years. NCBA Group's 2021 Annual Report indicates that the Group's investment banking subsidiary recorded revenues of Sh580 million in 2021

and a Certified Public Accountant of Kenya.

Ms Nyamu, schooled at the prestigious Precious Girls Riruta, an institution she remains proud of. She loves coaching and mentoring young upcoming women leaders while remaining very passionate about the boy-child, being a proud mother of two sons. She is looking forward to joining like-minded mothers to partner with on this cause.

When not braided, Ms Nyamu wears her natural kinky Africa hair with the gait of a queen. She enjoys reading widely and winds up after duty listening to a wide array of music. Her first love is classical music, shopee being a personal favorite.

Kathure's main hobby is playing the piano and looks forward to sitting her grade 7 piano exams. Other away from home hobby is organic farming, done real-time by the phone. ■



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#9

Annastacia Kimtai

KCB BANK KENYA

RETAIL DIRECTOR

Mrs Kimtai has risen through the ranks, becoming Retail Director, KCB Bank Kenya PLC, in 2011. KCB is Kenya's largest and most profitable Bank, with over 28.1 million customers, 205 branches, 423 ATMs, 22,916 merchants and agents, 5,104 employees, 1.8 plus social media followers and with an asset base of KES 858.5 Bn. The bank also operates merchant and agency banking model, to increase its footprints.

Annastacia Kimtai is an astute career banker with over 23 years' experience in banking, 10 of those being in senior management roles in strategic leadership and business development. She previously held roles including Regional Business Manager and Branch Manager.

Within the KCB Bank Group, she is reputed as an astute champion for financial inclusion, who runs the biggest banking retail chain in East and Central Africa.

Mrs. Kimtai, a devote practicing Roman Catholic and former national leader of its powerful Catholic Women Association (CWA) network, has a proven history of successful work with cross functional teams to deliver exceptional results in growing retail business market share and improving bottom line by optimizing operational processes while mitigating business risks. Annastacia is also proficient in training, mentoring, coaching, and developing careers of highly engaged retail teams.



She has over the time gained immense experience and competence across various disciplines such as business growth, leadership and talent development, business risk and compliance, change management, channel optimization, card business, mobile banking and agency banking, among others.

As the custodian of KCB's retail banking franchise in Kenya, Mrs. Kimtai has seen significant growth in the network's, with her goal aligned with KCB Bank Group's vision, 'to be the preferred financial solutions provider in Africa, with global reach. She aligns her customer care to the bank's purpose, 'simplifying your world to enable your progress'.

Her personality replicates the bank's core values: She is inspirational, carries herself with poise and simplicity despite her heavy responsibilities and the power she fuses. Mrs. Kimtai is professionally very friendly, on contact, to a fault: perhaps an extension of her Marian devotion.

In her tenure at the Bank, Annastacia has championed financial inclusion for customers at the bottom of the pyramid by developing products and services to serve this niche. She is currently leading the Women's Proposition at KCB where the bank is enabling the progress of Women in Business.

In her tenure at the Bank, Annastacia has championed financial inclusion for customers at the bottom of the pyramid by developing products and services to serve this niche. She is currently leading the Women's Proposition at KCB where the bank is enabling the progress of Women in Business. She has supported the revenue growth of the Women Proposition and so far, they have managed to open over 250,000 new accounts and issued loans worth over Kshs. 20 Bn to help the women scale up their businesses.

The supporting of women is mainly in the micro, small and medium enterprises >>



Inline with the International Women's week, KCB's Retail Director Mrs Kimtai, shares a light moment with guests at the Biashara Club Nairobi Region Engagement Forum held at Panafric Hotel, Nairobi.

Annastacia also runs the Inua Jamii senior citizens' scheme, which is a tax-financed pension-tested social pension offering universal pension coverage for all citizens of Kenya once they attain 70 years of age. The Kenyan government has been disbursing funds through KCB Bank since 2015.



KCB's Retail Director Annastacia Kimtai with now former Nakuru County Governor, Lee Kinyanjui with the MOU documents, which will be used to implement the Nakuru County Enterprise Fund.

>> (MSMEs), by giving them tailor made services like long term loans and overdrafts, asset finance and insurance premium financing, mortgages, local purchase orders (LPOs) and invoice discounting, bank guarantees and credit cards.

Annastacia also runs the Inua Jamii senior citizens' scheme, which is a tax-financed pension-tested social pension offering universal pension coverage for all citizens of Kenya once they attain 70 years of age. The Kenyan government has been disbursing funds through KCB Bank since 2015. For instance, in 2020, over Kshs.11.2 billion cash transfers were disbursed through the bank.

Mrs. Kimtai is also a board member of the KCB Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the conglomerate, which manages a number of initiatives that supports youth empowerment, tackling youth unemployment by creating jobs through technical and vocational skills development and vocational scholarships in the informal sector trades and ICT, including the 2jiajiri programme, the word coined from the Swahili word meaning 'let us employ ourselves'.

Annastacia holds a Master's degree in Business Administration (MBA) in Strategic Management, Master of Arts (MA) degree in Rural Economics and Co-operation and a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree. She is a Certified Executive Coach from the Academy of Executive Coaching (AoEC). She holds a Certificate in Senior Executive Program for Africa (SEPA) from Harvard University.

Humble to a fault, Mrs Kimtai spends time between her official duties and responsibilities mentoring and counselling her colleagues at work, on matters that go beyond the normal call of duty. She is also a loving wife and mother and sets aside time to be with her family and friends, in addition to nurturing her spiritual life as a devote Catholic. ■

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#10 Elizabeth Wasunna Ochwa

ABSA BANK KENYA PLC

DIRECTOR - BUSINESS BANKING



Absa Bank Kenya PLC has in recent years significantly increased the level of lending and support it offers to Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs). This move is aligned with the bank's strategy to accelerate the growth of its Business Banking Unit and diversify beyond Corporate and Retail Banking –two market segments where it has historically and to this day enjoyed strong market leadership, initially as Barclays Bank.

In an interview with Business Monthly EA, Elizabeth Wasunna Ochwa, the bank's Director of Business Banking, emphasized that MSMEs are a special area of focus because they account for an overwhelming majority of enterprises in Kenya. A survey by the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) noted that MSMEs account for 24 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), over 90 per cent of private sector enterprises and 93 per cent of the total labour force in the economy.

"You cannot succeed in business banking in Kenya without developing a strong value proposition for MSMEs," says the

career banker. "MSMES today account for about 8 per cent of the bank's loan book from less than 2 per cent a few years ago. Our ambition is to reach double digits," she adds. It's worth noting that 8 per cent of Absa's loan book is no small figure considering that the bank's net loans and advances to customers stood at a staggering Sh234.23 billion at the end of 2021, according to its Integrated Report for 2021.

Favorable ecosystem

"When it comes to supporting MSMEs, access to credit is just one piece of the puzzle. MSMEs face unique challenges that can only be addressed by creating a favorable ecosystem for them to thrive," says Elizabeth.

Some of these challenges include access to markets, cash flow constraints, and access to learning opportunities. To address these shortfalls, Absa Bank Kenya PLC has partnered with various institutions such as the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KNCCI), the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA), and others to help MSMEs build their capacity, scale up and strengthen market linkages.

Absa Bank Kenya PLC is a strong advocate of business practices that support MSMEs to address the unique cash flow challenges they face. As an example, the bank reviewed its own procurement policies to support its MSME vendors during the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic. "At the beginning of Pandemic, we asked ourselves, how can we relieve the cash



When it comes to supporting MSMEs, access to credit is just one piece of the puzzle. MSMEs face unique challenges that can only be addressed by creating a favorable ecosystem for them to thrive,"



flow pressures that our MSME vendors were facing at this difficult time. We accordingly reduced our credit periods to seven days for invoices below Ksh. 1 million and 14 days for invoices of more than Ksh.1 million," Elizabeth opines.

Absa Bank Kenya PLC has developed tailor-made solutions for women in business, cognizant of the fact that women own 33 per cent of all MSMEs in Kenya, according to a CBK survey. In 2021, the bank launched the "She Business Account" with a commitment to impact over one million women entrepreneurs in five years with this new proposition through the provision of financial and non-financial solutions designed to accelerate business growth.

The non-financial solutions include networking opportunities, coaching, and mentoring, and access to markets. "Topical areas that we've helped our women customers gain new knowledge and skills include cash flow management, taking your business online, mental health and work life balance," says Elizabeth, noting that the bank is also encouraging its anchor clients to consider the women owned MSMEs when looking for vendors. "We are actively involved in business match-making. Its encouraging to see a growing number of our large corporate clients who share similar aspirations to advance gender equity awarding contracts to our women owned MSME clients," she says.

Elizabeth notes that banks have historically shied away from MSMEs due to the perceived risks in the sector. However, Absa Bank Kenya PLC, is taking a more aggressive stance as it has successfully secured the backing of the African Guarantee Fund (AGF). The bank recently signed a Sh 1.25 billion loan portfolio guarantee facility with AGF that allows access to up to KES 100 million in a single borrower limit.

>>

>> Customer service and care

Although Absa's market share in business banking is growing, Elizabeth noted that competition in the segment is strong. "Like us, many banks are investing in technology and digital capabilities to improve the customer experience. There's also little differentiation in terms of products, as most lenders offer the same mix of facilities such as working capital loans, business expansion loans and mortgages," she said.

"What makes the difference for us is customer service and personalized care. We have invested and continue to invest in the latest digital technologies to make banking easier and seamless for our customers. Our teams put a lot of effort in ensuring we offer world-class customer service and personalized care," she explains.

Elizabeth gives credit to her team for the high customer service standards Absa has set in business banking. "As a leader, having a team that is aligned to what needs to be done is the most rewarding and fulfilling achievement. With this kind of a team, you not only achieve your business objectives; you also get to develop the skills and careers of each team member while growing your own abilities as a leader" she says.

Elizabeth has been in banking for more than 25 years, with extensive experience across different markets and geographies. "I joined banking right after university and my parents were fully supportive of this career choice. I was also passionate about the field and was fortunate to have highly capable and committed mentors and executive and life skill coaches from the very beginning," she says.

She encourages her team to constantly learn and to reach out to mentors and coaches. She also tries to foster a work environment where



Absa Bank Kenya PLC Business Banking Director, Elizabeth Wasunna-Ochwa (left) having a cordial moment with the C.S Industrialization, Hon. Betty Maina and Kenya Association of Manufacturers Chairman, Mucai Kuniya after presenting a cheque in support of the Changamka Kenya Shopping Festival.

// As a leader, having a team that is aligned to what needs to be done is the most rewarding and fulfilling achievement. With this kind of a team, you not only achieve your business objectives; you also get to develop the skills and careers of each team member while growing your own abilities as a leader"



everyone can communicate openly. "Listening is a key part of my management style. I try to lead by influencing rather than commanding and prefer when solutions come from my team," she notes, with nostalgia.

Elizabeth earned her Bachelor of Science (BSc) in International Business Administration from the United States International University, Africa (USIU-A Nairobi) in 1995 and an Master's degree in Business Administration (MBA) in Marketing and Strategic Management from the same institution shortly thereafter.

She has received extensive executive training all through her illustrious banking career, with her latest one being a course in governance from the Strathmore Business School (SBS). Outside of work, Elizabeth enjoys reading, travelling, and spending time with her family. Her current read is "Daughter of Africa", an autobiography by businesswoman and public relations guru, Gina Din. ■

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#11

Teresa Njoroge

CLEAN START

FOUNDER/CEO

Teresa Njoroge is the Founder and CEO at Clean Start. She sees herself as a Social Justice Reforms Leader.

Ms Njoroge is a driven professional who has been steering social-economic transformation and social justice reforms in Kenya and across the African continent through strategic leadership for over a decade.

A devoted people leader and a community-centric social entrepreneur, Teresa has passionately been advocating for the rights of children of imprisoned parents, youth and women impacted by the Criminal Justice system mostly due to the criminalization of poverty.

The visionary of a more just and humane justice system, Ms Njoroge set up the first formerly-imprisoned -women led organization - Clean Start, where she has been spearheading the vision in decriminalizing poverty related offences through socio-economic empowerment, declassifying petty offences through advocacy, policy formulation and legislation which birthed the first Coalition of Formerly Imprisoned Women Africa movement to advocate for second chances in society and destigmatize formerly imprisoned persons in society.

Teresa's perspectives towards the criminal justice system changed completely when she was falsely accused, maliciously prosecuted and wrongfully imprisoned at Langata Women's Maximum Prison for a year with her then three-month-old daughter, Umaa, for a crime that she had not committed. Ms



Teresa Njoroge recently spoke at #Ted2017 on Bridges.

Njoroge was later exonerated of any wrong doing and compensated by the government years after serving the sentence.

While imprisoned, she experienced first-hand the plight of the imprisoned women, some like her, accompanied by their children, who were crying out for justice. As she executes this work, she came across young girls in the Juvenile Justice System who only needed protection from their abusers but were now entangled with the challenges of the justice system and forever labelled negatively.

'Sadly, we imprison the poor and the vulnerable! It was very clear to me when I was serving term that it's easy to end up in prison when you are innocent and poor but to pay your way to freedom if you are guilty and rich'. Teresa quips.

'After my release in 2009, I embarked on supporting women who have gone through imprisonment through lifting them out of the trenches of poverty, pain, isolation, and stigma' Teresa laments.

"
Sadly, we imprison the poor and the vulnerable! It was very clear to me when I was serving term that it's easy to end up in prison when you are innocent and poor but to pay your way to freedom if you are guilty and rich'.

- Teresa Njoroge is the Founder and CEO at Clean Start.



Clean Start has evolved from one great idea to the dynamic, phenomenal and fast-growing organization it is today. In addition, Ms Njoroge runs The Coalition of Formerly Imprisoned Women Africa-COFIW, which is a society that builds the agency and self-advocacy for formerly incarcerated women. COFIW is the first of its kind in Kenya and East and Central Africa.

As a leader reimagining justice and helping shape the way justice is served, in particular to the vulnerable, Ms Njoroge has led her platforms into transforming the lives of many across the nation in her rallying call of Beyond the Bars; Never Again.

She is actively building key strategic partnerships, advocating in governments across the African Continent and private organizations for formerly imprisoned persons, to have better life outcomes, while challenging the injustices within the criminal justice systems.

Over the years, the work >>

>> at Clean Start has been recognized both locally and internationally. Teresa is an Inaugural Ford Foundation Global Fellow, a Vital Voices Lead Global Fellow, TED Women 2017 Speaker and the recipient of the African Female Leader 2018 Excellence Award by The Global Thinkers Forum, UK. Women and Girls Lead Global have recognized Clean Start's efforts as outstanding advocates for marginalized groups. Teresa has also received the Timeless Woman of Wonder Award, and most recently, the Head of State Commendation (HSC), in the Presidential Trailblazer award 2022-Republic of Kenya, for her

Teresa Njoroge, Co-founder and ceo of Clean Start, addressing the audience in Victoria Hall, Geneva



efforts to re-integrate formerly imprisoned persons. She also received the Diversity and Inclusion award 2022 for promoting human rights by Diar Awards and featured among top 50 women in development in Africa by Donors Africa.

I am motivated to leave behind a legacy of a bold contributor who streamlined social change to alleviate chronic poverty, reducing petty crimes caused by poverty related issues, breaking the high rates of recidivism in Africa and one that contributed to growing Kenya's restorative justice programs and a more equitable, inclusive and just world.

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A Charismatic Roman Catholic, Ms. Njoroge holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree (B. Com) in Banking and Finance and a Certificate in Arbitration. She is a mother of two, a girl aged 11 and a boy aged 9. She unwinds by taking to the swimming pool and walking. Teresa draws from several fountains of knowledge through reading.

Her key skills include an in-depth understanding of the legal framework and policy issues that surround community development projects and highly developed communication skills to articulate a vision of civil rights and civil liberties that is compelling to the public, partners in advocacy, policymakers and donors. ■



#12

Nancy Muhoya

EY KENYA

COUNTRY MANAGING PARTNER

According to posts on Nancy Muhoya is a seasoned C-suite executive with close to 19 years of experience in providing extensive assurance expertise to clients in diverse sectors across Africa. She is currently the Regional Managing Partner of EY East Africa and the Country Managing partner for EY Kenya.

Prior to this, Nancy was the Assurance Leader for EY in East Africa before moving up the ladder as a Partner for over 7 years.

With a strong track record in providing exceptional client service to EY clients and growing the EY business, Nancy is highly respected in the East African business ecosystem. Her expertise has positioned her as a strategic resource for investors and businesses looking to break ground on the African continent.

Nancy is a champion for people-centric leadership and is continually guided by the ethos of integrity, enthusiasm and cultural awareness in her management approach. Having made history as the first woman to be appointed as a cluster leader for EY on the African continent, Nancy has been deliberate with her efforts in sharing the spotlight with other female executives in the industry and mentoring the next generation of women leaders in Africa.

Nancy is extremely passionate about holistic leadership, inspiring young talents and building a better working world. She demonstrates this through various people and culture initiatives which aim to shift perspectives regarding unconscious bias, gender equality and empowerment through education, in the workplace and beyond. Nancy recently launched IamEY campaign in EY Kenya to celebrate special stories and talents of the people. She was sensitizing the world by show casing people as more than

their work, and that people are individuals with varied interests and passions. A classic Nancy's famous quote on people and culture that captures her spirit is, 'Just be yourself. Let people see the real, imperfect, flawed, quirky, weird, beautiful, magical person that you are' (Quote by Mandy Hale).

The launch of 'IamEY' confirms EY as a global organization that encourages people to bring their uniqueness to work as they build a 'better working world'.

Notable career milestones include her recognition as one of the Top 100 Women CEOs in Africa (2021). Earlier on, Nancy



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Yet another favourite from Leadershift First, which Nancy follows and which serves as an advisory read, 'Surround yourself with people that push you to be better. Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions, especially during these unprecedented times. According to Mark Twain, small people always do that, but the greats make you feel that you, too, can become great.'

was recognized by the prestigious 'Top40Under40 Women Award' by Business Daily in Kenya (2016).

The 2021 list of the Top 100 Women CEOs in Africa, featured leading African Women CEOs from 21 African countries heading various organizations that continue to excel under their leadership on the continent and beyond. The list was curated by Reset Global People in partnership with the >>

>> SDGs office at the Office of the President of Ghana and Avance Media.

Business Daily's Top 40 Under 40 list is an annual selection of the most influential and progressive personalities who leave a mark in corporate Kenya and in business. In the list are entrepreneurs, artistes, corporate high fliers, architects, lawyers, doctors, academics, researchers and other people breaking the glass ceiling in their areas of specializations.

Nancy is highly sought-after speaker and thought leader across East Africa, connecting with both executives and young professionals on relevant leadership matters that are actively shaping the future of work. This year, Nancy shared her learnings over the years with other executives and industry leaders at the National Co-operatives Leaders Conference 2022 at the invitation of The Co-op Bank Group, main themes being building a better working world and people and culture.

Nancy's educational background includes a Master's in Business Administration (MBA) strategic management major (2016) and a Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) degree, accounting option, (1998-2002) both from the University of Nairobi (UoN). She is a Certified Public Accountant CPA(K)-Strathmore University, a member of the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Kenya (ICPAK) as well as the Institute of Certified Accountants of Rwanda (ICPAR). She has risen through the ranks, from auditor, audit manager, senior audit manager to associate director.

Her skills include new business development, business and social sustainability consulting, executive coaching, business transformation, change management, people development, project management and team leadership.

She speaks English and Swahili and currently resides in Nairobi, ■



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#13

Anne Muraya

DELOITTE EAST AFRICA

CEO

Deloitte East Africa appointed Ms Anne Muraya as CEO effective 1 June 2022. Anne succeeded Joe Eshun, who was appointed as the Deloitte Africa Managing Director for Businesses, where he is overseeing Deloitte's business functions at an Africa-wide level, relocating to the Johannesburg office for the new position.

With this appointment, Anne became the first female CEO for Deloitte East Africa, overseeing Deloitte's offices in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, and other East Africa locations the firm serves, including but not limited to Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Somalia.

Prior this role, Anne was also the first female East Africa Audit Leader and Managing Director for Responsible Business and Public Policy for Africa.

Anne took the CEO role at Deloitte East Africa at a historic time for the Deloitte Africa firm, joining Deloitte Africa CEO, Ruwayda Redfearn, and Deloitte Africa Board Chair, Delia Ndlovu as senior female executives leading the Deloitte Africa business. "These appointments are not only a continuation of our transformation journey, but a reflection of the firm's commitment to living our Shared Values, particularly "Leading the Way" and "Fostering Inclusion," said the outgoing Deloitte Africa CEO, Lwazi Bam.



Deloitte East Africa CEO and former CEO, Anne Muraya (Left) and Joe Eshun (Right)



We have spent the last four years setting the foundations for the growth of our business by focusing on client service excellence, shaping the right culture aligned with our Deloitte Shared Values and ensuring operational efficiency. I am excited to hand over the torch to Anne Muraya and we are confident that she will be a force in driving Deloitte forward in an exciting, but also challenging post-pandemic environment."

- Joe Eshun, The immediate former Deloitte East Africa CEO

The immediate former Deloitte East Africa CEO Joe Eshun said, "We have spent the last four years setting the foundations for the growth of our business by focusing on client service excellence, shaping the right culture aligned with our Deloitte Shared Values and ensuring operational efficiency. I am excited to hand over the torch to Anne Muraya and we are confident that she will be a force in driving Deloitte forward in an exciting, but also challenging post-pandemic environment."



Ms Muraya started her career as an auditor at Deloitte in 1994, after completing her Bachelor of Education (B.Ed. in Science) degree in Mathematics and Chemistry at Kenyatta University. Anne subsequently rose to partnership in 2009, where she built a wealth of audit and accounting experience within the banking and financial services, manufacturing, agriculture and retail industries. During her time as partner, she was also the National Professional Practice Director for the East Africa practice, leading technical consultations on audit methodology and IFRS.

Anne was appointed as East Africa Audit Leader in 2017, in charge of 12 audit partners and over 200 staff across the region, overseeing audit quality; talent management; client service and profitability of the Audit and Assurance business.

Ms Muraya is a member of the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Kenya (ICPAK) where she sits on the Professional Standards Committee, and a member of the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Uganda (ICPAU).

In December 2020, Anne was inducted into the college of Fellows of ICPAK in recognition of services rendered to the profession. In 2021, she was appointed the Africa Managing Partner for Responsible Business and Public Policy. Ms Muraya has also been a member of the Deloitte Global Advisory Council, selected as one of 30 partners globally to act as a sounding board for the Deloitte Global CEO.

In accepting the position, Anne stated, "It is an honour to be appointed to this role. I am excited about working with our teams to serve our clients and continue to contribute to the growth in the profession, and the whole reporting ecosystem. It is also important >>



It is an honour to be appointed to this role. I am excited about working with our teams to serve our clients and continue to contribute to the growth in the profession, and the whole reporting ecosystem.



>> to me that we work with our people and our clients to impact the communities we live in by being part of the solution in matters of climate change and social and economic inequality.”

Anne’s thoughts on people and culture are best expressed by a number of her posts on LinkedIn, ‘Many people are not ready for their lucky break when it comes to them.’

‘Develop your skills. Study your craft. Save some money. Build a network before you need it. Lay the ground work.’ This one is apt, as a motivational mantra for the young upcoming executives. According to James Clear, a celebrated writer, entrepreneur and behaviour science expert, as quoted by Ms Muraya, ‘The prepared person is positioned to benefit from unexpected opportunities.’

James Clear is the author of the no. 1 New York Times bestseller, Atomic Habits. He is a writer and speaker focused on habits, decision making and continuous improvement. ■



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#14

Hope Murera

ZEP-RE

MD

Ms Hope Murera is the Managing Director of ZEP-RE, having previously served as General Manager, responsible for overall strategy and operations and Company Secretary of ZEP-RE. ZEP-RE is formerly the PTA Reinsurance Company.

Hope is an industry thought leader and a most sought-after conference speaker and executive leadership coach in the financial and insurance sector. One of her most recent contributions was at the 48th AIO Conference and Annual Assembly hosted between June 25-30th in Nairobi, Kenya, where she delivered a very illuminating speech titled: “Agri-tech and insurance development: Perspectives for the future in the face of climate change.”

Ms Murera said that Africa was experiencing the worst drought in 40 years, which had subsequently led to low crop yields, worsened by pests and diseases, flooding and other natural catastrophes. She explained to the audience why she believes that insurance can mitigate risks of extreme weather events.



The ZEP-RE CEO told the gathering that although 80% of Africa’s food is produced by smallholder farmers, thereby creating between 53 and 70% of employment, only 2% of these farmers have access to insurance and worse still, only 4% of private sector loans are given to agriculture.

She outlined ZEP-RE’s financial inclusion initiatives and shared the winning formula for national insurance programmes. ZEP-RE’s overall goal is to drive financial inclusion and make insurance accessible to all. The DRIVE Project is one project that as the implementing agent, ZEP-RE will be pushing for a 360-degree approach that will transform the pastoralists’ livelihoods, and also impact their value chains, bringing economic change to the people in the Horn of Africa.

According to Ms Murera, ‘Research has long shown that firms with greater gender diversity among senior leadership perform better. But why is that? What are the specific mechanisms that drive the positive business outcomes associ-

ated with increasing the number of women in the C-suite?’

An analysis of more than 150 companies finds that after women join the top management team, firms become more open to change and less open to risk, and they tend to shift from a Merger and

Research has long shown that firms with greater gender diversity among senior leadership perform better. But why is that? What are the specific mechanisms that drive the positive business outcomes associated with increasing the number of women in the C-suite?

Acquisition (M&A)-focused strategy to more investment into internal Research and Development (R&D).

In other words, when women join the C-suite, they don’t just bring new perspectives; they actually shift how the C-Suite thinks about innovation, ultimately enabling these firms to consider a wider variety of strategies for creating value.

On the importance of the practice of coaching, Ms Murera has some lessons for the executive leaders. She states, ‘Sometimes we confuse coaching with many other things. For example, is there a difference between a coach, a teacher, a trainer, a motivational speaker, a mentor, and a counsellor? Or is a coach all these bundled together into one?’

A certified executive leadership coach, Hope opines that coaching is a transformational journey and plays an integral role in transforming leadership profiles. She holds that coaching is imperative for leaders and their teams. She shared this in a forum hosted by the CDI-Africa Coaching Group.

>>



>> The shift in thinking includes the realization that C-Suite executives do not lead a business, they lead people. Coaching empowers leaders to know how to get the best out of every individual to enable them deliver great results.

Ms. Murera quoted an African proverb to explain the challenge facing Africa. Thus: 'Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter,' meaning that until the oppressed class learns how to read, write or communicate with the world outside, the world will never know their viewpoint.

She prescribes that: 'However, African homegrown financial institutions equipped with better understanding of the region and specific challenges which continue to bedevil the continent as well as tailor made solutions are starting to emerge and rewrite the African economic story but more importantly give Africa back her voice.'

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In a lengthy interview with BISSA that we have heavily lifted from, for this article, Ms Murera holds that, 'the outlook is good and we are very optimistic and believe Africa is rising, we are sitting on some of the fastest growing markets in the world, the demographics factor is in our favour, we have young people whom their average age is 20 years so that's amazing but it is also challenging, it's scary are we ready for them? So, getting the products that address our demographics will always remain challenging, if you look at mobile penetration and money transfer is really encouraging and it can only get better.'

And what is going on at the Africa Continental Free Trade that is something that is also exciting, Africans can look at their problems globally and solve them, create a common market of over 1.2 billion people that would be amazing, so there is so much good that is coming out of Africa, the future is bright for Africa.

So, organizing us so that we can look at it globally and bring the industry together, we have started doing the CEOs forums to kind of bring everyone on board to know what is happening.

Ms. Murera is a holder of a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree from Makerere University in Uganda, a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from IMD International, Lausanne, Switzerland. She undertook an Executive Program in Strategy and Organisation at the prestigious Stanford University Graduate School of Business (2015). Hope has wrung over 20 years working experience from the insurance and reinsurance industry.

Ms. Murera currently sits on the Boards of Uganda Reinsurance Company Limited, Africa Trade Insurance Agency (ATI) and the Organisation of Eastern and Southern Africa (OESAI).. ■



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#15 Melba Wasunna

BASE TITANIUM

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MANAGER



I am the External Affairs Manager at Base Titanium, the operator of Kenya's largest mineral sands mine and a flagship project under the Kenya Vision 2030 development blueprint, located in Kwale County.

My workstream ranges from leading policy discussions with key partners such as national and county government, to monitoring political and legislative developments, to ensuring the proactive management of issues that may impact our freedom to operate, to managing the company's engagements with external stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations, think tanks and research institutes, the media, and the local community. It's a dynamic role that requires prioritization, adaptability, an aptitude for teamwork and an eye for detail.

Education

I earned my Doctorate in Juridical Sciences (Law) from the Monash University in Melbourne Australia in 2014. I transitioned from my Master of Law (Human Rights) from the same institution in 2011. Australia holds a special place in my heart as I went to study there at a point in my life when I was crystal clear about the path I wanted to take in my career – driving correlation between business and social impact. I thrive at developing innovative, fact driven solutions, building the business case for social impact, enlisting buy-in for new initiatives and leading agile teams that make it happen.

I undertook my undergraduate studies at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, between 2002 and 2006. During this time, I earned my Bachelor of Arts and Humanities degree as well as a Bachelor of Law degree. I was placed on the Dean's Merit list for each year.

Before that, I attended the Moi Girls Secondary School in Nairobi, Kenya.



Dr Melba Wasunna, External Affairs, Manager Base Titanium Limited, with Kwale Youth Assembly on the latter's official site visit.



Academia and the public sector

Prior to joining Base Titanium in 2018, I worked in academia and the public sector. I was the Founder and Executive Director of the Strathmore Extractives Industry Centre at Strathmore University in Kenya. I served in this role between 2014 and 2016 before transitioning to becoming the Director of the Extractives Baraza at the same institution from 2016 to 2018.

While at Strathmore University, I created Kenya's first Masters in Law in Oil and Gas Program

in partnership with international institutions and facilitators. I also put together over 100 conferences, workshops, and events to promote dialogue and advanced understanding of the extractives industry (mining, oil, gas and energy) in Kenya.

I also spearheaded and coordinated fundraising drives for local research and capacity building that resulted in multi-million donor grants from the UK Department for International Development (through Oxford Policy >>



Dr Melba Wasunna and Ms Obuto Okudo after receiving awards as Women of the Year at the Kenyan Upstream Oil and Gas Awards.

>> Management), Oxfam International, Open Society, Danish Institute of Human Rights, among other aid institutions.

I have lectured at Strathmore University, University of Nairobi, and Monash University in various capacities. I have also authored several peer-reviewed academic papers and press articles in leading publications in Kenya and globally.

Prior to my stint in academia, I worked in the public sector as the Legal Advisor and Lead Researcher to Kenya's Deputy Chief Justice in 2013 and 2014.

In this role, I provided legal support directly to the Deputy Chief Justice through conducting in-depth research on matters before the Supreme Court and drafting legal opinions. One of my biggest achievements was initiating the development of the Judiciary's Sexual Harassment Policy in 2014.

I started my career as Legal Associate at Davis Polk and Wardwell LLP, New York, USA,

Along the way, I have earned some accolades including Upstream Oil and Gas Awards, Woman of the Year Kenya (2019), and Recipient of the "100 Global Inspirational Women in Mining (WIM100) Award (2020) and the "Africa Extractives Mentor Award", Pioneer Women in Extractives in Africa (2022).

- Dr Melba Wasunna , External Affairs, Manager Base Titanium Limited



where I worked in mergers and acquisition, and credit department, between 2007 and 2010.

Trust and Leadership

I am the current Chairperson of the Association of Women in Energy and Extractives in Kenya (AWEIK), which I helped found in 2017. I am the current Vice Chairperson, Energy and Extractives Sector Board, Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA).

Along the way, I have earned some accolades including Upstream Oil and Gas Awards, Woman of the Year Kenya (2019), and Recipient of the "100 Global Inspirational Women in Mining (WIM100) Award (2020) and the "Africa Extractives Mentor Award", Pioneer Women in Extractives in Africa (2022).

Between my work at Base Titanium and my other leadership responsibilities in the extractives sector, I enjoy travelling, cooking, and spending time with friends and family. ■

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#16

Patricia Ithau

WPP SCANGROUP PLC
CEO

The Board of WPP Scangroup PLC, Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE) listed firm appointed Ms Patricia Ithau the chief executive effective (CEO) and Executive Director on March 14, 2022, replacing founder and long-serving boss Bharat Thakrar. Ms Ithau was the regional director at Seed, the Stanford Institute for Innovation in Developing Economies.

“Patricia is passionate about creating opportunities that improve people’s live,” WPP Scangroup chairman of Board Richard Omwela stated upon her appointment.

Ms Ithau has worked with consumer brands including Unilever, Diageo/East Africa Breweries Limited and French personal care company, L’Oreal. She previously served on the board of WPP Scangroup as non-executive director from 2017 to 2020.

Ms Ithau describes herself on LinkedIn as a true believer in the continent of Africa, pointing our need to build on our own human capital to be able to market the region in order to transform the continent’s fortunes on the global stage. Patricia adds that she is a passionate spirit, drawing inspiration from making a difference in everything she does. She believes she has the opportunity to build role models in the corporate and entrepreneurial world, serving as a catalyst and connecting resources to help enterprise overcome adversity and seize opportunities to realize their full potential.

To use her own words as capture on LinkedIn, the most important global business network, Ms Ithau prides that her belief is underpinned by her love for identifying enduring consumer and commercial insights to support the development of brands and grow businesses, that actualized in a career spanning 25 years across three global companies, Unilever, Diageo/EABL and L’Oreal.

The last 8 years of that career saw her focus on setting up new organizations and opening new frontiers as Managing Director Uganda Breweries Ltd, Managing Director EABL International, with her last role in the FMCG sector being setting up L’Oreal East Africa, a subsidiary of the Global multinational as its inaugural Managing Director. This was indeed a crowning glory having in a little over three years grown a business with \$25million revenue, employing over 270 people, manufacturing 40 million units per annum and closing one of the first of its kind acquisitions of a local business, in this market.



Patricia Ithau during the ratification of WPP-Scangroup appointments of New Board and CEO.

“Patricia is passionate about creating opportunities that improve people’s live,”



She adds that she pivoted her passion to drive scaling and transformation of SMEs, the largest job creation sector in all emerging economies. Ms Ithau has made this a reality as the Regional Director for the Stanford Institute for Innovation in Developing Economies - Seed, an initiative out of the Graduate School of Business, that supports transformation of SMEs in the East and Southern Africa region, through a year-long program. The program in the last 5 years has supported scaling of over 200 small to mid-size companies, demonstrating real impact through the age-old idiom ‘teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime’.

In her board duties, Ms Ithau states that she builds on the positive impact of development funding, as a board member of Trade Mark East Africa (TMEA), the multi donor initiative with the overall goal >>



Patricia is one of those focused, positive, can-do people of which this country is so desperately short, upon the departure of Ms Ithau from the Advisory Board at Invest in Africa (IIA)-Kenya, where both of them served, 'she brings verve and vitality, sparkle and spirit, vim and vigour, dash and drive, to all she does and touches,'

- According to John Ngumi, director and Chairman of Safaricom PLC



>> of reducing poverty in the East African through advocating for policies that see to the reduction of trade barriers and increased trade competitiveness of the East African region; and bring to life her enduring desire to connect corporate business with social sustainability investment, as a Trustee on the Board of the Safaricom (Kenya) and Vodafone Foundations (UK). Patricia also seats on the board of Absa Bank Kenya PLC (where Patricia chairs Absa Securities board), Jambojet, British Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Vivo Activewear Limited where she is Chair of Board.

According to John Ngumi, Patricia is one of those focused, positive, can-do people of which this country is so desperately short. John adds, upon the departure of Ms Ithau from the Advisory Board at Invest in Africa (IIA)-Kenya, where both of them served, 'she brings verve and vitality, sparkle and spirit, vim and vigour, dash and drive, to all she does and touches,'.

She holds an MBA degree in Strategic Management from USIU –Africa, and a Bachelor of Commerce (B. Com) degree from the University of Nairobi (UoN). Ms Ithau has attended numerous executive education and advanced management programs with leading universities in the world, including the Said Business School (2013), University of Oxford, INSEAD-CEDEP (2012) and Strathmore Business School Nairobi/IESE Business School Barcelona (2007).

Patricia is a Certified Emotional Intelligence Practitioner with Genos International and an Accredited Executive Coach with the Academy of Executive Coaching (AoEC). On December 12, 2020, Ms Ithau was bestowed with the Head of State Commendation (HSC) for her distinguished service to the nation, in all the responsibilities and duties she has been involved. ■

- Dr Melba Wasunna , External Affairs, Manager Base Titanium Limited



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#17 Rebecca Mbithi

FAMILY BANK

MD/CEO

Rebecca Mbithi, a corporate lawyer-turned banker took the helm at Family bank in an acting capacity in mid-2018, before her substantive appointment by the board on February 26, 2019. She immediately shook the banking industry with a stellar performance. For instance, hardly a year into the job, Family Bank registered an historic and mind-boggling growth in profitability then, a whopping 300% in the first three quarters of 2019, reflecting a huge jump from similar period in 2018.

Rebecca's previous strong background in the management of legal affairs in two other large organisations, including ensuring compliance with regulatory, financing and environmental requirements, managing litigation and contract administration, all hosted her firmly onto the CEO's seat at Family Bank.

The bank immediately started on a growth trajectory, thanks to aggressive deposit taking and on-lending to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) strategy that Ms Mbithi harnessed. For a start, customer deposits grew by a substantive 26 %, with net loans and advances keeping pace at 11 %.

Today, only a few years down the line, customer deposits have reached a staggering KES 69.8 Bn, according to the Integrated Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2021. Family Bank increased earnings hit the KES 3.3 B profit before tax, representing a 132% increase. The growth in earnings was largely driven by an increase in interest income, marginal growth in



“Our aggression in deposit taking has been targeted at institutions, county governments, NGO’s, corporate and our main client base, the MSME customers, as we arrive at an optimum deposit mix,”

Family Bank CEO Rebecca Mbithi

interest expenses and operating expenses, coupled with a reduction in the loan loss provisions.

The group's total assets grew by 23 % to close at KES 111.7 b, fired up by net loans and advances which expanded by 18.2% to KES 66.9 B while investment in government securities increased by 45% to KES 24.7 B on account of improved liquidity. In the same period, customer deposits increased by 17% to KES 81.9 B.

The Group's operating expenses decreased by 2.8% to KES 7.5 B, mainly driven by prudent management under Ms Mbithi. Under her belt, Family Bank boasts of over 1.7 million customers, with a growing balance sheet and deposit base.

According to Rebecca, Family Bank continues to provide innovative products and superior customer experience which has witnessed Family Bank customers recognize the bank as the best bank in customer responsiveness and digital experience in 2022, according to the 2022 Kenya Bankers Awards.

“Our aggression in deposit taking has been targeted at institutions, county governments, NGO’s, corporate and our main client base, the MSME customers, as we arrive at an optimum deposit mix,” CEO Rebecca Mbithi says.

Investments in innovation and digitization continue to strengthen the bank's balance sheet by weeding off costs. Rebecca states that the adoption of digital channels has seen more than 70 % of pivotal transactions conducted online including requesting for loan advances, through the mobile application, PesaPap and other digital payment platforms including internet banking. She adds that, ‘As a business, Family Bank continue to drive its strategy pegged on innovative channels and solutions that ease access to finance and capital that is critical in driving the >>



Rebecca Mbithi with other dignitaries during the official opening of Family Bank Eastleigh Branch.

Investments in innovation and digitization continue to strengthen the bank's balance sheet by weeding off costs. Rebecca states that the adoption of digital channels has seen more than 70 % of pivotal transactions conducted online including requesting for loan advances, through the mobile application, PesaPap and other digital payment platforms including internet banking.



Family Bank CEO Rebecca Mbithi congratulates Carol Mvuya from Bura Girls High School in Taita Taveta County, who emerged top girl in the county in the 2018 KCSE with a grade of A- with 74 marks.



UN Global Compact Kenya Network Executive Director Judy Njino hands over membership certificate to Family Bank CEO Rebecca Mbithi, making Family Bank the 4th lender in Kenya to officially join the Union.

>> growth of the Micro, Small and Medium-sized businesses, fuelling personal growth and that of the public sector’.

Rebecca Mbithi adds that the success of Family Bank is facilitated through the over 1,000 of human resource, 95% of whom are below 40 years of age. The CEO takes pride in hiring experienced individuals with unmatched capabilities and further trains and develops them to enable Family Bank meet the customers’ needs and fulfilment.

Rebecca Mbithi’s key reasons behind the success of Family Bank is the institutions focus on diversification and onboarding of new engagements with strategic partners, growth of the customer base, confidence rebuilding and brand drive which has culminated into the rollout of the bank’s brand campaign in 2020, dubbed ‘Fuzu na Family’.

Rebecca Mbithi holds an MBA degree with a concentration in strategic management from the USIU-A and an LL. B degree from the



As a business, Family Bank continue to drive its strategy pegged on innovative channels and solutions that ease access to finance and capital that is critical in driving the growth of the Micro, Small and Medium-sized businesses, fuelling personal growth and that of the public sector’.

Family Bank CEO Rebecca Mbithi

University of Nairobi (UoN). She is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and a member of the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Kenya, a Certified Secretary and a Member of the Institute of Certified Secretaries, an advocate of the High Court of Kenya and a member of the Law Society of Kenya. In addition, Rebecca Mbithi is a Certified Executive Coach.

Ms Mbithi is a health fanatic, who has ran marathons in a number of cities in the world. ■



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#18

Rebecca Miano

KENGEN

MD/CEO

Rebbecca Miano, the Managing Director and CEO of Kenya Electricity Generating Company PLC (KenGen), heads one of the most crucial entities in Kenya's energy sector. KenGen is responsible for about 75 per cent of the country's installed electricity generation capacity and has been instrumental in driving improved electrification rates across the country.

Kenya's electrification rate has improved from around 32 per cent in 2013 to more than 80 per cent today. This is double the African average, which the African Development Bank (AfDB) estimates at 40 per cent. KenGen has been the driving force behind this transformation, underlining its importance to the national economy.

Since Rebecca's appointment to the helm of KenGen in 2017 – a very competitive and hotly contested CEO job that drew more than 90 applications – the seasoned corporate lawyer has proven her prowess as a corporate strategist and savvy business leader.

KenGen, an NSE listed entity that is 70 per cent owned by the government of Kenya and 30 per cent owned by the public, has under Rebecca's leadership set new records in terms of operational and financial performance. It has also distinguished itself as an outstanding corporate citizen, embedding world-class Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) standards into its operations in a meaningful and measurable way.

Strong geothermal legacy

KenGen has through the years distinguished itself as Africa's leading geothermal power producer. Under Rebecca's leadership, the company has extended this legacy following the launch of several flagship geothermal projects in recent years. These include the recent addition of 86 megawatts of power into the national grid from its geothermal plant in July 2022 in an event headlined by the outgoing HE President Uhuru Kenyatta.

Overall, KenGen generates 799 megawatts from geothermal steam which is found deep underground in the Rift Valley and is

Rebecca has been emphatic about protecting the country's leadership in renewable energy in line with the national ambition to reduce carbon emissions and protect the environment. She has also been keen on diversifying KenGen's revenues beyond electricity sales to create strong shareholder value.



used to drive large turbines that generate power. The company generates 825 MW from hydro, 25 MW from wind and 253 MW from thermal, creating an energy mix that is more than 90 per cent clean and renewable.

Rebecca has been emphatic about protecting the country's leadership in renewable energy in line with the national ambition to reduce carbon emissions and protect the environment. She has also been keen on diversifying KenGen's revenues beyond electricity sales to create strong shareholder value.

As an example, KenGen recently unveiled plans to set up a fertilizer plant in Naivasha. The company is currently undertaking feasibility studies for green hydrogen, ammonia, and fertilizer production at its pilot plant at Olkaria, Naivasha.

An out-of-the-box thinker, Rebecca has also leveraged on the location of its Olkaria plant in Naivasha to tap into local and international tourism. Under her leadership, KenGen has established the Geothermal Spa in Olkaria.

Impressive results

KenGen's financial performance in recent years has been phenomenal. The company recorded revenues of Sh45.9 billion and profit before tax of Sh14.7 billion in 2021, its Annual Report shows. By contrast, in 2017 when Rebecca took the reins, the company posted revenues of Sh43.4 billion and profit before tax of Sh11.4 billion. Over this time, KenGen's asset base has grown 13 per cent from Sh376.73 billion to Sh425.65 billion.

These impressive results make KenGen among the top performing parastatals in Kenya, a feat that has not gone unnoticed. Rebecca has been the recipient of several awards recognizing her exceptional stewardship of KenGen. She was in 2021 named among the Top 100 Women CEOs by Reset Global People in partnership with Pulse and Avance Media. She was also selected as one of the top 25 movers and shakers in Africa in 2021 by the African Energy Chamber. >>



KenGen MD and CEO, Mrs. Rebecca Miano and the project implementation team laying a cornerstone of the State-of-the-Art Research and Development Centre in Tana Station.



KenGen's Managing Director and CEO, Rebecca Miano (centre), Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure, Housing and Urban Development, James Macharia, EGH (right) and Environment and Forestry Cabinet Secretary Keriako Tobiko (left) planting a tree during the commemoration of the World Habitat Day in November 2021

>> Rebecca strongly believes in diversity mainstreaming and has over the years strived to improve the working environment for women employees at KenGen to grow to their full potential. She founded the Pink Energy forum in KenGen to address gender parity and close the gap within the company. She has since advanced the Pink Energy forum to become a sectoral platform within the Ministry of Energy.

Rebecca strongly believes in diversity mainstreaming and has over the years strived to improve the working environment for women employees at KenGen to grow to their full potential. She founded the Pink Energy forum in KenGen to address gender parity and close the gap within the company.

She holds a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) Degree from the University of Nairobi and a Masters in Comparative Law from the University of Australia. She completed the Advanced Management Program from Strathmore University. She is a registered Certified Public Secretary of Kenya and is a Member of the Institute of Certified Public Secretaries of Kenya (ICPSK) and the Law Society of Kenya (LSK). ■



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#19

Jane Kimemia-Nechi

OPTIVA CAPITAL PARTNERS

CEO

Founded in 2008, Optiva Capital Partners is a Wealth Management and Investment Immigration Company with focus and specialization in investments immigration, wealth management and investment advisory and insurance. Its main objective is to help clients in protecting, growing, diversifying and optimizing their wealth.

Optiva Capital Partner's strategy has revolved around their vision of being the partner of choice in providing solutions to clients, that accords them and their families in global access, world class education opportunities, preservation and welfare of families across generations.

In essence, the basis of Optiva Capital Partners, underpinned by the firm's investment philosophy, is to work with clients in order to:

■ **PROTECT**- making sure that the bulk of clients' wealth is held in currencies and geographies that safeguard the value over time.

■ **GROW**- be the gateway to a wide range of investment opportunities for the clients across different jurisdictions with a range of investment products across different asset classes.

■ **ENHANCE**- work with the clients to ensure that clients' wealth is well diversified across asset classes and currencies.

■ **OPTIMIZE**- with all of the above, ensures that clients' wealth is well optimized into the best opportunities.

Optiva Capital Partners started from a humble beginning, one office with 15 members of staff. Over time, the firm has distinguished itself as a market leader in the Citizenship by Investment industry in Africa. Investments immigration are platforms or structures that governments set up to attract foreign direct investments (FDIs) whereby foreigners are given the opportunity to invest specific designated amounts in specific jurisdictions



and in turn are given citizenship or permanent residency. The world has become a global village and there is growing need for second citizenship options amongst families for different objectives including diversification of investments, global access, children's education and family security/welfare.

Some of the benefits of these programs include:

➤ Global access with visa free travel to over 110 countries. Simply put, Optiva Capital Partners clients buy themselves and generations to come freedom. Some of the jurisdiction offer up to 145 countries visa free.

➤ Opportunities to invest in other jurisdictions outside home country, hence diversification of investments across jurisdiction, currency and assets.

➤ Opportunities to invest in government endorsed designated real estate including 5-star franchise resorts. For example: The Kempinski, Six Senses, Intercontinental Hotel Group and government approved start-ups in high growth sectors.

➤ Access to world class education opportunities at heavily subsidized local rates as opposed to international school fees rates. International students pay up to 12 times more than residents for the same courses.

➤ Alternative residency and dual citizenship acts as life insurance guaranteeing access to world class opportunities for education, business and quality of life for generations to come.

➤ Secondary investment opportunities for our clients post the initial immigration or permanent residency programs.

Optiva Capital Partners are supported by a wide network of international partners including immigration attorneys, government designated international developers, development institutes and asset management companies.



At the helm of Optiva Capital Partners since April 2017, as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is Jane Kimemia-Nechi. She has since spearheaded the transformation and growth of Optiva Capital Partners into the formidable organisation it is today and in line with the strategic direction provided by the board and senior stakeholders.



Optiva Capital Partners has been on a bold expansion strategy to provide a workforce and a branch distribution footprint that is expansive enough to meet targets potential clients in their various catchment areas. Towards this objective, Optiva Capital Partners has grown organically to the current distribution of 16 state of the art branches across Nigeria with a wide coverage of the markets in Lagos, Abuja and other key states.

The company has a staff headcount of over 1,100 of diverse backgrounds and talents distributed across the branch network and ready to serve clients within their areas of operation. Women make up 71% of the workforce, well aligned to the UN SDG Goal no: 5-Gender equality.

At the helm of Optiva Capital Partners since April 2017, as >>

>> Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is Jane Kimemia-Nechi. She has since spearheaded the transformation and growth of Optiva Capital Partners into the formidable organisation it is today and in line with the strategic direction provided by the board and senior stakeholders.

Prior to this, Jane had longstanding career in the financial service industry, having worked with two international banks; Standard Chartered Bank (SCB) and Barclays Bank of Kenya (now ABSA Bank Kenya PLC) for a combined period of 20 years. She was the Executive Director and Head of Wealth Management at SCB, with the responsibility of investments services, bancassurance and forex for Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. Ms Nechi was instrumental in the setting up and establishment of the wealth management division at the bank. She was also the managing director of Standard Chartered Investments Services (SCIS), one of the bank's subsidiaries and was managing director at the Standard Chartered Insurance Agencies Limited (SCIAL).

Jane also served as the General Manager-priority and international banking at Standard Chartered Bank, where she spearheaded the setting-up, establishment and management of the Priority Banking proposition for high-net-worth clients across Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

Prior to this, Jane worked for 12 years at Barclays Bank of Kenya, holding senior positions including:

- Head of Premier Banking, managing the segment including sales and service.
- Head of Scheme Loans, the business she set up and established from scratch.

Ms. Nechi has extensive experience in general management, with a track record of set up and building sustainable businesses with specialisation in wealth management and working with high-net worth clients.

In 2018, Jane founded Everlasting Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation that works with teenage and young adults in Kibera, Kenya, focusing on mentorship, spirituality and support. This NFP organisation has a membership of over 200 members who meet on a weekly basis and is a peer mentorship and accountability group. Everlasting Foundation runs monthly school



Ms. Nechi has extensive experience in general management, with a track record of set up and building sustainable businesses with specialisation in wealth management and working with high-net worth clients.

feeding programmes, providing hot meals every school day, as well as being involved in the distribution of basic sanitary wear for the young girls. According to a post on LinkedIn, Kibera is one of the largest informal settlements in sub-Saharan Africa. The result is a formidable movement of young people committed to making the right choices, peer mentorship circles and being a force for good in the society.

Other causes Jane believes in include economic empowerment, environment, health, human rights and poverty alleviation.

Jane graduated from the Kenyatta University with a Bachelor of Education degree in Science and Education. Ms. Nechi has also attended executive education courses from The INSEAD. ■



#20

Eva Ngigi-Sarwari

VISA KENYA

COUNTRY MANAGER

Eva Ngigi is the Country Manager for Visa, an American payment service provider, a tour of duty that started in September 2020, deep inside the Covid-19 Pandemic.

As Country Manager, Eva is the Senior Business Development Leader responsible for the development and implementation of growth strategy in Kenya, and is part of the larger Visa East Africa Leadership team.

Ms Sarwari is a financial services expert, having earlier in the day spent over 15 years in the banking industry, structuring working capital and payment solutions for large and medium sized corporates while occupying various levels of corner suites at various banking institutions in Kenya including SC ventures, Standard Chartered Bank (SCB), CfC Stanbic, now Stanbic, and the Cooperative Bank of Kenya (Coop Bank). At SC Ventures, Eva was the Venture lead, rewiring the DNA in Banking, while at SCB , she was the head of transaction banking commercial banking, developing, executing and managing the Kenya and East Africa transaction banking strategy for commercial banking.

Eva led the Visa team in collaboration with Safaricom PLC, the leading Telco in East Africa, that was instrumental in the launch of the virtual Visa card.

The Mary Leakey High School alumnus, loves to read, her all-time favourite book being Napoleon Hill's Outwitting the Devil. Other reads include Fiction, Politics, Leading and Motivation. Eva is self-driven, knowledgeable, and dependable, with an outgoing personality who loves travelling with her family. She unwinds with Rock and Country music and works out to keep fit. Key part of the family is sports. Through sports, the family members learn resilience, accepting failure, leadership and team work.

Professionally, Eva sees technology from the lenses of as an enabler, delivering cutting edge value propositions to clients, to ensure seamless, effective and efficient operations. In addition, technology is a tool for driving financial inclusion throughout the social fabric of society and is enthusiastic as being one of the top executives at the forefront of this transformative agenda.

Her customer centric agenda has enabled Eva over the years to value client relationships and to use her time patiently in understanding needs specific to different businesses and endeavour to provide solutions that align to the visions



Visa Country Manager Eva Ngigi (right) and Family-Bank CEO Rebecca Mbithi award Daystar University student Shirleen Gachini KES5,000 Youth Prepaid card where the bank-unveiled a series of prepaid cards in November 24, 2021.

Professionally, Eva sees technology from the lenses of as an enabler, delivering cutting edge value propositions to clients, to ensure seamless, effective and efficient operations. In addition, technology is a tool for driving financial inclusion throughout the social fabric of society and is enthusiastic as being one of the top executives at the forefront of this transformative agenda.



and aspirations of the respective business entities. 'I am proud to be playing a key role in most of the transformational solutions that improve the way clients run their operations.

Environment being one of the causes Ms Sarwari is passionate about, she states that, 'I am living my purpose a day at a time. We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors. We borrow it from our children,' a great quote by Anonymous. Other causes she is passionate about is the girl-child. 'Enabling access to education is the key to independence. I teach my daughter that her gender is not a barrier and she should never settle on what >>



Safaricom CEO Peter Ndegwa, Visa Kenya Country Lead Eva Ngigi-Sarwari and KWS Director of Strategy and Change Edwin Wanyonyi sample photos at an exhibition.

Her customer centric agenda has enabled Eva over the years to value client relationships and to use her time patiently in understanding needs specific to different businesses and endeavour to provide solutions that align to the visions and aspirations of the respective business entities.

>> life throws at her,' she says. Eva, a mother of two sons, is deliberate in how they are raising the boys. She once ran a soccer academy, not only to give her kids a safe space where they could learn the sport, they deeply love but also to get an opportunity to impact boys in the neighbourhood who loved soccer but had no access.

Eva's mother was a school teacher for 38 years, managing to build a legacy in the school she taught. This rubbed positively on Ms Sarwari, who remains steadfast in helping many in her community access education by providing financial support and mentorships to disadvantaged students, considering education as the best gift an individual can get. She also helps her community access a house of worship, through numerous activities including offering financial support for development projects.

Ms Sarwari holds a master's degree in business administration (MBA) from the University of Nairobi (UoN), a post-gradu-



Eva Ngigi-Sarwari, MD of Visa Kenya and marathoner Eliud Kipchoge joins in the conversation #TheWorldIsYours "the only barriers are those we have in our minds"

ate diploma in digital business from EMERITUS, and a bachelor's degree in business and marketing management from Moi University. She attended Oxford Fintech Programme at famous Said Business School, University of Oxford in 2019.

Eva is singularly committed to promoting access to digital payments for all in order to accelerate financial inclusion and eliminate digital inequity. Visa provides financial education to its merchants, remove barriers to entry, being a thought leader in these matters. ■



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#21

Catherine Muraga

MICROSOFT AFRICA DEVELOPMENT CENTER

MD

Supporting women in technology is critical to uplifting the technology sector, allowing everyone to contribute.

Catherine Muraga opines in a post on LinkedIn that she is a product of her village and the reality reminds her to always do the same when an opportunity beckons, for others, along her journey. Catherine posts further that the true measure of success is the depth of impact one creates for those they work with and around.

Over the past years, there has been a keen interest in empowering women and championing them to take the top leadership positions in the quest to achieve gender equality. This has resulted in an increase of women taking up top c-suite positions including in the sectors and industries that were hitherto boy's club.

Of note, 2022 has seen an exponential increase of Kenyan women taking CEOs positions in leading fintech and services companies and other strategic industries, both locally and internationally.



One of this is engineer Catherine Muraga, who recently took up the position of Managing Director for Microsoft's engineering hub, African Development Centre (ADC). She replaced long serving Jack Ngare, who is now at Google Kenya.

Catherine is an IT professional with over 15 years of experience, wrung from working in diverse industries including manufacturing, aviation and banking. Prior to joining Microsoft, Ms Muraga led the Engineering team at Stanbic Bank Kenya and South Sudan.

Embarking on her new assignment with her usual passion and gusto, Catherine recently joined other ICT industry leaders at the launch of the Industry Digital Talent Program that was hosted by the Safaricom PLC CEO, Peter Ndegwa. On this occasion, Ms Muraga spoke about how the Microsoft Africa Development Centre is collaborating with Kenyan/African partners, academia, governments, and developers to drive impact and innovation in sectors important to the continent. 'And while we have made some progress, I am cognizant that the responsibility for ensuring effective transformation in digital skilling cannot be assumed by just a few players but must be collaborative' she opined in her presentation.

According to the 2021 global survey by Stackoverflow targeting software developers across the world, 'there is a growing number of developers with no university degree and have instead focused on acquiring software development skills,' she observed. She posed the question, 'Could taking up courses in coding provide a career path for some of the thousands who missed the university cut-off?'

In the same presentation, Catherine added that the survey also indicates that 53% of developers wrote their first lines of code between the ages of 11-17 years,



I encouraged the youth to embrace becoming learners — having a growth mindset. Then applying that mindset to constant learning about the global shifts, the world issues and how technology can play a role in resolving these — ultimately—making a difference in the world.'

- Catherine Muraga, Managing Director for Microsoft's engineering hub, African Development Centre (ADC).



posing out loudly the question, 'What path are we creating for this young, curious demographic in our market?'

Catherine stated that, 'I encouraged the youth to embrace becoming learners — having a growth mindset. Then applying that mindset to constant learning about the global shifts, the world issues and how technology can play a role in resolving these —ultimately—making a difference in the world.'

Ms Muraga added that Microsoft is supportive of initiatives such as this by Safaricom PLC and will continue to partner with both the private and public sectors to enhance digital skilling for our young people.

Other notable activi- >>



>> ties include hosting the first Women in Engineering forum 2022 at Stanbic Bank Kenya

'The forum is a gathering of Women in Engineering (Technology, Data and Analytics, Operations and Cyber Security) within Stanbic, where we get to share and discuss issues close to our hearts, while building each other's ambitions and motivations. I'm optimistic that this will be a strong forum to empower each and every woman within and outside our organization,' she submitted during the forum.

Ms Muraga opened up by stating that her work is inspired every day by these women in her team, who have continued to prove that gender should not be an obstacle to being extraordinary and exemplary in their work and lives. The Kenya forum was immediately followed by a similar engagement in Uganda.

Ms Muraga is an alumnus of Columbia Business School Digital

Ms Muraga is an alumnus of Columbia Business School Digital Strategies for Business, Oxford University Fintech Programme, and holds a bachelor's degree in Computer Science from Africa Nazarene University-Kenya.



Strategies for Business, Oxford University Fintech Programme, and holds a bachelor's degree in Computer Science from Africa Nazarene University-Kenya.

Catherine's ICT journey started in 2003 when she joined ISP Kenya as a Network Engineer, then EABL as Team Leader-IS Support. She then served at Kenya Airways as Manager IS, first in automation then in service delivery. Ms Muraga then moved to Stanbic Bank Kenya, exiting as head of IT Operations, to serve as Director IT and Operations at Sidian Bank. Her career would take a turn for the better when she returned to Stanbic Bank Kenya as Chief Information Officer, then Head, Engineering until June 2022 when she joined Microsoft.

Ms Muraga is, all intents and purposes, a respected high flying tech leader with a passion to apply technology to create business outcomes or impact lives positively. ■

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#22 Gwen Kinisu

PRUDENTIAL

CEO

Gwen Kinisu is the Chief Executive Officer at Prudential. If asked to describe who she is, Gwen would describe herself as a student of life. She credits much of her journey to learning from those she has interacted with. According to Angela Githuthu on LinkedIn, ‘Gwen is open minded, curious and keen to learn new things. She demonstrates diligence in her work and is very good at developing individuals.’

Dr. Robert Ochola adds in the same business media and we quote verbatim, ‘Gwen is extremely strategic and focused individual with a drive for excellence and results. She is very passionate about what she does and brings a high level of professionalism and energy to any team she is part of. Gwen is a strong leader, who is very good at consulting widely. She is result oriented and definitely gets things done within the stipulated period. I believe Gwen is in a strong position to add value to any organisation in a key leadership role.’

Working for over 15 years in insurance and banking, Gwen has experience managing projects and diverse teams across her career journey. She is a marketer at heart, a business developer with a keen interest in technology and people. She is a strategic thinker, an expert negotiator, and a team leader.

Currently, Gwen is tasked with leading a Global brand, Prudential, here in Kenya. Her journey to become a CEO began in marketing, where fresh from university, started as an assistant brand manager for MILO at Nestle Foods.

Her foray into financial services began at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) as an intern, followed by Old Mutual and later at Sanlam. In the 8 years at Sanlam, Gwen was involved in various areas of the business from Operations, Product Development, Digital, Partnerships, and Business Development. She and her team at the time celebrated many milestones including becoming 1st runners-up in the Think Business awards for their telesales marketing initiative dubbed “6777”, successful projects in partnership with Airtel, “Bima Mkononi” and Family Bank’s “Family Educare”. Gwen was subsequently invited to speak at the 3rd Microinsurance Conference in Johannesburg hosted by the South African Insurance Industry.

In 2014, Gwen moved to National Bank of Kenya (NBK) as GM, Bancassurance, and Principal officer for the insurance business. Embarking on a service culture ensured customer-centricity from service delivery to process alignment. Creating and maintaining relationships with partners was key to ensuring better revenue. These initiatives and more ensured success in her team, which prepared Gwen for her next role at UAP Old Mutual.

As the GM for direct and digital business, Gwen was responsible for the digital business of the general insurance business for UAP Old Mutual. Because this was a new concept at the time, Gwen’s tasks included building the team from the bottom up. This included strategy formulation, the conceptualization of digital framework, vendor management and engaging the requisite stakeholders to ensure end-to-end product delivery.

In June 2021, Gwen was appointed the Chief Executive Officer at Prudential, the first female executive to hold the position at Prudential Kenya. Prior to her appointment as the CEO, Gwen was the chief commercial officer (CCO) in charge of the commercial division at Prudential. As the chief commercial officer at Prudential, Gwen was responsible for growth in Bancassurance, Alternative and Digital partnerships, and Group



Business. She was also in charge of corporate marketing, corporate social responsibility, brand development and the communication functions of the business. Now

Working for over 15 years in insurance and banking, Gwen has experience managing projects and diverse teams across her career journey. She is a marketer at heart, a business developer with a keen interest in technology and people. She is a strategic thinker, an expert negotiator, and a team leader.

as the CEO, Gwen looks over the entire Kenyan business landscape and leads the team to achieve their purpose.

Despite being the CEO, Gwen’s passion for people, marketing, and customer-centricity remains. In fact, she is more than ever, keen to ensure she builds an engaged and agile workforce, fostering a culture that promotes excellent customer experience, and the use of technology to delivering on changing customer needs. She believes these are key to any business goals.

Gwen holds a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degree in International Business Administration (IBA) in Business (2000-2004) and a Global executive MBA focussed in International Business from the United States International University-Africa, (2014-2015) and a Postgraduate Diploma in Marketing from Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) in the United Kingdom (UK). ■

#23 Nasim Devji

DIAMOND TRUST BANK

MD

Devji is one of five female CEOs of commercial banks in Kenya, as the MD of Diamond Trust Bank (DTB).

DTB is an award-winning tier-1 lender that is listed in the Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE). DTB operates in EA except Rwanda. It recently has announced plans to open 17 new branches by the end of 2022 ostensibly as part of its expansion drive aimed at delivering increased customer value and foot prints in its operations.

As at December 31st 2021, DTB footprint indicates 570,867 customers, 352, 816 mobile banking customers, 129 branches with 150 ATMs and 2,156 employees.

The strategic expansion drive is expected to complement the group's business growth strategy and underpin its premier position as one of the leading financial institutions in East Africa. The increase in branch outlets is aligned with DTB'S efforts to deepen its market presence in the fast-growing region of Eastern Africa and create increased value through its assets as it looks beyond 2022.

This addition will increase DTB's branch network in Kenya from 63 to 81, while its total branch network across East Africa from 129 to 146.

In the midst of customers' rapid



adoption of online banking services and products, Devji, a leading businesswoman in her own right, states that move confirms DTB's confidence in the Kenyan economy.

DTB, is optimistic about Kenya's economic recovery post COVID-19 and the 2022 general elections. She adds that DTB is making strides to be closer to the customers in order to support them to attain their personal and business goals.

Linus Gitahi, chair of board of DTB, reinforces this thought trajectory, stating that the branch network expansion demonstrates DTB's commitment to expanding its presence in the EA region in line with its growth strategy. He adds in a special article in the Billionaires Africa, written by Omokolade Ajayi, and which we heavily quote below, for this write-up, "The investments we are making are not only a sign of the bank's financial strength but also a sign of our commitment to creating more convenience for our customers. As a tier-one bank, we are keen on increasing our market presence as this underpins our growth strategy,".

DTB net earnings increased to Ksh 4.4 Bn in 2021 compared to Ksh 3.5 Bn over a similar period in 2020, representing an increase of 25.7%. The Group's loans and advances to customers increased to Ksh 220.4 Bn in 2021 from Ksh 20.6 Bn in 2020. Customers' deposits increased to 331.4 Bn in the same period, up from 298.2 Bn in 2020.

Shareholders Equity, what owners of the firm would be paid were DTB to be liquidated, increased to Ksh 67.3 Bn in 2021 from Ksh. 61.9 Bn in 2020. The bank has been in operation for more than 75 years.

Devji became MD at DTB in 2001 and is one of five female CEOs at Kenyan commercial banks. The



other four are Betty Korir, CEO of Credit Bank; Rebecca Mbithi, CEO of Family Bank; Anne Karanja, CEO of Kenya Post Office Savings Bank; and, Joyce Ann Wainaina, CEO of Citibank Kenya.

Ms Devji is a Fellow of The

Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales. She is an Associate of the Institute of Taxation (UK) and Fellow of the Kenya Institute of Bankers. She is a Member of the Institute of Directors (Kenya). >>



In the midst of customers' rapid adoption of online banking services and products, Devji, a leading businesswoman in her own right, states that move confirms DTB's confidence in the Kenyan economy.



Two financial giants...Mrs. Nasim Devji (DTB) and Dr. Odour- Otieno (ex KCB) honoured as Fellows of the Institute of Directors Kenya.

>> Nasim is Board Member at the Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE), Jubilee Insurance Burundi, Diamond Trust Insurance Agency, DTB Tanzania, DTB Uganda and DTB Burundi.

She has been recognized as the 'Leading African Woman in Business of the Year' at the 2010 Africa Investor Investment and Business Leader Awards, 'CEO of the Year' award from the Capital Markets Authority in 2011 and 2014, and 'Chief Executive of the Year in Banking' during the Banking Awards (2011 and 2013).

Nasim is Board Member at the Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE), Jubilee Insurance Burundi, Diamond Trust Insurance Agency, DTB Tanzania, DTB Uganda and DTB Burundi.

Ms Devji was recently ranked among the 2021 Top 100 Women CEOs in Africa by Avance Media and Reset Global People in support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Nasim is passionate and active locally on issues being pioneered by the UN Global Compact and especially in support of the recently launched UN Global Compact African Strategy 2021-2023, with the theme: Mobilizing African Business for Impact. She recently posted the launch, on LinkedIn, that was hosted by UN Global Compact Network Kenya. The strategy is key in advancing corporate sustainability and scaling up responsible business practices across the continent, while upholding the Ten Principles of the Global Compact focused on the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. ■

Ms Devji was recently ranked among the 2021 Top 100 Women CEOs in Africa by Avance Media and Reset Global People in support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

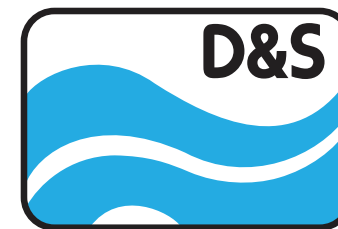


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#24 Alice Kilonzo-Zulu

ECOBANK RWANDA

MD

Alice Kilonzo-Zulu is the Managing Director of Ecobank Rwanda. Prior to this, Alice was the Group Head of Trade Finance, responsible for product development and sales of the trade portfolio across the Ecobank Group. Prior to joining Ecobank in 2012, Alice worked with Citibank Kenya in various roles.

Her career in banking goes back to June 1995, when she took up employment with Citibank Kenya, as a relationship

Alice bears the responsibility for ensuring compliance with local legal and regulatory requirements and serves as the spokesperson for all Ecobank matters in Rwanda.

manager, serving in that capacity for over six years. She was then promoted to senior relationship manager, responsible for public sector enterprises, where she served for nearly two years, until 2003.

She was then promoted to vice president, corporate banking at Citibank Kenya, where she served for some three years. During that period, she served as a member of the Branch Credit Committee. Starting in January 2006, and for the next six and half years, Kilonzo served as director, heading trade finance for the bank's customers in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia. Alice was responsible for revenue growth and expense management of trade portfolio for East Africa, including Zambia. She also managed and provided leadership to a team of trade product managers across East

Africa. Alice structured and executed standard and complex trade transactions while providing risk management of trade portfolio.

In 2012, she was head-hunted by Ecobank Transnational Incorporated to serve as a senior group manager responsible for trade finance and based in Nairobi, Kenya's capital and largest city, serving in that role for four and half years. In November 2016, she was appointed as a CEO and managing director of Ecobank Rwanda.

As the Managing Director, Ms Kilonzo is charged with leading and growing Ecobank's business in Rwanda. Alice is responsible for creating and executing Rwanda country strategy focused on increasing revenue, planning and executing on business development activities, working with business and function heads to deliver on each country initiative, and managing the financial performance and growth of Ecobank's revenue and Profit and Loss (P&L) in Rwanda.

Alice bears the responsibility for ensuring compliance with local legal and regulatory requirements and serves as the spokesperson for all Ecobank matters in Rwanda.

Kenya born Alice Kilonzo studied at the University of Warwick, in the United Kingdom, graduating with a Bachelor of Art (BA) in Politics with International Studies. Later, she obtained a Master of Art (MA) degree in Economics and Social Studies from the University of Manchester. Alice is equipped with strategic skills including in business and transformational leadership.

Alice is listed at number 7 on the 2021 among the Top 100 Women CEOs in Africa recognized by Reset Global People and Avance Media, awarded during the 2021/2022 African Women CEOs Summit. The 2022/23 Africa Women CEOs Summit will be hosted in



Alice Kilonzo-Zulu, Managing Director Ecobank Rwanda during the signing of a partnership agreement with CFAO Motors Rwanda Ltd which open way for their customers to acquire new vehicles through affordable loans.

Alice is listed at number 7 on the 2021 among the Top 100 Women CEOs in Africa recognized by Reset Global People and Avance Media, awarded during the 2021/2022 African Women CEOs Summit. The 2022/23 Africa Women CEOs Summit will be hosted in Johannesburg, South Africa.



Johannesburg, South Africa. This award is in recognition and support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This was the second list after the inaugural one in 2019.

This recognition throws the spotlight on African women leading various organizations across 21 countries in the continent. The organizations these 100 women CEOs continue to excel under their leadership and beyond the shores of Africa. A recent McKinsey Global Institute study found that the global GDP could increase by \$12 trillion by 2025 by advancing women's equality. To be one of these women is an extraordinary achievement. ■



#25

Lizz Ntonjira

AMREF HEALTH AFRICA

GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Every voice matters. Especially when navigating complex issues like global health injustices, poverty and climate change, youth advocacy, misinformation and disinformation.... a diversity of perspective ensures that every person's experience is taken into account when designing solutions for the future," says Lizz Ntonjira, the Global Communications Director at Amref Health Africa and also the author of #YouthCan; a book around youth and leadership in Africa.

According to Lizz, storytelling has the power to engage, influence, teach and inspire a diverse pool of audiences. That's why she often argues for organizations to build a storytelling culture and place storytelling at the heart of their learning agenda.

At only 35, Lizz Ntonjira is a force to reckon with. Fearless, is an adjective that can aptly be used to describe her. Lizz has never shied away from speaking her mind, neither has she ever backed down from a challenge in pursuit to realizing her dreams. From the young age of 19 years when she graced our TV screens to now, a more behind the scenes role in the boardrooms making strategic decisions driving impact and change. Backed by her legal background, policy advocacy practice, her master's in public policy and management and well-earned years in the field of public affairs- it is no surprise that she has led and advised some of Africa's leading organizations to deliver scalable programs, manage risk, identify, and leverage market opportunities and manage critical engagements with both internal and external stakeholders.

For instance, in her previous role as the communications manager for central, east, and west Africa at IBM, she led all external communication activities and



Lizz Ntonjira, the Global Communication Director at Amref Health Africa, handing over a prestigious global universal health coverage award to Elizabeth Merab (left) of Nation Media Group for her contribution to health journalism across Africa during the Agenda for Health in Africa International Conference (AHAIC) 2021.



Communication and Community Engagement Steering Committee appointed by the Africa Centers for Disease Control (Africa CDC) and the World Health Organisation Africa Region (WHO-AFRO), says "Persuasion is the centerpiece of any business activity or mission of an organisation. Audiences and stakeholders must be convinced to buy into either your mission, products, or services. But despite the critical importance of persuasion, most executives struggle to communicate, let alone inspire, because they undervalue the role of communication in achieving strategy."

"Persuasion, best exemplified by stories create a shared point of connection—something concrete for all involved to share, react to, and build from," she adds. And this is perhaps the reason why she is so well accomplished in coalescing different groups and organizations around a topical area to bring about impact.

For some organizations, she has set up their communications >>



>> and external relations departments from scratch, while in others, she has brought her extensive experience and expertise to oversee several global public outreach and communications initiatives that have contributed to the bottom line of for-profit companies and acquired new funding and support from new partners in the international development space. With every role, she has demonstrated impact, moving beyond normal business operations to overcome new challenges and to develop strategies to optimize the experiences of organizational growth.

For her work, she has received numerous international and national awards and accolades. She was recently nominated for the prestigious 2022 Tällberg-SNF-Eliasson Global Leadership Prize.



For her work, she has received numerous international and national awards and accolades. She was recently nominated for the prestigious 2022 Tällberg-SNF-Eliasson Global Leadership Prize. The Prizes are awarded annually to outstanding leaders who demonstrate the willingness and capacity to address the complexity of 21st-century challenges in innovative, risk-taking, and ethical ways, and whose work is global in aspiration or implication and is rooted in universal values. She was featured by Elle Magazine (Italy) as a key youth influencer in Africa. She was also awarded by BIC as one of the top 70 writers in Kenya whose written words have a positive influence on the people of Kenya and around the world. On International Youth Day 2021, Lizz was recognized for emerging as a champion in the #ExemplaryLeadership Category for the Top35Under35 2021 awards, among other accolades.

Lizz says taking risks and trusting her instinct have been the biggest drivers of her growth. She is a strong believer that whatever organization you choose to work for or business you intend to start, it must align with your values. Having started working at a very young age (at 19) one of the things she says that has helped her grow is the yearning to learn new skills and capabilities, being resilient and consistent.

Lizz holds an LLB degree in Law from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, a Master's degree in Public Policy and Management from the Strathmore Business School (SBS), an Associate's degree in Public Relations, Advertising and Applied Communication from the Chartered Institute of Public Relations UK. Ms Ntonjira is Public Management Fellow with the Virginia Commonwealth University. She also holds a Diploma in German from the Goethe Institute of Nairobi. ■



WHO WE ARE

Amref International University (AMIU) is a premier pan African university of health sciences fully owned by Amref Health Africa. AMIU is founded on the experience and intellect of Amref Health Africa, which is reputed with over 60 years of quality and innovative public and community health interventions in over 35 countries in Africa.

AMIU's focus is on training, research and extension in health sciences with emphasis on promotive, preventive, rehabilitative and palliative health.

The University offers Postgraduate, Undergraduate, Higher Diploma, Diploma, Certificate programmes as well as Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses that prepare human resource for health to serve throughout the health system.

AMIU has two intakes every year, the April intake and the August intake.



MY AMIU EXPERIENCE



I speak for the entire class of 2019 when I say that our experience at AMIU was an unforgettable one. We will remember the serene learning environment, the flexible (and blended) study mode and essential learning resources,

including well-equipped skills lab and competency-based training and assessment methodology at AMIU.

This class of 2019 will remember the relationships we built, the people we met and the entrepreneurial and professional training we received through practical sessions, which sharpened our technical, research, managerial and leadership skills and prepared us for successful professional careers.

Walter Owate (Kenya) | Valedictorian, 2019



As an international student I felt at home the moment I set foot at AMIU, having been attracted by the warm and compelling learning environment at the University. The interactive and flexible learning mode has made it possible for

me to progress my studies remotely during the Covid19 pandemic. I will be graduating in 2021.

I relish my time at this great institution where I was granted vast opportunities that have positively defined me: I served in the Students Council, participated in the Work Study Programme and most notably was a beneficiary of the Vice Chancellor's scholarship fund.

I have had impactful and life changing interactions that have influenced and strengthened my resolve of Inspiring Lasting Change wherever my profession leads me.

Tertioury Nyarugwe (Zimbabwe) | Health Systems Management & Development Final Student, 2021



South Africa could produce a lot more **renewable energy**: Here's what it needs

South Africa's power utility, Eskom, has not been able to provide a steady electricity supply for several years now. At the start of the 2022 winter the utility warned the public to expect up to 100 days with rolling power outages.



Gouda wind farm and power lines, Gouda, Western Cape, South Africa.

HARTMUT WINKLER

Professor of Physics, University of Johannesburg

At the end of June there was at times a 6,000 MW shortfall in electricity supply, which corresponds to about 20% of the evening peak demand.

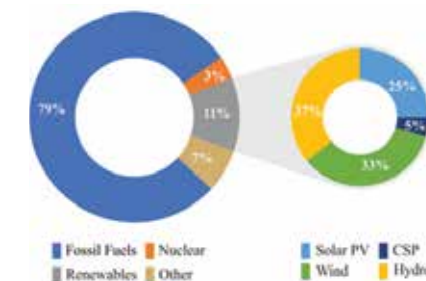
While there is consensus that new electricity generating plants are urgently needed to minimise power outages, there are radically differing views on how this is best achieved. The official electricity plan approved three years ago is already out of date. Its implementation is furthermore two years behind schedule.

One widely promoted view is that increasing electricity generating capacity requires grand scale new renewable energy developments. In 2020 the electricity generated from renewables amounted to a mere 10.5% of the South African national total. This will have grown to about 11.5% as more plants have been completed.

South Africa has some of the best solar and wind resources in the world. Solar and wind plants already produce electricity very effectively in many cloudier and less windy environments than South Africa.



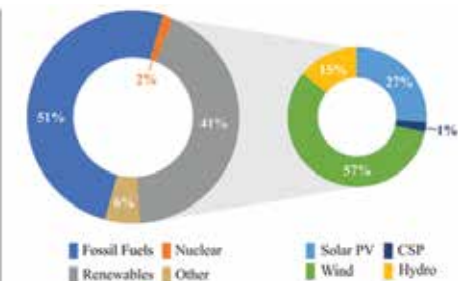
INSTALLED CAPACITY 2018



*Fossil Fuels includes coal and natural gas/diesel
*Other includes cogeneration, biomass and landfill

Data source: IRP 2019

IRP TARGET - 2030



*Other includes storage (pumped storage)

The country's power generation is still dominated by coal. And it's lagging far behind the global trend towards clean energy.

Most people associate renewable energy exclusively with wind and solar energy, but it includes all technologies that don't process non-replaceable fossil fuels. Fossils include coal, oil, gas and minerals (for example the uranium used in nuclear energy).

Hydropower stations, which extract electricity from the downhill flow of water, are a renewable energy source. This is the major source of electricity in water rich countries like Norway, but only a limited option in drier climates. When water needs to be retained in dams during times of drought then no electricity production is possible.

As South Africa is drought-prone, a major increase in local hydropower gen-

eration (currently at 3% of the total) is not feasible. Other renewable energy technologies like geothermal and tidal power generation work in select localities that are not common in South Africa.

This leaves wind and solar. These sources currently make up about 8% of South Africa's energy mix.

Wind and solar power

Wind and solar power are very attractive because:

South Africa has some of the best solar and wind resources in the world. Solar and wind plants already produce electricity very effectively in many cloudier and less windy environments than South Africa.

Solar and wind plants can be built in less than two years. But the pre-construction processes – bidding, approvals and such – stretch completion times by at least another year.

>>



>> Running costs are very low as there are effectively no fuel purchases. Prices of solar and wind technology have dropped very sharply in the past 10 years. The cost – including building and other expenses – of solar and wind electricity is now well below the corresponding expenses for electricity from gas, nuclear and even coal.

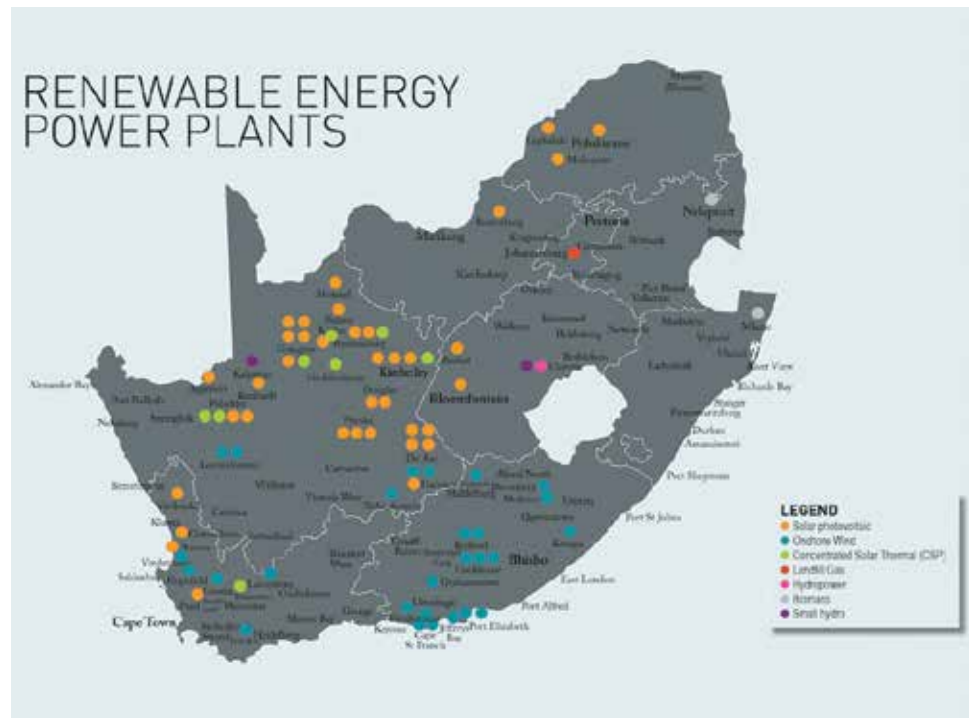
Their extremely low carbon emissions mitigate global warming and makes solar and wind energy attractive for investors.

Solar and wind power however have obvious drawbacks. The main one is that their operational capacity entirely depends on the weather. Furthermore, solar energy production is linked to the day-night cycle, with maximum efficiency around noon. This doesn't coincide with the electricity demand peaks in the early morning and early evening.

Could renewable energy dominate?

The ideal of a national electricity generation network without greenhouse gas emitting coal, gas plants and radioactive waste generating nuclear plants has practically already been achieved in a number of medium-sized countries such as Costa Rica, Iceland and Paraguay. But these mainly rely on hydropower.

In theory, with South Africa's wind and solar resources superior to other countries with 100% renewable electricity ambitions, this should be a relatively easy target to reach. But other countries are often grid connected to neighbours with significant power production.



Several larger countries, such as Germany, now generate over half of their electricity from renewables. More countries are setting road-maps to achieve 100% renewable electricity.

In theory, with South Africa's wind and solar resources superior to other countries with 100% renewable electricity ambitions, this should be a relatively easy target to reach. But other countries are often grid connected to neighbours with significant power production. This means they can draw on these when weather conditions are unfavourable.

That is why a renewable electricity system can't become the dominant power source in South Africa until electricity storage technologies become practical and economical.

A target of 50% electricity from renewables is however perfectly feasible. It's the minimum that the country should aspire

to. Even the 2019 electricity plan projected this would happen by 2050.

Renewable energy in South Africa

Considering the climatic advantage, the fraction of electricity generated from renewable energy technologies is surprisingly low. Despite this small fraction,

A target of 50% electricity from renewables is however perfectly feasible. It's the minimum that the country should aspire to. Even the 2019 electricity plan projected this would happen by 2050.

there is significant hostility to renewable developments in some quarters. Some sectors have interests in maintaining the coal-dominated status quo.

In assessing the contribution of renewable energy sources to the electricity supply it's important to distinguish between power (the rate at which it is produced at any particular moment) and energy (the total produced over an extended time period).

In view of the variability of the wind strength and the intermittence of sunlight, these technologies only occasionally produce power at top capacity. In typical South African conditions, a 100 MW solar or wind plant only generates about a third of the energy of a functioning 100 MW coal plant.

Thus, the recently announced construction of an additional 2,600 MW of wind and solar farms will effectively only produce electricity equivalent to about 900 MW averaged over a day – this equates to only about 15% of the worst power shortfalls experienced to date.

Overcoming the present 6,000 MW power shortages therefore requires approximately 15,000 MW of new solar and wind plants. The continuing deterioration in the efficiency of the large coal power plants means that the actual need for new renewable generating capacity in the next five years is closer to 20,000 MW. In the current electricity plan, this scale of renewable energy developments was projected over a time span of 10 years.

There is now an increasing recognition that the energy crisis must be treated as such. A speedy renewable energy boom is the only way to escape the downward spiral in power cuts in the medium term.

President Cyril Ramaphosa's announcement that drastic steps are imminent to combat the electricity crisis are likely to amount to a major drive towards more renewables.

This will not unduly place the South African electricity supply at the mercy of the weather or developments in storage technology, as the contribution of electricity from coal would still amount to around 60%. ■

Why factory jobs for Ethiopian women haven't translated into greater participation in politics

Until the war in Tigray started in November 2020, Ethiopia was a favoured investment destination. It had experienced strong economic growth for the previous decade.

LOVISE AALEN

Senior Researcher, Political Science, Chr. Michelsen Institute

The country gave foreign investors preferential access to American and European markets, favourable customs and tax policies, and relative political stability. Labour costs were also low – around half of what they were in China.

The Ethiopian government had invested US\$1 billion annually in industrial parks since 2010 – almost one-third of its total net foreign aid.

Investors from across the world, including China, India, the US and South Korea, started industrial production in these parks, creating job opportunities for thousands of citizens.

And most of them were women who entered the labour force as never before. Before the COVID-19 crisis in 2020, firms in the new industrial parks in Ethiopia employed about 86,000 workers – around 80% of them women. They were hired for light manufacturing, making products like shoes, textiles and garments. Employers saw women as diligent and disciplined.

The entry of women into Ethiopia's work force provided a rare opportunity to study the impact of jobs on women's empowerment, especially participation in politics.

A study I conducted with colleagues yielded unexpected results that have implications for the understanding of political agency in a non-democratic and developing context.

Work and political activity

Research in democratic and developed countries shows a strong correlation between increased female labour force participation and women's political participation.



The entry of women into Ethiopia's work force provided a rare opportunity to study the impact of jobs on women's empowerment, especially participation in politics.



Wage labour tends to boost the status of women. This influences their effectiveness in getting power in other realms of society, including politics. It also increases the number of women with professional experience and resources to mount credible campaigns and challenge negative voter attitudes towards women.

We wanted to know whether this trend would be the same in a developing country but also one as authoritarian as Ethiopia.

The 2020 Human Development Report shows that gender inequalities persist in Ethiopia, denying women the opportunity to participate in development projects. A lot more needs to be done to increase women's empowerment in the country.

Starting in 2017, we collected data from 27 large factories that make shoes and garments across five industrial parks

The 2020 Human Development Report shows that gender inequalities persist in Ethiopia, denying women the opportunity to participate in development projects. A lot more needs to be done to increase women's empowerment in the country.

in Ethiopia. The firms agreed to randomly assign 1,498 applicant women to two groups. One group of women was offered jobs and a control group was not offered jobs.

This unique research design made it possible to compare groups and identify the impact of employment. We asked both groups of women the same questions to measure a variety of indicators of women's empowerment. These questions were

around economic decision making (bargaining power), their influence on number of children they would have, and their levels of political interest and participation.

The study followed up with participants at intervals of six, 12, 18 and 36 months after they had applied for the job. We combined this with extensive qualitative data and phone surveys conducted with women's partners.

Our study investigated if women's sta-

tus as workers made them more interested in politics – and more likely to participate in politics – than women who did not work.

Contrary to expectations, our research found no evidence to suggest that the job offers had any positive effect on political participation. We saw no effect of employment on women's bargaining power or gender equality norms. We even found a reduction in women's participation in community meetings.

We see this as an outcome of female factory workers' long working hours, poor working conditions and lack of labour rights. A gendered division of labour in factories, and the belittling and derogatory attitudes of factory owners and supervisors towards women, further limits their political agency.

In our interviews, women said they had no time to attend political meetings. They often had to work long hours to reach production targets. There was no minimum wage and attendance bonuses were lost on the first day of an absence.

Almost all women had experienced abusive behaviour from their supervisors. This included being shouted at, insulted or subjected to physical force to get them to work faster or as a punishment for mistakes.

The opportunity to unionise was nearly non-existent. Out of the 27 companies in our study, only two had labour unions. The investors and factory owners we interviewed expressed their resistance to such unions.

Government officials and representatives of the national labour union told us that labour laws were not enforced for fear of investors leaving the country. Most factories were in practice exempted from basic labour regulations. Even if inspectors uncovered health and security violations, for instance, they would be unlikely to take these cases to court.

Authoritarian settings

Our findings correspond with studies of women's political participation in other African autocracies, such as Rwanda and Uganda.



Ethiopian workers inside the Huajian shoe factory on the outskirts of Addis Ababa.

>> Income and job status have less of an impact on women in authoritarian contexts than in advanced democracies.

Having an income and a job, especially if the job does not come with labour rights, doesn't give an individual the kind of power it would in an advanced democracy.

The Ethiopian government and the investors creating employment have a long way to go to offer Ethiopian women what the International Labour Organisation terms decent work.

Our research shows that the main actors determining labour conditions in Ethiopian factories have little concern for the potential damage that poor working conditions can have on their reputations.

But recent developments may support a change. In 2021,



Our research shows that the main actors determining labour conditions in Ethiopian factories have little concern for the potential damage that poor working conditions can have on their reputations.

Ethiopia's preferential access to American markets through the African Growth and Opportunity Act was terminated. This has been a big blow for investors and the government. Investors have left the country.

Being more open to unionisation could have benefits for industries. Better working conditions might improve manufacturers' image among western consumers. The Confederation of Ethiopian Labour Unions told us in research interviews that unionising would facilitate more peaceful industrial relations. It is already seeing progress in industrial parks.

If this leads to better working conditions for female factory workers, the country may see positive changes in women's political interest and participation. ■

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The African Union at 20: some reason to cheer, but lots of work ahead

The European Union (EU) has lived up to the primary reason it was created – ensuring that member states will not wage physical war against one another, but settle their differences amicably. It owes some of its successes to a combination of enforcement and management mechanisms to ensure member states conform to rules and policies.



CHRIS CHANGWE NSHIMBI

Director & Research Fellow, University of Pretoria

Other regional bodies, like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), are advancing towards their objectives of economic growth, social progress and cultural development. ASEAN draws on its distinctive informal and consensus-based principles and decision making.

What about the African Union (AU), which was modelled on the EU?

There is some reason to cheer as the continental body celebrates its 20th anniversary on 9 July. Key among its achievements is the African Continental

Free Trade Area, which commenced on 1 January 2021. It is expected to boost intra-African trade by about \$35 billion by end of 2022.

The larger market area will likely attract investment for continental infrastructure development. The increased trade will create jobs, enhance Africa's global competitiveness, improve social welfare and position Africa for greater industrialisation. The resultant economic growth should help contribute to peace and stability for the continent's more than one billion population.

On the diplomatic front, the AU has established a permanent mission in Beijing, China, to strengthen economic, commercial and cultural ties with Africa's largest trading partner. This consolidates Africa's global profile and ability to speak

with one voice on world affairs.

Still to be achieved is reform of the UN Security Council to give Africa at least two permanent seats. Over two-thirds of the council's agenda concerns Africa, yet the continent is excluded from permanent representation.

In my view, the AU still needs to address two main problems to steer Africa into a prosperous future. These are the use of unconstitutional means by leaders to hold on to power; and disregard for the rule of law.

Unconstitutional hold on power

Africa has seen a troubling resurgence of military coups and leaders using unconstitutional means to cling to power. There have been at least 32 coups and coup attempt since 2013, when General Abdel

Fattah El-Sisi toppled the government in Egypt.

The AU handed him its rotating chairship in 2019, tacitly endorsing power grabs.

Following the October 2021 coup in Sudan, United Nations secretary general Antonio Guterres expressed concern that some military leaders felt they could do whatever they wanted.

Five out of the seven coup attempts since 2020 succeeded. The coup leaders in the five countries – Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Mali and Sudan – violently suppressed pro-democracy protesters.

The death toll from the suppression of anti-coup protestors in Sudan, for instance, is over 100. Over 18 million Sudanese are threatened by food insecurity.

But the AU acts as if it's unaware of the political paralysis in Sudan.

Some coup plotters justify their actions by pointing to poor social, political and economic conditions in their countries. For example, Colonel Mamady Doumbouya of Guinea cited endemic corruption and lack of economic progress to justify deposing President Alpha Condé in September 2021.

Condé had manipulated the constitution to extend his term. This led to political instability. But that does not justify the coup.

Turning a blind eye to unconstitutional leaders and their actions indicates a backsliding from peaceful handover of power and democracy. It threatens Africa's security.

Some African leaders have perfected the art of unconstitutionally holding on to power. They use violence to rig elections. Or they doctor the rules of participation to exclude rivals. That happened in Tanzania, where laws that clamped down on freedoms of expression and assembly were passed and enforced ahead of the 2020 election.

Others criminalise popular opposition leaders, as happened to leading opposition challenger Bobi Wine in Uganda. Some feign constitutional reform to change constitutions and prolong their stay.



Sudanese demonstrators take the streets in Khartoum on June 3, 2022 to demand justice for scores of pro-democracy protesters killed during the suppression of a 2019.

The AU still needs to address two main problems to steer Africa into a prosperous future. These are the use of unconstitutional means by leaders to hold on to power; and disregard for the rule of law.

Disregard for the rule of law

Africa is seeing a relapse into the autocratic rule of the Cold War era. An increasing number of democratically elected and legitimate governments are cracking down on civil society organisations. This is worrying, even if it is part of a global trend.

The governments are squeezing out institutions that should hold them accountable and are silencing the media. They arrest activists and enact laws that restrict civil society organisations and their activities.

This reversal in democratic norms flies in the face of the normative framework mechanisms of the AU, which are about the rule of law, peace, security, democracy, good governance and human rights.



Uganda's popular opposition leader Robert Kyagulanyi (Bobi Wine) being arrested by police in Kampala.

The AU should deal decisively with member states that undermine the rule of law within their territories. The rule of law is essential for sustained and inclusive economic growth, sustainable development, and the eradication of poverty and hunger. The rule of law enables people, business and commerce to flourish.

Looking ahead

African leaders should address the problems which military leaders use as the pretext for coups in African states – mainly corruption, misrule and insecurity. Solving these problems would deny the military an excuse to interfere in civilian matters.

Instead of cracking down on citizens and civil society, states should use their natural resources to grow their economies and empower citizens. Collective economic strength will improve Africa's standing as a global actor.

The response to coups and instability can't be limited to sanctions.

The AU must also be firm and consistent in dealing with constitutional violations. It's no use hoping that illegitimate officials will relinquish power. Recent examples show that perpetrators simply defy calls to restore constitutional order. ■

Morocco - a top fertiliser producer - could hold a key to the world's food supply

Morocco has a large fertiliser industry with huge production capacity and international reach. It is one of the world's top four fertiliser exporters following Russia, China and Canada.

MICHAËL TANCHUM

Associate Senior Policy Fellow, European Council on Foreign Relations and Professor, Universidad de Navarra

Fertilisers tend to divide into three main categories; nitrogen fertilisers, phosphorus fertilisers, potassium fertilisers. In 2020 the fertiliser market size was about US\$190 billion.

Morocco has distinct advantage in the production of phosphorus fertilisers. It possesses over 70% of the world's phosphate rock reserves, from which the phosphorus used in fertilisers is derived. And this makes Morocco a gatekeeper of global food supply chains because all food crops require the element phosphorus to grow. Indeed, so does all plant life. Unlike other finite resources, such as fossil fuels, there is no alternative to phosphorus.

In 2021, the global phosphorus fertiliser market amounted to about US\$59 billion. In Morocco, the sector's 2020 revenues amounted to US\$5.94 billion. Office Chérifien des Phosphates, the producer owned by the Moroccan state, accounted for about 20% of the kingdom's export revenues. It is also the country's largest employer, providing jobs for 21,000 people.

Morocco plans to produce an additional 8.2 million tonnes of phosphorus

fertiliser by 2026. Currently production is at about 12 million tonnes.

The state company recently announced that it would increase its fertiliser production for the year by 10%. This would put an additional 1.2 million tonnes on the global market by the end of the year. This will significantly help markets.

But, as I argue in a new report, Morocco faces new challenges. Its production of fertiliser is threatened by increasingly daunting environmental and economic challenges. They include the COVID pandemic and the severe supply chain disruptions that have followed.

The timing to address these is crucial.

Russia is currently the world's largest fertiliser exporter – 15.1% of total exported fertilisers. And fertiliser represents one of the greatest vulnerabilities for both

Morocco could therefore become central to the global fertiliser market and a gatekeeper of the world's food supply that could offset the attempt to use fertiliser as a weapon.

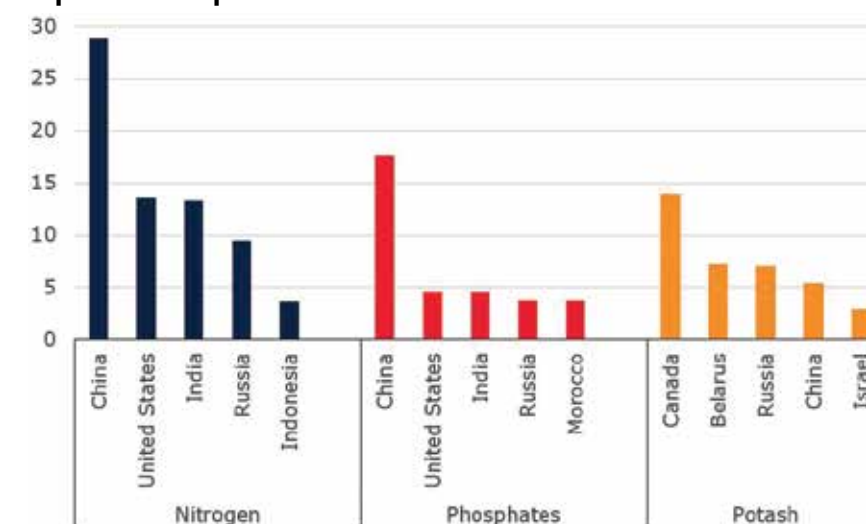


Europe and Africa. For instance, the EU27 (all of the 27-member state of the European Union) as a whole depends on Russia for 30% of its fertiliser supply. Russia's advantageous position is amplified by its status as the world's second-largest natural gas producer. Gas is a main component of all phosphorus fertilisers as well as nitrogen fertilisers.

Because of this, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has serious implications for global food security. Both in terms of supply, and also because fertiliser can be used as an economic weapon or tool.

Morocco could therefore become central to the global fertiliser market and a gatekeeper of the world's food supply that could offset the attempt to use fertiliser as a weapon.

Top fertilizer producers (mmt nutrients)



mmt=million metric tons. Data as of 2018

Sources: International Fertilizer Association, World Bank

The journey

Morocco started to mine phosphorous in 1921. During the 1980s and 1990s it began to produce its own fertiliser. Office Chérifien des Phosphates built the world's largest fertiliser production hub in Jorf Lasfar on Morocco's Atlantic coast.

Before the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war, the company had over 350 clients on five continents. About 54% of phosphate fertilisers bought in Africa come from Morocco. Moroccan fertilisers also account for major domestic market shares in India (50%), Brazil (40%) and Europe (41%). India and Brazil have reached out to Morocco to fill additional supply gaps.

Morocco's economy has reaped the benefits of the transformation into an >>

>> international fertiliser exporting giant. And in sub-Saharan Africa in particular, the combination of joint venture partnerships in local fertiliser production and direct outreach to farmers has resulted in a remarkable boost to African agricultural yields.

It's also expanded Morocco's soft power influence across the continent. For instance, Morocco supplies over 90% of Nigeria's annual fertiliser demand.

But, how well Morocco manages challenges to the industry will affect both its own economic development and the stability of food supplies across the world.

The challenges

Water and energy constraints

Phosphate extraction and fertiliser production uses a lot of energy and water. Morocco's phosphate and fertiliser industry consumes about 7% of its annual energy output and 1% of its water.

But Morocco is among the countries suffering the most from water scarcity. This is due to a dry climate, high water demand, climate change and reservoir contamination and siltation.

Morocco is trying to address this through a National Water Plan 2020-2050. It envisages building new dams and desalination plants and expanding irrigation networks, among other measures, to sustain agriculture and ecosystems. It's estimated to cost about US\$40 billion.

Natural gas costs

Nitrogen is the other basic fertiliser element that plants need. Diammonium phosphate, the most popular type of phosphorus fertiliser worldwide (and which Morocco makes along with monoammonium), is composed of 46% phosphorus and 18% nitrogen.

Natural gas accounts for at



Workers fill bags with fertilizer in the Elephant Vert factory in the "Agropolis" industrial zone in Morocco's northern city of Meknes.

least 80% of the variable cost of nitrogen fertiliser. This means the price of natural gas massively affects production costs.

But Morocco has scant natural gas resources. And natural gas prices have been soaring.

How well Morocco manages the food-water-energy nexus will affect both its own economic development and the stability of food supplies across the world.

Some answers

The key is to expand its renewable energy sector. Morocco holds considerable solar and wind resources. Fertiliser manufacturing could become powered by renewable energy, and renewable energy could be used within the fertiliser itself.

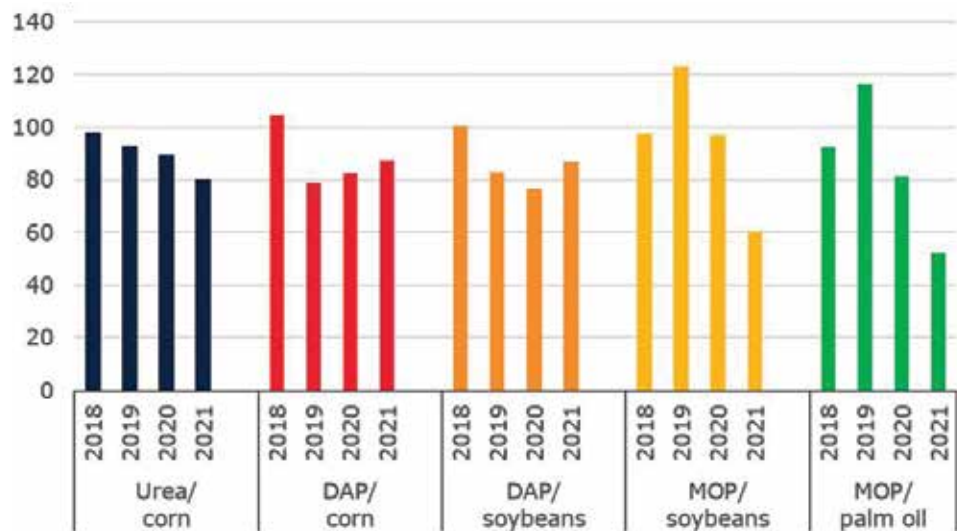
In 2020, the state's fertiliser company covered 89% of its energy needs by co-generation (producing two or more forms of energy from a single fuel source) and renewable energy sources. Its aim is to eventually cover 100% of its energy needs in this way.

Renewable energy could also be used within the fertiliser itself. Instead of importing ammonia derived from natural gas, Morocco could produce its own using hydrogen produced from its domestic renewable energy resources.

According to the state company, 31% of its water needs are met with "unconventional" water resources, including treated wastewater and desalinated seawater.

Morocco's growing reliance on desalination plants to satisfy

Fertilizer-to-crop price ratios (Index, Jan 2019 = 100)



A lower index indicates higher fertilizer affordability and vice versa. DAP = diammonium phosphate, MOP = muriate potash.

Data for 2021 is the average of January to April prices.

Sources: Bloomberg, U.S Department of Agriculture, World Bank

Most fertilizer prices soared in 2021, particularly phosphates and urea, driven by strong demand and higher input costs. Potash prices remained broadly stable on ample supply. Fertilizer prices are projected to average more than one quarter higher in 2021 than the previous year, before easing in 2022. Risks to the forecast include the pace of capacity expansions, geopolitical tensions, and, in the medium term, environmental policies on fertilizer use.



industrial, agricultural and residential needs will require sizeable new investments in power generation from renewable energy sources. Desalination plants require 10 times the amount of energy to produce the same volume of water as conventional surface water treatment.

To sustain operations and expand green ammonia production, Morocco will have to strike a careful balance between its fertiliser exports, its drive to expand its high-value agricultural exports and the provision of drinking water to its population.

Using its large solar energy resources to power green hydrogen and green ammonia production, along with desalination, Morocco could escape the vicious cycle of the upward spiralling of prices in the food-energy-water nexus. ■

Cotton breeders are using genetic insights to make this global crop more sustainable

Products derived from the cotton plant show up in many items that people use daily, including blue jeans, bedsheets, paper, candles and peanut butter. In the United States cotton is a US\$7 billion annual crop grown in 17 states from Virginia to Southern California. Today, however, it's at risk.

SERINA TALUJA

Ph.D. Candidate in Genetics and Genomics, Texas A&M University

Cotton plants from fields in India, China and the U.S. – the world's top three producers – all grow, flower and produce cotton fibre very similarly. That's because they are genetically very similar.

This can be a good thing, since breeders select the best-performing plants and cross-breed them to produce better cotton every generation. If one variety produces the best-quality fiber that sells for the best price, growers will plant that type exclusively. But after many years of this cycle, cultivated cotton all starts to look the same: high-yielding and easy for farmers to harvest using machines, but wildly underprepared to fight disease, drought or insect-borne pathogens.

Breeding alone may not be enough to combat the low genetic diversity of the cultivated cotton genome, since breeding works with what exists, and what exists all looks the same. And genetic modification may not be a realistic option for creating cotton that is useful for farmers, because getting engineered crops approved is expensive and heavily regulated. My research focuses on possible solutions that lie at the intersection between these tools.

How to retool cotton

In a perfect world, scientists could change just a few key components of the cotton genome to make plants more resilient to stresses such as pests, bacteria, fungi and water limitations. And the plants would



In a perfect world, scientists could change just a few key components of the cotton genome to make plants more resilient to stresses such as pests, bacteria, fungi and water limitations. And the plants would still produce high-quality cotton fibre.

still produce high-quality cotton fibre.

This strategy isn't new. Some 88% of the cotton grown in the U.S. has been genetically modified to resist caterpillar pests, which are expensive and hard to manage with traditional insecticides. But as new problems emerge, new solutions will be required that will demand more complex changes to the genome.

Recent advances in plant tissue culture and regeneration make it possible to develop a whole new plant from a few cells. Scientists can use good genes from other organisms to replace the defective ones in cotton, yielding cotton plants with all the

resistance genes and all the agriculturally valuable genes.

The problem is that getting regulatory approval for a genetically modified crop to go to market is a long process, often eight to 10 years. And it's usually expensive.

But genetic modification isn't the only option. Researchers today have access to a gigantic amount of data about all living things. Scientists have sequenced the entire genomes of numerous organisms and have annotated many of these genomes to show where the genes and regulatory sequences are within them. Various sequence comparison tools allow scientists

to line up one gene or genome against another and quickly determine where all the differences are.

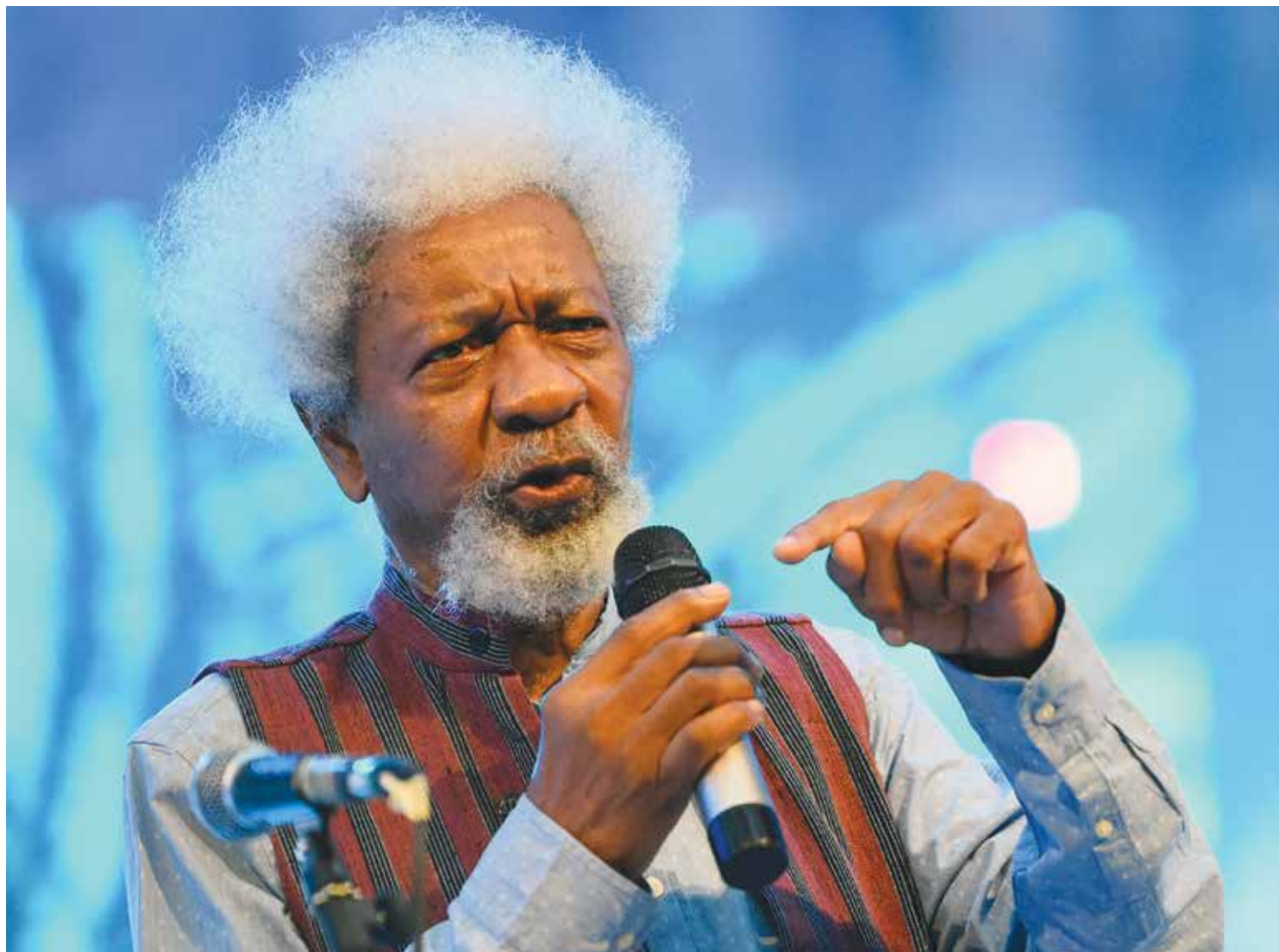
Plants have very large genomes with lots of repetitive sequences, which makes them very challenging to unpack. However, a team of researchers changed the game for cotton genetics in 2020 by releasing five updated and annotated genomes – two from cultivated species and three from wild species.

Having the wild genomes assembled makes it possible to start using their valuable genes to try to improve cultivated varieties of cotton by breeding them together and looking for those genes in the offspring. This approach combines traditional plant breeding with detailed insights into cotton's genome.

We now know which genes we need to make cultivated cotton more resistant to disease and drought. And we also know where to avoid making changes to important agricultural genes.

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BUSINESS MONTHLY | SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2022 117



Wole Soyinka's life of writing holds Nigeria up for scrutiny

Akinwande Oluwole Babatunde Soyinka, known simply as Wole Soyinka, can't be easily described. He is a teacher, an ideologue, a scholar and an iconoclast, an elder statesman, a patriot and a culturalist

ABAYOMI AWELEWA

Lecturer in African and African Diasporan Literature, University of Lagos

The Nigerian playwright, novelist, poet and essayist is a giant among his contemporaries. In 1986, he became the first sub-Saharan African, and is one of only five Africans, to be awarded the Nobel prize for literature. This was in recognition of the way he "fashions the drama of existence".

His works reveal him as a humanist, a courageous man and a lover of justice. His symbolism, flashbacks and ingenious plotting contribute to a rich dramatic structure. His best works exhibit humour and fine poetic style as well as a gift for irony and satire. These accurately match the lan-

guage of his complex characters to their social position and moral qualities.

His works have such impact that some of them are used in schools in Nigeria and some other anglophone countries in West Africa. Some have also been translated into French.

Life and activism

Soyinka was born into a Yoruba family in Abeokuta, southwest Nigeria, on 13 July 1934. His parents were Samuel Ayodele Soyinka and Grace Eniola Soyinka. He had his primary education at St Peter's Primary School in Abeokuta. In 1954, he attended Government College in Ibadan, and subsequently University College Ibadan (now the University of Ibadan) and the University of Leeds in England.

He was jailed in 1967 for speaking out against Nigeria's civil war over the attempted secession of Biafra from Nigeria. Soyinka was also incarcerated for taking over the radio station of the disbanded Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation in Ibadan to announce his rejection of the 1965 Western Nigerian election results.

He joined other activists and democrats to form the National Democratic Coalition to fight for the restoration of democracy in Nigeria.

He now lives in Abeokuta.

Themes and style

My first contact with Soyinka was in secondary school when we were made to read his play *Lion and the Jewel*. Some of my classmates then felt he was difficult to read and assimilate. I later found out *Lion and the Jewel* was actually one of the simplest titles.

Soyinka's works often address the clash of cultures, the interface between primitiveness and modernity, colonial interventions, religious bigotry, corruption, abuse



Your guide to Wole Soyinka's body of work

The Nigerian writer and activist **Wole Soyinka** was born on July 13, 1934, in Aké, Abeokuta, a town in southwestern Nigeria.

One of the greatest writers of his generation, Soyinka produced plays, novels, poems, and essays that explore African art and worldviews and serve as witnesses to sociopolitical issues in the world. The multi-talented artist, wrote the poet and academic Tanure Ojaide in *Black American Literature Forum*, "combines traditional African and Western influences so dexterously that he creates a personal authenticity."

In 1975, Soyinka edited *Poems of Black Africa*, considered by many scholars to be the first anthology of poems that truly captures the abundant identities and realities of Black Africa. From 1975 to 1979, he was a Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University. He has since taught at Harvard, Oxford, and Yale.

In 1986, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, the first African and Black writer to be so honoured. In December 2017, he received the Europe Theater Prize's "Special Prize."

Soyinka's body of work comprises 25 plays, 10 essay collections, seven poetry collections, five memoirs, three novels, and two translated works.

of power, poor governance, poverty and the future of independent African nations. His themes have remained constant over time and many African states are still grappling with issues he has raised since the 1950s.

Through his works, I discovered that he has deep knowledge and understanding of his mother tongue, Yoruba. For instance, in *Death and the King's Horseman* and other plays, we see Yoruba wise-cracks, philosophy and proverbs translated into his language of communication, English. These enrich his writings.

I find the changing forms of his creative works interesting in spite of the unchanging content of the narratives or drama. Read *King Baabu* or *The Beatification of the Area Boy* and *Chronicles from the Land of the Happiest People on Earth* to observe the change in Soyinka's style.



>> Forms of writing

Soyinka's plays cut across diverse socio-economic, political, cultural and religious preoccupations. A Dance of the Forests, one of the most recognised plays, was written and presented in 1960 to celebrate Nigeria's independence. It reflects on the ugly past and projects into a blossoming future.

His 1965 play Kongi's Harvest premiered in Dakar, Senegal in 1966 at the first Negro Arts Festival. The lead character, Kongi, was played by Soyinka himself. It deals with themes of corruption, ego and paranoia. The lead character, Kongi, is the archetype of dictatorship globally. He suppresses all voices of reason, revelling in

his illusion of power and thinking no one can stop him – until he meets a tragic end.

Other plays depict clashes of culture between white influence, colonial values and black African orientations. Soyinka never blames but dramatizes the evil people do through characters with impact, strong plots, accurate settings and language.

Soyinka has written only three novels: The Interpreters (1965), Season of Anomy (1973) and Chronicles from the Land of Happiest People on Earth (2021), which came almost 50 years after his last. The novels focus mainly on Nigeria and its many ills, including corruption, religious bigotry and inept governance.



Only one universal ideology answers human cruelties, the excesses of power, bigotries, social inequalities and alienation: Literature,"

- Wole Soyinka, Africa's first Nobel laureate in literature

The characters in the first two novels have dreams which are sometimes dashed through a tragic truncation of their lives. The latest captures contemporary Nigeria, the Nigerian diaspora and the myths of an ever-crawling giant. It paints a picture of things going wrong for the country.

Certain poems stand out among Soyinka's collection. These are Telephone Conversation and Abiku. The former uses humour to talk about the serious issue of an African experiencing racism as a new student in a British university. The latter comments on Nigeria's inability to develop; the poet explores the futility of life.

Soyinka's non-fiction includes The Man Died: Prison Notes (1972), his autobiography, Ake: The Years of Childhood (1981), Isara: A Voyage Around Essay (1990), Ibadan: The Penkeleles Years (1989) and You Must Set Forth at Dawn (2006). In these works, he has narrated how the story of his life and his family intertwines with the fate of Nigeria.

As an essayist and intellectual, he has highlighted the specific failings of individuals in the Nigerian polity. Soyinka is not afraid of mentioning names of people he writes about, nor the wrongdoings he is accusing them of.

These works include Myth, Literature and the African World (1976), Art, Dialogue, and Outrage: Essays on Literature and Culture (1988), The Black Man and the Veil: Beyond the Berlin Wall (1990) and The Open Sore of a Continent: A Personal Narrative of the Nigerian Crisis (1996).

They are essays that have contributed to Soyinka's status as a global intellectual. ■

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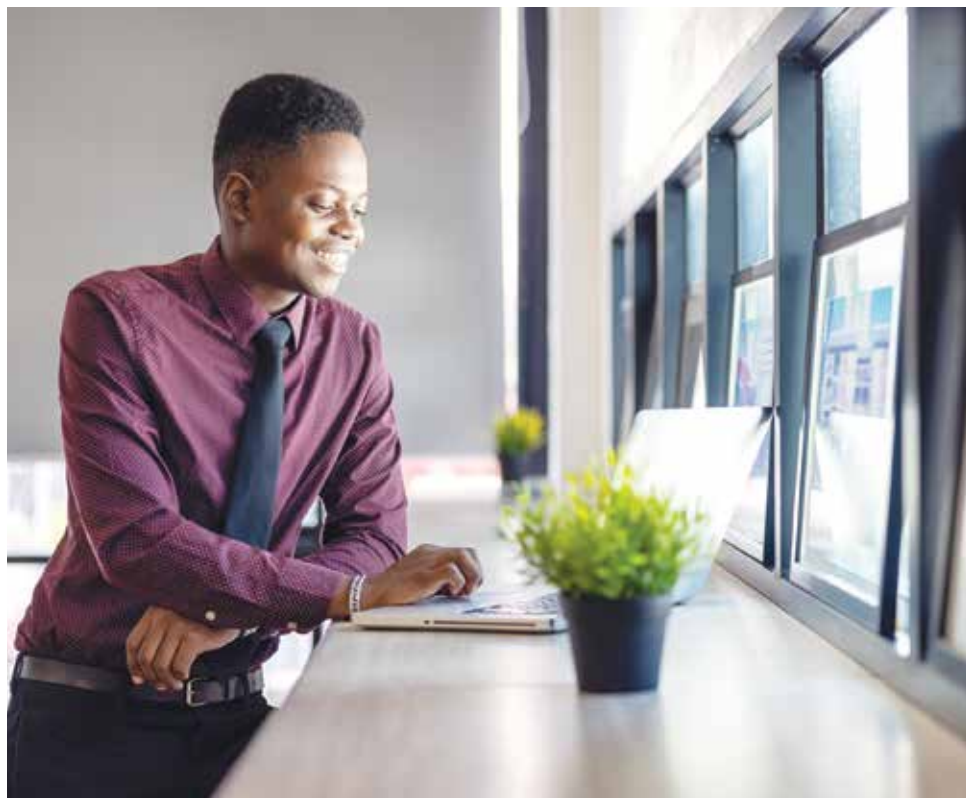
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Kenya and South Africa offer insights into digital economy challenges and alternatives

The World Bank is warning of the real danger of a massive economic downturn across the world

STEPHAN MANNING

Professor of Strategy and Innovation,
University of Sussex

In a recent analysis it warned that many countries – including those in sub-Saharan Africa – will be facing economic challenges due to rising food and fuel prices.

At the same time, however, there is unshakeable optimism around

the growth potential of African economies as a whole and specifically the digital economy. The rapid rise of tech hubs and start-ups in urban areas in sub-Saharan Africa in recent years seems to support that.

Many observers have, therefore, identified the digital economy as an important driver of long-term growth in Africa despite current global challenges.

The reality is that experiences with promoting the digital economy in sub-Saharan Africa have been mixed. Following great hopes in the promise of “digital connectivity” in the early 2000s, many scholars have observed that the ability of African businesses to turn connectivity into success in global markets has been limited.

The future of Africa’s tech scene is equally uncertain. Despite great potential, the tech start-ups scene is underfunded, and several tech hubs have had to shut down due to bankruptcy.

How can we explain this gap between promise and reality with digital economy investments in sub-Saharan Africa? And how can investments lead to more sustainable growth?

In my recent study I analysed the historical case of global business services in Kenya and South Africa to examine why governments and businesses make certain investment choices over time, and how they can learn to be more in tune with the context of sub-Saharan Africa.

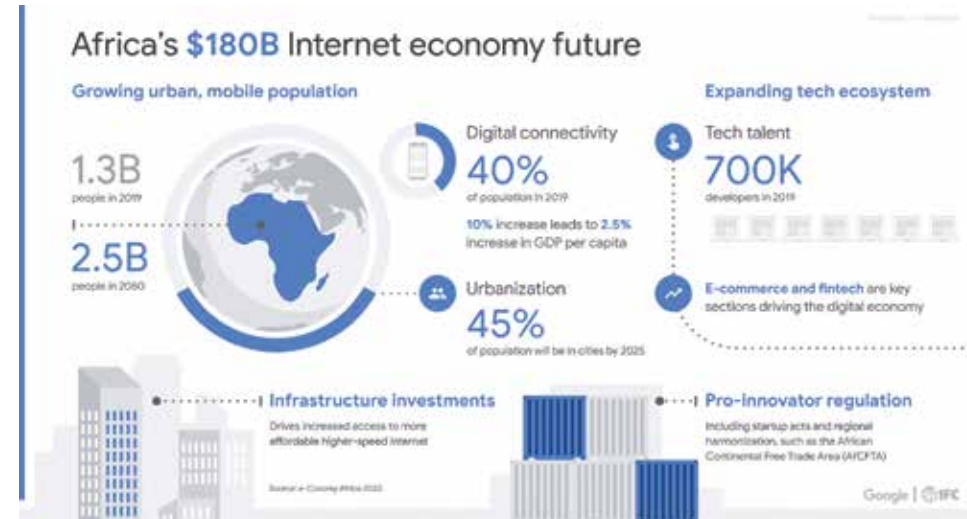
The main finding is that global templates of success, such as meeting global standards and developing scalable business models, often stand in the way of realising the full potential of locally specific skills and business opportunities. As I show below, this has fundamental implications for today’s digital start-up scene in sub-Saharan Africa.

Flawed hopes

The promise of the digital economy has always been a double-edged sword. Many global consulting firms and international organisations initially saw “digital connectivity” as a key driver for the future growth of African economies. Even today there is a strong belief that you just need to have the right infrastructure in place for the digital economy to grow and create jobs.



Business outsourcing EPZ Call Center in Kenya. Below: Techies in Lagos, Nigeria, work on an open-source project.



The main finding is that global templates of success, such as meeting global standards and developing scalable business models, often stand in the way of realising the full potential of locally specific skills and business opportunities.



This optimism led the Kenyan government in 2007 to define business process outsourcing as a central pillar in its Vision 2030. The assumption was that Kenya had the talent and internet connectivity to copy India’s success in this business. In a similar fashion, South Africa’s business leaders put their hopes in call centres, which had previously generated many jobs in India and the Philippines.

But these hopes turned out to be flawed. Digital businesses are often easy to get into but difficult to compete in – especially on the global stage. To win client contracts in a highly standardised digital business, such as call centres and tech support, you need to be scalable. Yet, to succeed with scale you also need to be cost competitive and develop a strong reputation.

Kenyan business process outsourcing services were neither scalable nor competitive. As a result they soon went out of business. A famous example was KenCall, a once-hyped Kenya-based call centre that could not keep up with global competition.

South African call centres had the scale. But competition from the Philippines put enormous pressure on them.

The current tech start-up scene seems to be facing similar challenges: scalability of new ventures has been a serious issue. In part >>

>> this is due to poor support infrastructure as well as global competition.

Lessons learnt

In the case of global business services, Kenya and South Africa learned their lesson. Initially, trying to meet global standards and keep up with global rivals was seen as desirable in the eyes of governments, businesses and the general public. But as competitive pressure grew, the agenda changed from competing globally to avoiding global competition, from meeting global standards to focusing on locally specific skills and resources.

As a result, both economies invested into niche business segments. For example, Kenyan business process outsourcing providers increasingly focused on local and regional clients rather than trying to compete for clients from Europe and North America.

In the case of South Africa, business services increasingly diversified into more specialised areas such as legal process outsourcing, to lower global competitive pressure.

Also, both economies promoted so-called impact sourcing, which focuses on hiring and training disadvantaged young people from slums and rural areas, combining employment opportunities with community impact. What these niche strategies have in common is that they are less subject to global competition, and that they rely on locally embedded resources, such as local client connections and untapped labour pools in local communities.

Some of these niche models emerged even before they became fashionable. In fact, their ability to survive against the mainstream gave them a competitive edge, allowing them to survive in the long-term.

A similar dynamic might be unfolding with today's tech start-up scene in sub-Saharan Africa.



Staff members of an e-commerce company in Rwanda.

Research shows that while African tech hubs often “fail” to scale up businesses in the Western sense, they are very effective in providing individual growth opportunities and in expanding and deepening community connections.

Alternative models

It's still fashionable today to promote tech start-ups and tech hubs based on models from the global North. But new, alternative models might be emerging that might be much more sustainable.

For example, studies suggest that African businesses are traditionally much more community-focused. Businesses exist to support communities rather than just to make profit. Research shows that while African tech hubs often “fail” to scale up businesses in the

Western sense, they are very effective in providing individual growth opportunities and in expanding and deepening community connections.

Such experiences suggest that concepts of “scalability” and “growth” may take on a range of meanings in sub-Saharan Africa, and that the global North should expand their horizon beyond their narrow conception of these terms to really understand Africa's economic potential.

Take-aways

Recent reports may be right that the digital economy carries a lot of potential in helping sub-Saharan Africa overcome current economic challenges towards sustainable growth. But maybe it is not because the digital economy can merely drive economic growth in the conventional sense, but because it can expand regional business networks and local communities, and make them more resilient against global economic threats. ■



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Is eastern Africa's drought the worst in recent history? And are worse yet to come?

Large areas of Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya are currently in the grip of a severe drought. An estimated 16.7 million people face acute food insecurity. That's more than the combined populations of Austria and Switzerland.

DAVID NASH

Professor of Physical Geography, University of Brighton

Four consecutive rainy seasons have now failed since late 2020, a climatic event not seen in at least 40 years. This meteorological drought has resulted in a loss of soil moisture, caused waterways to dry up, and led to the death of millions of livestock.

The Horn of Africa experiences two rainy seasons per year. The timing varies across the region, but rains broadly fall from March to May (the "long rains") and from September to December. The

Herders with their animals traverse a semi arid area in Ethiopia in search of water and pasture. Water and food crisis arisen and 1 million cattle and sheep perished as result of drought in Ethiopia.

delayed start and then failure of the March to May rains this year has been felt particularly in equatorial parts of the region, where the long rains contribute 70% of the annual total.

The situation is unlikely to improve in the short term. Forecasts suggest that the September to December rainy season could also fail. This would set the stage for an unprecedented five-season drought.

The ongoing humanitarian crisis caused by the drought raises serious questions about future food and water security in the Horn of Africa. The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report projects that global warming will negatively affect food systems in the region by shortening growing seasons and increasing water stress.

The crisis also raises the questions: is the current drought the worst in recent history and might future droughts be even worse?

Exploring past data

I'm a physical geographer who uses descriptions of weather conditions within historical documents, combined with meteorological data, to explore how rainfall has varied in the past across various regions of Africa – a discipline known as historical climatology. To understand the relative severity of the current drought, we need to examine both historical records and data.

For the purposes of this article, I am focusing on the last 200 years. This time-span includes what is called the period of instrumental record – the period during which we have used standardised instruments (called rain gauges) to measure rainfall. The earliest systematic rainfall data collection in Africa began in the 1830s for coastal Algeria and southwest South Africa. In eastern Africa, however, continuous runs of data are only available from the 1870s onwards.

HORN OF AFRICA DROUGHT SITUATION (April 2022)

At least **20 million people** including **10 million children** are facing severe drought conditions, a 38% increase in people and children in need from 14.5 million in February

88% increase in household water insecurity from 5.6 million in February to 10.5 million in April 2022. **Rising price of water and food prices limit access.**

Up to **5.7 million children** will require treatment for acute malnourishment, with more than **1.7 million** at risk of severe acute malnourished

15 million children are out of school as of February in HoA with additional **1.1 million at risk of dropping out by mid-year**

Children are **trekking longer distances, on average three times longer in some areas, to fetch water** compared to normal dry season, which is contributing to many risks including **GBV**

Diseases like cholera, measles and diarrhoea cases on a rise

Sources: UNICEF Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Kenya HAC 2022 and sitreps.

Fortunately, we can fill in gaps for years and areas where there are no measured rainfall data using historical information sources. The most important of these are oral histories and collections of documents written mainly by settlers, explorers, missionaries and colonial governments that describe past climate and conditions related to climate.

According to recent research, 2016 was the driest single year of the last four decades – Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya received 40% less rainfall between August and October than the long-term average.

There are several droughts that stand out.

According to recent research, 2016 was the driest single year of the last four decades – Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya received 40% less rainfall between August and October than the long-term average. The 2016 drought followed a particularly strong El Niño event, when patterns of warmer and cooler water in the Pacific Ocean shifted, with knock on effects for the Indian Ocean and eastern African rainfall.

The drought from 1983 to 1986 – which triggered global humanitarian efforts such as the music fund-raising initiative Live Aid – was also very severe. Like the current drought, the event was prolonged and therefore had a cumulative effect. Going back further, rainfall series spanning the full instrumental period suggest that the mid-1950s was almost as dry as 2016 in Ethiopia and Somalia.

It is possible that even more severe droughts occurred >>



Residents of Hargududo, Ethiopia glancing at carcasses of dead animals necessitated by the prolonged drought. There has hardly been a drop of rain in the area in 18 months.

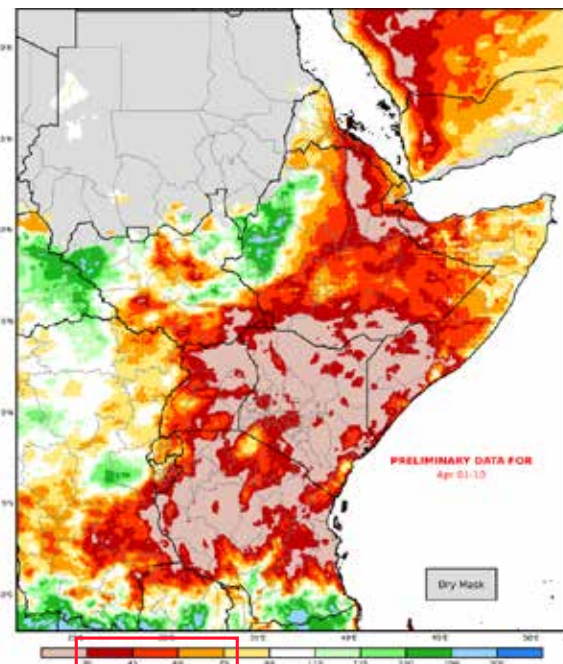
>> during the pre-instrumental period. It isn't easy to compare the magnitude of the rainfall deficit during modern droughts with earlier periods when rainfall wasn't measured. However, a major, continent-wide historical climate study shows that eastern Africa experienced droughts – at least as bad as those in recent decades – throughout the 1820s and 1830s, during the 1880s and around 1900.

The 1820s-1830s drought was probably the worst of the last 200 years. Lake levels fell in central Kenya (with Lake Baringo drying up completely), and reports from European travellers describe prolonged famine, possibly lasting as long as 20 years, affecting areas including Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

A more recent historical climate study provides further detail for Kenya, including vivid descriptions of the multi-year, drought-driven, famine around 1900. This is locally referred to as the “Iwaya” (crocodile) famine, as people had to hunt

Amongst the lowest cumulative rainfall, three consecutive failed rains

CHIRPS Season precipitation percent of average (%) Period: April 2022



The seasonal rainfall performance, represented as a percent of the 1981-2021

CHIRPS historical average, for March 2022 based on preliminary CHIRPS data.

Sources: UNICEF Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Kenya HAC 2022 and sitreps.

crocodiles for food. By 1902, colonial authorities had to distribute Indian rice, brought in via the under-construction railway linking the coast to Lake Victoria, as famine relief.

Taking this information as whole, the current drought in eastern Africa is clearly unprecedented in recent decades. This is due mainly to the fact that below-average rainfall has fallen in four consecutive seasons. The worst recent food security crises in the region have been associated with multi-season dry spells.

However, the droughts of the 1820s and 1830s, before the advent of global humanitarian aid, were even more protracted and therefore probably more severe in terms of cumulative human impacts.

The future

In addition to having human impacts – recorded in the types of historical documents described earlier – droughts also impact

upon natural vegetation and landscapes. These impacts leave a legacy in pollen and sedimentary records that can be studied by botanists and geologists to understand past climate variability.

Data from marine sediments in the Gulf of Aden spanning the past 2,000 years, for example, indicate a close association between globally warm conditions and drying in the eastern Horn of Africa. If this association holds into the future, global warming will be met with drying and we may anticipate worse droughts.

Climate change is already affecting rainfall levels in the Horn of Africa. Human-induced warming has raised the temperature of the western Pacific Ocean, leading to concerning rainfall deficits in eastern Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia. This may be the reason why droughts in back-to-back seasons are becoming more common in the region.

As with any semi-arid region, droughts are an integral part of the



Dinsoor camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Baidoa, Somalia. One of the areas facing adverse effects of the drought.



Cereals distributed by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in famine-hit area of Thonyor, South Sudan.

climate of eastern Africa and will continue to be so into the future. The positive news is that groups of scientists such as the Famine Early Warning Systems Network can now provide early warning of acute food insecurity. Drought in eastern Africa is often linked to the build-up of La Niña conditions in the Pacific Ocean. Forecasting is such that governments and aid agencies can now put emergency provisions in place well in advance of drought onset.

Measures to improve the resilience of eastern African communities to climate shock and stresses meant that the overall impact of the 2016 drought was much lower than the mid-1980s and 1973 droughts. As resilience continues to improve, it should be possible to move from crisis management to risk management of droughts in the Horn of Africa. ■

Road deaths: Why matters have only got worse over the past 100 years

In the early days of motoring in the US, transport historian Peter Norton tells us, people were angry. In the four years following the end of the First World War, more Americans were killed on roads than had died on the battlefields in France.



LISA KANE

Honorary Research Associate, University of Cape Town

Monuments were erected to crash victims in Baltimore and Pittsburgh. Detroit tolled bells of mourning and remembrance. In New York a safety march on thousands included bereaved mothers who

dedicated a monument there.

Such widespread public anger is unlikely 100 years on even though the world's roads are still deadly. Globally, more lives are lost to road deaths than to malaria or HIV/AIDS. Each year, more than 1.2 million people die in road crashes. In reality, the figure could be larger: road crash data is known to be regularly under-reported.

It's not just about lives lost. People

who don't die in crashes may still be badly injured or permanently maimed. Globally, road traffic crashes cost most countries 3% of their gross domestic product. The World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims on Sunday 18 November is a reminder of the human tragedies behind the data.

The risk of a road traffic death is highest in the African region, at 26.6 deaths per 100 000 people. The lowest risk is



found in Europe, with 9.3 deaths per 100 000.

Why is road death and injury still so prolific? Enough research has been done, verified and compiled to show which policies, regulations and technologies can radically reduce road deaths and injuries. The World Health Organisation has produced multiple guidelines that set out how nations can make their roads safer.

Some identify a lack of "political will as a key factor in road safety failures. But generalising about "political will", while understandable, also reinforces an unhelpful categorisation. It contains an assumption that politics is separate from technical road safety and road engineering work. That somehow professionals, governments, businesses and civil society working on road safety operate in a depoliticised, "technical" realm.

Transport scholars have shown, in various cases studies and analyses, how the political and technical work hand in hand. Biases favouring one group are inherent in transport planning and engineering. Early funding allocations in the US were skewed towards highways

The link between vehicle speeds and road death and injury is now widely accepted and corroborated by research) but speed remains a poorly understood public health risk, despite strong warnings.



prompted in part by the less than robust use of statistics. And seemingly independent road professional bodies have been influenced by corporate interests.

In short, road engineering, planning and use is not divorced from broader politics.

Lobbies and interests

Historical work like Norton's about the dawn of motoring in the US reveals some of the contours of power at play. It shows who or what was able to influence roads policy and engineering norms at the beginning of motoring. Trevor Barnes points out that such norms put in place at the beginning of a discipline's development have a particularly strong influence and are difficult to displace.

In the case of public road development, businesses lobbied to protect and promote their interests. In particular, Norton exposes the role that oil and motor industries played in propagating a very particular style of managing and engineering roads. Regarding road safety, the powerful "motordom" lobby worked to quieten concerns about the relationship between vehicle speeds and road injuries.

The link between vehicle speeds and road death and injury is now widely accepted and corroborated by research) but speed remains a poorly understood public health risk, despite strong warnings.

Now, 100 years on from the first days of motoring, can we still attribute the generally parlous state of road safety in many countries to such "motordom" interests wedded to high vehicle speeds and increasing motorisation in business interests? To some extent, we can.

The politics of roads

Present day engineering practices can be traced back to road engineering norms established in the >>



>> early part of the last century. The attribution of responsibility to the “reckless” pedestrian rather than to the motorist who is driving the vehicle that’s capable of causing harm can also be traced back to these earliest days of motoring.

Historical and sociological research work on planning and engineering thus queries the idea of roads and traffic as objective, de-politicised realms of practice. Yet,

Political analyses of road safety are in their infancy. Much work is still required to understand the politics of roads and road-making. But deeper interrogations of the forces holding the status quo in place are also needed.

the work of road safety continues for the most part to be divorced from thinking about the broader political interests that are at play in the business of roads and traffic.

Political analyses of road safety are in their infancy. Much work is still required to understand the politics of roads and road-making. But deeper interrogations of the forces holding the status quo in place are also needed.

Development scholar and author Wolfgang Sachs, as an example, writes eloquently of the car as an object of desire; the love for speed is central to its popularity. The car, he argues, promises humans a means to overcome their existential angst at slowness of life.

Peter Sloterdijk, a philosopher and cultural theorist, points to our collective “sacrifice” of 3600 children killed in road crashes each year in the name of modernity. He suggests that people’s yearning for relief from the discomforts of being human goes some way to explaining the thirst for automobility.

To accelerate change we need more broad conceptions like these. They offer tantalising possibilities for improved thinking – and acting – for road safety. ■



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Harnessing the Strength of Women Leadership to solve the challenges of the 21st Century

The Iron Lady is a 2011 biographical film drama based on the life and career of the former UK Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, as portrayed by American actress Meryl Streep. One poignant scene in the movie shows the remarkable steel character of the first female Prime Minister of the UK, as she grappled with the 1982 Falklands Island crisis, perhaps the most difficult time of her career.

RITA KAVASHE

The Prime Minister emphatically rejects an offer by the US Secretary of State Alexander Haig to explore a diplomatic solution to avert a war: “No, no, no. We will stand on principle, or we will not stand at all!” Margaret Thatcher went ahead with the war against Argentina for the Falklands Islands. In ten weeks, the British forces emerged victorious.

On being elected for the first time as UK Prime Minister on 4th May 1979, Margaret Thatcher quoting St. Francis of Assisi, summarized her upcoming style of governance to the media: “Where there is discord, may we bring harmony. Where there is error, may we bring truth. Where there is doubt, may we bring faith. And where there is despair, may we bring hope”.

Margaret Thatcher’s time in office over an 11-year period was marked by great vision and purpose during the cold war phase of the 1980s. She often navigated

through diverse economic and social challenges in the UK as well as on the global stage.

In 1979, when she began her term in office, Thatcher found a nation mired in economic recession. Businesses were failing, with inflation and unemployment rising. Thatcher immediately set out to turn the economic situation around. In her quest to privatize state-owned enterprises, Thatcher was confronted by the 1984 miners’ strike which threatened to paralyze the country.

The Prime Minister faced down the Trade Unions during a 362-days national strike, and eventually triumphed, to modernize and hugely improve the productivity of the UK economy. Her tough stance helped build her enduring reputation as the “Iron Lady” - a nickname given to her by the Soviet press in the ‘70s. Of note, the failure of the 1984-85 miners’ strike helped revive the British economy.

Margaret Thatcher was the longest serving British Prime Minister of the 20th Century and the only one to have won

three consecutive terms in office between 1979 and 1990. The ‘Iron Lady’ banished all doubts as to the capabilities of women in national and global leadership positions.

Joining the gallery of prominent women leaders to emerge in the 20th century was the former Pakistan Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto. In 1988, she became the first woman to head a democratic government in a Muslim majority country.

In the 21st Century, Angela Merkel emerged as the first female woman Chancellor in Germany. She came into office in 2005, becoming the third longest serving Chancellor in German history until 2021 when she retired. For 16 years, Merkel was a towering figure in the politics of Germany, the European Union and respected on the global stage.

She was widely seen as a steadying influence among the fractious 27 member states, often finding a way out of difficult disputes. Merkel helped to steer the bloc out of the 2008 financial crash and the

subsequent euro crisis when the European Union’s currency was under its severest threat.

In Africa, Graca Machel had the unique distinction of serving as a first lady in her native Mozambique as well as in neighbouring South Africa. What a feat. In her long professional and public life, she led strong initiatives as an international advocate for peace, women and children’s rights.

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf served as President of Liberia from 2006 to 2018, being the first woman elected head of state of an African country. As president, she secured millions of dollars of foreign direct investments (FDIs) and established a Truth and Reconciliation Committee to probe corruption and heal ethnic tensions in her country.

More recently, Samia Suluhu Hassan made history in 2021 when she was sworn in as Tanzania’s first female president after the death of her predecessor, John Pombe Magufuli. She is currently one of two serving female heads of state in Africa, alongside Ethiopia’s Sahle-Work Zewde.

This list of internationally acclaimed women leaders would not be complete without mention of the most impactful Kenyans of all times - the late Prof. Wangari Maathai. She was the first African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004 “for her contribution to sustainable development, democracy and peace”. She was also the first female scholar from East and Central Africa to take a doctorate in biology, and the first female professor in Kenya.

In 1977, she started a grassroots movement aimed at countering deforestation by encouraging women to plant trees in their local environments and to think ecologically. The Green Belt Movement spread to other African countries contributing to the planting of over thirty million trees. The Nobel Peace Prize Committee aptly described Prof. Maathai as “thinking globally and acting locally.”

This fascinating history provides a glimpse into the evolution of women in leadership and the significant strides achieved across public and private sector



Margaret Thatcher’s time in office over an 11-year period was marked by great vision and purpose during the cold war phase of the 1980s. She often navigated through diverse economic and social challenges in the UK as well as on the global stage.

spheres over the last century and into the 21st century.

In the last couple of years, we have seen more women rise to the top levels of companies across the world. This is because an increasing number of companies are seeing the value of having more women in leadership, and they are proving that they can make progress on gender diversity.

A 2016 study by the Peterson Institute for International Economics, surveying 91 countries, found that organizations with women in the C-suite were more profitable. This is supported by a 2018 McKinsey Report, Delivering through Diversity, which showed that companies in the top-quartile for gender diversity on executive teams were 21% more likely to outperform on profitability and 27% more likely to have superior value creation.

There is also evidence that corporate boards with women are better able to shift

business focus from short term profit to longer term growth as women leaders are more collaborative and skilled in balancing interests of multiple stakeholders. Data continues to show that women are accelerators for economic growth, new market value, profits, reputation and development goals like ending hunger, poverty, inequality, and tackling climate change.

These are the major challenges of the 21st Century which also comprise health, aging populations, talent shortage, virtual management of production and employees. These challenges which have no easy answers require leadership (with female-like values) that involves resilience, courage, flexibility, listening, caring, empathy, collaboration and collective contribution. The participation of everyone’s intelligence becomes the key to success, characterized by a more traditional female management style.

The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020 brought this element strongly to the forefront, in the way different countries responded to the health crisis. It was widely noted that countries led by women seemed to be particularly successful in fighting the Coronavirus.

Countries such as Germany, New Zealand, Taiwan, Norway, Iceland, Finland, Denmark - which are women-led - rose to the occasion, revealing that women have what it takes when the heat rises in our Houses of State. While other countries were reeling from the effects of Covid-19, these countries were able to effectively manage the crisis, hence recording lower deaths and infection rates.

For instance, Germany’s Chancellor Angela Merkel stood up early and calmly told her countrymen that this was a serious bug that would infect up to 70% of the population. “It’s serious,” she said, “take it seriously.” She did, so they did too. Testing and lock downs began right from the get-go.

New Zealand’s Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern was early to impose lockdowns and crystal clear on the maximum level of alert she was putting the country under - and why. She imposed self-isolation on people entering New Zealand when >>



The late Prof. Wangari Maathai, she started a grassroots movement aimed at countering deforestation by encouraging women to plant trees in their local environments and to think ecologically.

>> there were just 6 cases in the whole country. She banned foreigners from entering the country soon after. In January 2020, at the first sign of the new illness, President Tsai Ing-wen of Taiwan introduced 124 measures to block the Corona SAR-2 virus spread without having to resort to the lockdowns that later become common elsewhere.

A World Economic Forum (WEF) study found that female-led countries invariably locked down earlier than their male counterparts in similar circumstances. While this had some longer-term economic implications, it certainly helped these countries to save lives, as evidenced by the significantly lower number of deaths in those countries. Covid-19 demonstrated that women make smart leaders across the world.

Closer home, an ambitious health initiative conceptualized by Kenya's First Lady Margaret Kenyatta, stands out as an example of what single-minded commitment to a social cause can achieve. In rolling out the initiative in 2013, Ms Kenyatta envisioned the Beyond Zero work as a health

Prof. Maathai was the first African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004 "for her contribution to sustainable development, democracy and peace".



Graca Machel, she led strong initiatives as an international advocate for peace, women and children's rights.

program focused on ending preventable maternal and child deaths in Kenya's remote rural areas by 2023.

The First Lady identified the problem as the lack of essential health services for expectant mothers in marginalized areas to support the safe deliveries of their babies and to reduce new HIV infections among children. Beyond Zero committed to take these ser-

vices closer to the mothers through the provision of well-equipped mobile clinics in all the 47 counties of the country.

The Beyond Zero team of medical staff worked closely with engineers from local automotive assembler Isuzu East Africa to develop a mobile clinic design that would adequately meet the program objectives. The very first Isuzu mobile clinic was donated to the program in early 2014, opening the way for every county in Kenya to receive a locally assembled mobile clinic by the end of 2016. The initiative has played a significant role in reducing child maternal mortality rates in the country, and Ms Kenyatta has been recognized by various international organizations for successfully driving the Beyond Zero campaign.

There is a lot we can draw from these remarkable leaders. They inspire and empower the rest of us to become great leaders. Indeed, women must continue to be given the opportunity to play significant roles in decision making as countries continue to recover after Covid-19, to now tackle emerging socio-economic challenges.

The value that women bring to the table can no longer be ignored. Stereotypical female qualities such as social skills, tact, empathy, compassion, collaboration and intuitive decision making are more needed in tough times like these.

The "Women Matter 3" report by McKinsey shows that such leadership behaviours more frequently adopted by women are critical to navigate through crisis safely and perform well in a post-crisis world. There is no better time to tap these strengths of women in leadership to inspire optimism for the future.

Rita Kavashe is the Managing Director of Isuzu East Africa. She is regarded as a thought leader in the African Women CEOs Forum. ■



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