

The
C  **ourier**

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The magazine of Africa - Caribbean - Pacific & European Union cooperation and relations

REPORT

Nigeria

An emerging country
in waiting

DISCOVERING EUROPE

Iceland

Land of fire and ice

DOSSIER

ACP Tourism

Barometer set fair

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Cover

"Welcome statues", Lagos Island, by the sculptor Olubodun Shodeinde representing three traditional chiefs. The sculpture gives three pieces of advice to visitors to Lagos island; "Don't be slow, don't be stupid, don't let go of what's yours."

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The Courier: The End

As announced previously, this latest 24th edition of *the Courier* is the final issue to be published. The ACP Secretariat, which was behind this project, and the European Commission, which financed it, are now at a point where they are reconsidering their communications policies. The team of *the Courier* would like to thank its readers, both of the printed magazine and its online edition, for their vote of confidence and great support to the project. Opinion polls have shown that the vast majority have appreciated the magazine's objectivity, despite the knowledge that the publication was financed by institutional bodies.



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A Farewell to Robert Iroga

The team at *the Courier* would also like to take this opportunity to thank Robert Iroga, a member of the Editorial Board of *the Courier* in his role as spokesperson of the ACP Group. Robert closely followed the project in its final preparatory phase and during its subsequent evolution, and has helped the editorial staff to get to know a little better

the extraordinary region that is his native Pacific. Now he is returning to the Solomon Islands, and we wish him all the best in his new ventures.



Nollywood world. Nigeria's vibrant entertainment industry
 - top left / Movie star Femi Adebayo interviewing a contestant in the Miss Global Nigeria pageant
 - top right / Vicki, dancer hip hop, choreographer

- centre / Oshadipe Twins (right to left: Kenny and Taiwo Oshadipe), singers, performers, video filmmakers
 - bottom left / Whitney Wonder, an 8-year-old pop star
 - bottom right / Koffi, movie and music star, comedian

The index finger and the road ahead



Almost four years have passed since the launch of the new edition of *the Courier*. We made it clear at that time that the aim was to bring the magazine up to date with the changes that had taken place during the three years since publication was suspended. This time period saw above all the development of the Internet, and we quoted the French philosopher Alain Finkielkraut, who described this medium as the most intricate mixture of truth and lies.

Since then, the Internet has continued, along with other communications media such as Twitter, digital notepads, geolocalization and many more, to invade every corner of private and public life. But even more than this, the world has undergone fundamental changes. The unipolarization under the banner of western liberalism, too readily proclaimed after the fall of the Berlin Wall, was quickly overtaken by a contrasting multipolarization, with the breakthrough of emerging countries. This multipolarization goes in four directions. A reconquest of these countries' domestic markets, the appropriation of the technologies of Western countries and a simultaneous move to become these countries' factories, penetration into the European and North American markets, and finally the establishment of a dominant role on the African continent.

China, for example, managed to secure a Pyrrhic victory over its competitors in almost the whole of Africa. Brazil, too, is a major player there, as well as South Africa, of course. Even medium-size Asian and Latin American powers are trumping America, Europe and Japan on the continent.

The second major change in recent years has been the economic and financial storm which broke in 2008 and which continues to hit hard in the United States and in Europe. This crisis inspired a financial commentator from the French-speaking Belgian radio and TV channel, RTBF, to declare: "We have long imposed austerity measures on poor countries, and now we have to undergo them too." The first developed nation to have suffered heavily as a result of this was Iceland, the first nation not a member of the EU to be profiled in the *Discover a European Region* feature. The country is of course a candidate for accession to the Union.

Change has also been there for all to see in Africa, which has so far withstood the worldwide financial crisis rather well, thanks to solid foundations. The country that is the object of the major report of this latest 24th edition of *the Courier*, Nigeria, is indeed symbolic of the whole. Despite its problems, above all those of social inequality, the lights are green as regards its macroeconomic results. Even if the country's relative economic boom is based on oil, there are many other sectors which promise much, such as the film and entertainment industry and the development of infrastructure. As this edition went to press, the country was getting ready to launch into space its second and third satellites. At the same time elsewhere, the news came out that South Africa could construct the largest radio telescope in the world. This issue of *the Courier* discusses this, as it does the classification of Africa as a success story by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), which points out too that the Pacific is also positioning itself in this sector, thanks to European aid, and that the Caribbean is holding its own.

Any geopolitical analysis must also mention that there has been a clear spread of the formal structures of democracy on the African continent, and a significant decline in armed conflicts. It is important too to bear in mind the "Arab spring" in terms of these countries' future political relations both with sub-Saharan Africa and with Europe.

Within the European Union, links have been forged between development policy and the new European External Action Service (EEAS). At this moment when the ACP, pre-empting important changes in its cooperation with the EU, has started to discuss this subject, there can be no doubt that the two partners need to redefine policy as regards communicating about their relations. And *the Courier*, which is now publishing its final edition, would like to thank the readers that have kept us company, and hopes that it has served as a road sign pointing out where something is happening, while at the same time making sure that readers focused on the road itself and not our index finger.

Hegel Goutier
Editor in chief



Jacques Delors © Reporters

Jacques Delors, a pragmatic visionary

Hegel Goutier

Without any doubt, Jacques Delors made a profound impact on the strengthening of the European Union during his three mandates as President of the European Commission, from 1985 to 1994. Relations between the EU and the ACP were also reconfigured during his presidency through the revision of the Lomé Convention in 1995, giving a greater political dimension to the partnership.

Compromise and willpower

When Jacques Delors became head of the European Commission in 1985, the post was one for a very high-level international official, but when he left it, the President of the Commission was considered the equivalent of a head of state. It could be said that he received a chair and transformed it into a throne. His great assets were an ability to listen to others and negotiate agreements but without sacrificing his own course of action. In his role as the French minister for the Economy and Finance

before his appointment at the Commission, he forged the difficult compromise of the 'British rebate', a reduction of the UK contribution to European Community finances.

From the outset of his tenure as head of the Commission on 6 January 1985, his qualities were all displayed in finding an agreement on the budget of the then European Economic Community (EEC). In reaching an agreement, he visited in turn all of the heads of state in the Community to discuss this matter and other projects. Showing both great determination and a spirit of compromise, he finally managed to get the members of the Council to agree to his proposals. In the process, the Council endorsed the 'Delors Report' on the creation by 1992 of the internal market of the free circulation of goods, services, capital and people. The Single European Act, adopted in 1986, that pulled together the different treaties governing the community and revised the role of community institutions, included arrangements for the establishment of the internal market. The final goal was attained with the adoption in 1992 of the Treaty on European Union, better known as the

"Maastricht Treaty", and the coming into force in 1995 of the Schengen Convention on the free circulation of persons between the signatory countries.

A personal anecdote... At the end of the 1990s, following a press briefing by President Delors on the concept of free circulation of persons, I asked him whether the same freedom would be guaranteed to legal immigrants in countries of the Union. He responded: "Sir, I make a commitment before you and all your journalist colleagues that I shall fight to the bitter end for that to be the case." A year later, I interviewed him on another issue, and without any prompting he remarked: "Sir, I have not forgotten the commitment that I made on the free circulation of legalised immigrants". His word was his deed.

Consistency and his balanced outlook on the human being, society and politics, define him. These characteristics are reflected in both his actions and published writings. At the launch his book, 'Memoirs', he commented on his refusal to be a candidate in the French Presidential elections of 2005, despite being the most popular prospective candi-

date in the opinion polls. "The disappointments of tomorrow would be worse than the regrets of today", he said. Today Jacques Delors is still one of the most influential voices on the future of Europe, and with very good reason.



Sir Shridath Ramphal © Reporters

An architect of the ACP

Profile of Sir Shridath Ramphal

Sir Shridath Ramphal is one of the architects of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group. From 1975-1990, he was Secretary General of the Commonwealth. He continues to work on environmental, governmental and other developmental challenges and is a fervent advocate of Caribbean integration.

Debra Percival

Considered to be the Caribbean's leading former statesperson, his career extends across continents. He returned to his native, then British Guiana, in 1953 after completing legal training in the United Kingdom. In 1965, he was invited by Forbes Burnham, the Prime Minister, to become Attorney General and drafted the new constitution of Guyana, as the nation was known on gaining independence in 1966. Awarded a knighthood in 1970, two years later he was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs and was instrumental in shaping a non-aligned policy for the country. He is revered for his skilful diplomacy in assembling 46 African, Caribbean and Pacific states to embark on negotiations on a wide-ranging aid and trade agreement with the former European Economic Community (EEC) of nine countries. Individual ACP states signed the Georgetown Agreement in Guyana in 1975 to form the ACP Group and subsequently sealed the accord with the EU known as the Lomé I Convention (1975-1980).

Strong ACP bonds

Sir Shridath explained that negotiations on Lomé I were the first occasion where countries of the South had negotiated a comprehensive and innovative regime of economic relations with the developed world. It included special trade preferences - including sugar, bananas and rice - for ACP states. "It was a new salutary experience for Europe; it was a new and reassuring experience for the ACP States," said the former foreign minister who was a key ACP negotiator in Lomé I talks. In a recent interview with *the Courier* at the beginning of 2011, Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, Guyana's incumbent foreign minister, said that Sir Shridath had made her very conscious of the enduring strong bonds between ACP states. "The original aim of the Georgetown Agreement was always to make its remit broader than just relations with Europe," she told us. Recent geopolitical shifts and the current uncertainty hanging over future relations between the ACP and EU after the expiry of the Cotonou Convention (2008-2013) have widened the ACP's outlook. Pursuing the vision of Sir Shridath and the architects of the ACP, the group is currently seeking to

forge partnerships with other nations and entities including China, Brazil and India.

However, the lack of political will among Caribbean leaders to advance integration within their own region preoccupies Sir Shridath. Referring to a new study of the Institute of International Relations of the University of West Indies, he stressed to an audience in Jamaica in July 2011 that Caribbean issues required regional solutions. "Climate change, transnational crime, the decline of regional industries, food security, governance challenges, international diplomacy and so on are problems which can only be effectively addressed by co-ordinated regional responses," read the study.

On a global front, Sir Shridath continues to work on weighty development issues, such as international migration, through the Ramphal Centre, the London-based intellectual hub on policy issues that he set up in 2008. It provides analysis and aims to generate ideas to assist Member States of the 54 Commonwealth countries and other nations with their policy-making.

Found out more about the Ramphal Centre:
www.ramphalcentre.org



United Kingdom overhauls its development spending

Interview with Stephen O'Brien, the UK's Parliamentary Under-Secretary for International Development

Stephen O'Brien has been the United Kingdom's Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development since May 2011. He has direct responsibility for policy with Europe in the Department of International Development (DFID) headed by Secretary of State for International Development, Andrew Mitchell. A vigorous global campaigner against malaria, he previously held posts in the former Conservative opposition's shadow cabinet. In an interview with *the Courier*, he gives his backing for the changes voiced by EU Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs for more high-impact and value-for-money EU aid spending. These are targets that the UK is already pursuing in its bi-lateral development aid programmes.

Debra Percival

In brief, what are the UK's current overseas development priorities?

We are transforming our aid budget to ensure maximum impact on the ground and full accountability to British taxpayers that their money is well-spent and

focusing our efforts on a smaller number of countries and agencies to ensure that British aid makes an even bigger impact. This will include detailed plans and tough safeguards to ensure we can track where the money has been spent and be sure it is making a difference. We will also change the way we give aid, where money is only handed over if results have actually been achieved. These reforms will get 11 million kids into school, vaccinate more children against preventable diseases and stop 250,000 newborn babies dying needlessly.

Are you on target to reach the proportion of GNI to development by 2015?

Britain has kept its promise to the worlds poor. Last year's spending review set out how we will meet our pledge to spend 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income on aid from 2013. We are the first G8 country to set out how we will meet this target.

The UK has recently revised its development policy, stopping bi-lateral programmes for several developing countries and also to some inter-governmental bodies - Why?

Our aid reviews have made our work more focussed and effective, setting out how our aid can be best directed towards the poorest. Britain will end bilateral programmes in countries such as China, Vietnam and Serbia, which are now no longer in need of British aid. We will shift our bilateral support to countries where British taxpayers' money can have the most positive impact for poor people. Our bilateral focus will be 27 of the poorest countries, which between them account for three out of four global deaths during pregnancy and nearly three out of four deaths from malaria worldwide. Nearly two-thirds of programmes will be in conflict and fragile countries, many of which are furthest from reaching internationally agreed poverty targets.

We have also reviewed our support to major multilateral aid agencies, stopping funding to four agencies which were rated as providing poor value for money and increasing support for the most effective agencies. All multilateral agencies – including the EU – are expected to prove that their aid programmes are delivering real value for money

There's a lot of talk in development circles about using innovative aid instruments. Has the British government introduced any such methods?

We have pioneered new and innovative ways to get more aid and investment into the poorest countries. For example, the International Finance Facility for Immunisation has already prevented 1.4 million deaths from yellow fever, polio and measles, while the UK-backed Private Infrastructure Development Group has helped secure \$US14.5bn of private investment in telecoms, energy and transport infrastructure to serve nearly 100 million people in the poorer developing countries. But this cannot replace our official aid budget. A recent G8 report showed that there is still a \$US19bn shortfall in the eight richest nation's aid pledges.

However, this cannot replace our official aid budget. A recent G8 report showed that there is still a \$US19bn shortfall in the eight richest nation's aid pledges.

It is vital that other European nations live up to their commitments as the UK has done. My fellow Ministers and I will continue to press EU leaders at the European Council to make good their pledges and at least maintain the proportion of aid in the next long term EU budget. This is the

It is vital that EU aid is more transparent, results-focussed and that it continues to target the most off-track poverty goals, not least in fragile states

only way to achieve the internationally agreed targets to reduce global poverty.

At the same time, in the Horn of Africa we are seeing the most catastrophic situation in a generation. Britain is leading the way. We have provided over £90M (€102M) of aid which will help over two million people in the region, providing them with much needed food, drinking water and shelter.

Commissioner Piebalgs is expected to put two sets of proposals on the table in autumn 2011 on changes to budget support programmes¹ and development policy in general², to be debated by EU Ministers. What sort of recommendations would you like to see?

It is the way budget support is delivered which is important. When providing budget support, the EU must ensure it has rigorous political, economic and financial risk assessments for each country to ensure that aid reaches its intended recipients.

The EU's aid must be more firmly focussed at helping the poorest escape from poverty. At the same time - as the second largest aid donor in the world - it should also use its muscle to drive up economic growth and harness the private sector in developing countries which will ultimately pull countries out of poverty. It is vital that EU aid is more transparent, results-focussed and that it continues to target the most off-track poverty goals, not least in fragile states.

Do you feel that the introduction of the European External Action Service (EEAS) will change the shape of EU development policies?

The External Action Service has the chance to improve the way the EU delivers aid, greatly improving coordination across the EU's foreign and development policies, and minimising wasteful duplication. The EU's Development Commissioner, Andris Piebalgs will continue to have clear financial responsibility for aid spending and is working closely with the EEAS to ensure a more joined up approach. We are working with the Development Commissioner and the EEAS closely to maximise the benefits they deliver by better linking up EU policies on trade, conflict, climate change and humanitarian support to help the poorest.

Find out more about the UK's development policies: www.dfid.gov.uk/changinglives.

¹To view the public consultation carried out on budget support: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/public-consultations/5221_en.htm

²To view the public consultation on development policy: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/public-consultations/5241_en.htm



Stephen O'Brien (right) listens to Gomun Faustina now a refugee in Liberia after fleeing fighting in Ivory Coast
© Robert Stansfield/DFID



Liberia is doing well – on the outside

Liberians go to the polls late 2011. The incumbent, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, is running for a second term and she will very likely be re-elected. So where was Liberia when she took office five years ago - and how far has it come?



Liberia's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf © Reporters

Bram Posthumus *

‘All is in place for the presidential elections,’ asserts National Election Commission chairman James Fromayan. ‘If we have them in October, we’ll be ready – if they are in November, it will be a plus. But we’re ready.’

Later this year, reigning president Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, is expected to beat her numerous challengers outright. Among the achievements of her government – and she never tires of highlighting them – is economic recovery.

Five years ago, she inherited a nation in ruins: bullet-riddled houses, broken bridges, no electricity, no safe drinking water. Her government was going to

restart the economy, create jobs, put an end to corruption and heal the nation.

Recovery

Economic recovery has gone rather well. Growth has been steady, between 5 and 10 per cent for the past five years. Admittedly, it came from virtually zero: since 1980, Liberia has only seen gross mismanagement and civil war. But the country is visibly better off now than it was when the president made her first public speech on January 16, 2006.

Take the main road through the capital city Monrovia. It is called Tubman Boulevard, named after the man who ran Liberia between 1944 and 1971 and used to be a pot-holed, unlit obstacle course for cars and pedestrians. Today, it is a long stretch of smooth asphalt, lined with shiny new banks and offices – including that of the National Electoral Commission. Another place where recovery will soon be visible is the Freeport of Monrovia. Its quay is collapsing from years of neglect and port manager Brian Fuggle wants to rebuild it urgently. ‘Parts of the quay are inaccessible for lorries because it is too dangerous. We will start demolishing it in October and hopefully the project will be complete in April 2013.’

Resources

The recovery is built around the export of natural resources: rubber, iron ore and timber. Rubber still is – by far – Liberia’s largest foreign currency earner

We’re concentrating too much energy on the physical reconstruction; we don’t pay enough attention to the minds and the souls

but iron ore could reclaim that spot if and when exportation resumes, using the rehabilitated railway from the mines in the north to the port of Buchanan.

Minds and souls

The hardest work, though, is found outside the capital Monrovia, especially in the Southeast of the country. This is the region that voted against Johnson-Sirleaf the first time around and will do exactly the same this year. The counties of Grand Gedeh, River Cess and Maryland feel left out in the reconstruction boom. Political resentment against Monrovia is palpable. True, construction work has begun on roads and bridges, banks have opened

branches, there is even a brand new university in Maryland’s capital Harper.

Former Truth and Reconciliation Chairman Jerome Verdier has this to say: ‘We’re concentrating too much energy on the physical reconstruction; we don’t pay enough attention to the minds and the souls.’ If one goes back to the Tubman Boulevard in Monrovia it becomes clear what he means. Those shiny new office blocks have replaced the old popular residential areas. The people have been moved far away, to outlying suburbs.

They have gone, quietly, so far. But this can change very quickly. Verdier says he is worried about the swiftness with which people resort to violence when there are situations of conflict. A quick survey of recent news appears to bear him out: violent riots at a rubber plantation kill one person, workers threaten to violently disrupt the first iron ore transport out of the country, numerous smaller disputes that end in fighting. While economically successful, the Johnson-Sirleaf administration has many challenges ahead. Perhaps these will become priorities if re-elected.

*Freelance journalist

Sustainable timber exploitation

Probably the most contentious export product has been timber. Liberia is home to almost half of all of West Africa’s rainforest but during the calamitous reign of former president Charles Taylor, timber exploitation was rapacious. Now, Liberia has entered into a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the European Union. This is aimed at exporting only sustainably harvested timber. A very upbeat Forestry Development Authority managing director Moses Wogbeh was at the ceremony marking the signing of the VPA, in May. ‘The VPA will put an end to illegal logging and bring transparency and accountability into the system,’ he said, adding that the new way of forest exploitation would also benefit the people actually living there. As a matter of fact, the people living there have other ideas. They bring down the trees to start farms and rubber plantations...



Remains of war in Harper, South East Liberia © Martin Waalboer

Pan-African University on track

Established by the African Union, with the support of the European Union, the Pan-African University (PAU) is set to open its doors in autumn 2011, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Jean Ping, announced on 30 June at the opening of the 17th Summit of the African Union in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. The first three campuses, out of an eventual five, will be opened.

The aim of the PAU is to enable African students to be fully competitive on an international level. Each of the five campuses – located in Africa's five main regions – will focus their teaching on one of the five thematic areas considered to be essential to Africa's development: Space Sciences (Southern Africa, campus to be confirmed), Water and Energy Sciences (including climate change) (North Africa, campus to be confirmed), Basic Sciences, Technology and Innovation (East Africa, Kenya), Earth and Life Sciences (including health and agriculture) (West Africa, Nigeria) and lastly, Governance, Humanities and Social Sciences (Central Africa, Cameroon).

Each institute will be linked to a network of educational centres already established throughout the continent and will focus on the same thematic areas. The latest details regarding the first three campuses (Kenya, Cameroon and Nigeria) were finalised by African ministers for education, who met on 13 May 2011 in Nairobi, Kenya, under the aegis of the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF).

Mutual recognition

The participating institutions must meet high-quality criteria. These include: expertise in the key thematic areas, participation in international partnerships and joint-research projects, high standards for selecting students for admission, a strong management system and adequate infrastructure and availability of staff. Furthermore, the Arusha Convention – adopted in 1981 and revised in 2002 – guarantees the mutual recognition of diplomas and other higher-education qualifications.

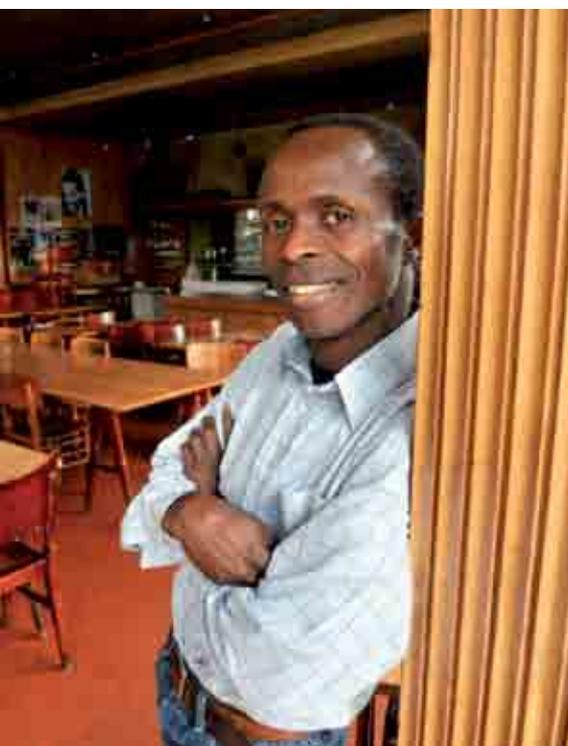
The EU supports initiatives like the PAU within the framework of its partnership with the African Union on migration, mobility and employment. Education has a key role in this respect. The European Commission supports mobility of students and twinning agreements between higher education establishments in Europe and Africa through several programmes, including Erasmus Mundus and Edulink. **M.M.B.**



Illustration Gregorie Desmons

Ken Ndiaye and *L'Horloge du Sud*, Brussels

Putting a swing into the diaspora



Ken Ndiaye © B. Maindiaux

Ken Ndiaye is the one of the best known faces of the African diaspora, and above all a link between this community and others from all corners of the earth in the cosmopolitan city of Brussels. Trained as a ballet dancer at the Mudra de Béjart dance school in Dakar, Senegal, he is also a musician and anthropologist. In 1997 he opened, along with Belgian associate Paul Jamouille, *L'Horloge du Sud* (the Clock of the South), a unique venue

which combines a restaurant, café théâtre, meeting centre and artists' workshop in Brussels.

My mourning is happier than your birthday

This modestly decorated place is the one of those rare venues. A Prime Minister can be holding a meeting next door to that of a small association of unemployed immigrants. A group of German EU civil servants celebrating a birthday in a very official manner could find themselves sharing a table and mixing with a Congolese family who are joyfully marking the end of a period of mourning.

The venue has a warm ambiance, but this alone doesn't explain why both Bart de Wever's Flemish nationalist N-VA party has organised receptions there. The French-speaking Green party, Ecolo, also holds its meetings there. A deputy mayor from Brussels City Hall makes regular visits and immigrants and likewise, small local neighbourhood associations of all nationalities. *L'Horloge du Sud's* principle is that entrance is never restricted, not even when an event hosted by the Prime Minister is going on at the same time as a meeting of Bangladeshi residents or of a Kivu women's association [*Ed*: Kivu is region in the Democratic Republic of the Congo]. "The Horloge du Sud is open by definition," says Ken Ndiaye, the man behind the venue's recipe of success.

The outset: saving Brussels from a double split

At the end of the 1980s, in town planning terms Brussels underwent a rupture between the so-called 'European'

neighbourhoods of the city and those close to the Ixelles commune [*Ed*: one of the city's administrative areas] which has a large African community and which became depopulated owing to property speculation. "Trying to do something to set up a meeting point for these two worlds was my first concern. The second was to find a place for African culture where young people could show the work they were doing and provide a gathering point for various community associations", Ndiaye explains.

Artists like Denise Blue and Pitcho found a window for their work at the Horloge du Sud. Others such as Pierre Van Dormael and the kora player Soriba Kouyaté, Marlène Dorcéna, and Thione Seck, king of Senegalese rumba, have all put on concerts there, just because they wanted to.

Ken Ndiaye also works with the Royal Museum for Central Africa as an expert and an adviser. This began when he set up, along with a small group of Africans, a group to reflect on the role of the institution, with its wealth of objects from Africa's heritage. He is currently working there on two projects with a European dimension, respectively, the role of ethnographic museums in the world today and their links with the diaspora.

Asked about his modesty and disciplined attitude to work, Ken Ndiaye smiled: "I simply do what I want to do. I am first and foremost an enthusiast, the number one fan of the artists that come to my place. Unlike other venues that I respect it's great that the public doesn't come here for African folklore. I am happy that this is the place where a Cameroonian can meet a Finn". **H.G.**

Viewpoint

By the editorial committee “Africa-EU partnership”

A Sound Framework for African Agriculture

In terms of employment and economic output, agriculture is the most important sector for Africa, yet its potential is largely under-utilised. The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) is helping to achieve agriculture-led development across the continent.

As a predominantly agrarian continent, Africa’s economy is heavily dependent on its agricultural production. Relieving hunger and achieving the Millennium Development Goals necessarily involves targeted efforts in this field.

“Much more can be done,” says Willem Olthof, Head of Sector in charge of agriculture, food security and rural development at the Commission’s DG Development and Cooperation. He explains that there is good potential for agriculture in much of Africa and that benefits could be achieved by increasing sustainable production and productivity. Investments in agriculture have proven effective in reducing poverty and hunger and in creating additional and more rewarding jobs.

CAADP is a crucial tool in this regard. Acknowledging the huge potential of the sector, it focuses on improving policy formulation and implementation, stepping up investments as well as improving transparency and accountability.

“One of the key values of CAADP is that it puts a very high premium on knowledge, knowledge systems and evidence-based analysis for the planning, policy formulation, implementation and evaluation of programmes,” stresses Martin Bwalya, Head of CAADP.

Concrete targets have been set to achieve tangible progress: at the Maputo summit in 2003 when the programme was launched, African leaders pledged to aim for a 6 % agricultural growth rate per annum, and to devote 10 % of their resources to agriculture and rural development.

The programme has four ‘pillars’ corresponding to the different thematic priorities – sustainable land management, improved market access, increased food supply to combat hunger as well as more agricultural research and better technology dissemination.

How can the EU act as an effective partner?

While the programme is an entirely African-led and African-owned initiative, it is at the heart of development efforts undertaken in the framework of the joint Africa-EU strategy.

Recognising CAADP as a very useful instrument for development cooperation with Africa on agriculture, the European Commission provides financial support to it in the form of several projects and programmes.

One of them is a support programme for African farmers organisations. The programme strengthens the institutional capacity of these organisations and helps them to get their say in agricultural development policy and programmes.

“We are working with four regional platforms of farmer organisations,” Mr Olthof explains. “Through that initiative, we have also funded the establishment of the Pan-African Farmers Forum, set up to strengthen their role as partners in dialogue on policy.”

The EU is also active in support of land policy and land management (CAADP Pillar 1) and supports Africa’s agricultural research agenda (pillar 4), in addition to support at the regional and national levels. Funding instruments

used are the Food Security Thematic Programme (FSTP), the Food Facility and the European Development Fund.

A number of different African institutions are involved in CAADP, including the African Union Commission, the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency (NPCA) as well as the regional economic communities. A trust fund was set up to help build the capacity of these institutions. It receives financial support from the USA and the EU as well as a number of EU member states. The Commission has contributed € 5 million so far.

Engaging with the private sector

Currently, the level of private sector financing in agriculture remains very low. Looking ahead, Mr Bwalya notes that this is a challenge to be mastered in the years to come in order to achieve better long-term results: “Harnessing private sector financing is an important means of achieving sustainable financing for the sector,” he says.

Progress in this field should be brought about by increasing accountability to key stakeholders and through public-private partnerships. Microfinance institutions will also play an important role in this context as a means of channelling private funding into agricultural activities.

For more about Africa-EU Partnership: www.africa-eu-partnership.org

The poorest nations are forgotten by the MDGs

The report presented on 7 July 2011 by the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-Moon, on the state of progress of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) shows uneven improvement. While it highlights success in many areas, such as access to treatment to combat HIV/AIDS, it also states that the most vulnerable in society still do not have access to education or health care.

There remains a lot to be done to achieve all the objectives – of which there are eight – established by the Member States of the United Nations and to be fully achieved by 2015, with the aim of reducing poverty in the world. The Rio +20 Conference on Sustainable Development, which will take place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012, will provide a decisive opportunity to ensure that promises made become promises kept, emphasised Ban Ki-Moon.

However, the report highlights that between now and 2015 the global poverty rate is expected to fall below 15%, but still remains far from the 23% target. Significant progress has been made in education in countries which are considered to be the poorest on the planet. Thus, in Burundi, Madagascar, Rwanda, Togo, and even in Tanzania, the target of primary education for all children has been met or is on the point of being met. The number of children under five dying has also decreased, from 12.4 million in 1990 to 8.1 million in 2009. The same

can be observed for the global mortality rate linked to malaria. Lastly, 1.1 billion people living in urban areas and 723 million living in rural areas had access to an improved source of drinking water in the period 1990–2008.

It brings to light a shortcoming: the world's poorest children continue to be the most neglected when it comes to health and nutrition. Furthermore, the report points out that the progress on sanitation is not usually felt by those living in extreme poverty or in rural areas. **M.M.B.**

Birth of the 54th African nation

On 9 July 2011, South Sudan officially became Africa's 54th nation. An independence won after decades of struggle with the successive regimes in Khartoum, capital of the former unified Sudan, and one recognized by all members of the international community, first and foremost the European Union.

EU High Representative Catherine Ashton, who was present at the independence celebrations on 9 July in Juba, capital of the new nation, declared: “We will continue to support a peaceful transition in South Sudan and we express the hope that South Sudan's leaders will take full advantage of the unique opportunity they have before them. The EU has committed itself in the long term to maintaining peace and stability in the two Sudans and calls upon them to live together in peace as two viable states after 9 July.”

For his part, Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs urged the state to give itself a good springboard from which to fight corruption, build up governance and state structures and generate income for itself and for its people. “The EU can engage with South Sudan in a broad and

honest dialogue on these issues. As partners, we should be brave enough to tell each other the truth – even if the truth can sometimes be difficult to hear. In any event, the people of South Sudan can count on the EU to be a reliable partner,” he said.

Since 2005, the EU has granted more than €650M in development aid plus, since 2003, €776M in humanitarian aid. In May, EU foreign ministers agreed to allocate South Sudan an additional €200M to support a development plan for 2011–2013 and to finance projects in the fields of education, health, agriculture, food security and democratic governance. **M.M.B.**

Info: For further information on South Sudan read the report in issue 22 of *The Courier*, available online at www.acp-eucourier.info



A delegate shows his euphoria, as the flag of the Republic of South Sudan is raised to mark the admission to the 193rd Member State to the community of nations in New York on July 14, 2011 © Reporters / Abaca

South Africa vies to site world's largest radio telescope

The winning in 2012 of the bid to site the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) – the most powerful radio telescope in the world would bring a plethora of benefits to South Africa and the African continent, says South Africa's Project Director for SKA, Dr. Bernie Fanaroff.

Debra Percival

South Africa was short-listed to site this iconic telescope in 2006 by the SKA Steering Committee. Eight other Africa nations; Namibia, Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique and Zambia are partnering the country's bid. They are in competition with just one other bidder, Australia twinned with New Zealand.

Once the site has been chosen by major project's principal funders and SKA's Science and Engineering Committee, construction is expected to start in 2016 under the auspices of a profit office located at the Jodrell Centre for Astrophysics in Manchester, the United Kingdom. The telescope is expected to become operational by 2024.

One hundred times more sensitive than any other telescope, SKA will enable astronomers to locate over a billion new galaxies. Its main objective is to map the distribution of hydrogen in the Universe, which will help explain the expansion of the Universe after the big bang and the nature of the mysterious dark energy. The project was originally mounted by a group of leading astronomers in 2002. The two short-listed lead countries are currently finalising their reports for mid-October 2011 on the strengths of respective bids.

South Africa has near perfect site conditions in the Karoo region in Northern Cape Province, says Dr. Fanaroff, who was recently in Brussels. The chosen

location is a non-seismic zone which is not too densely inhabited and has very little light pollution. For astronomy, the area has very rich skies. South Africa can also provide qualified labour and inexpensive services. The suggested site is also near enough to Cape Town for materials to be shipped in with the vision of a "technology cluster" growing around the city.

An iconic project

The major component of the SKA telescope will be an extensive array of approximately 3,000 antennas. Half of these will be concentrated in a 5 km diameter central region, and the rest distributed out to 3,000 km from this central concentration. The combined collecting area of all these antennae will add up to one square kilometre, or one million square metres. Dr. Fanaroff says the project gives the opportunity for the whole of the African continent to gain a reputation for scientific development and move a step away the unsustainable future of investment in raw materials which has resulted in South Africa's – and Africa's – marginalisation in the world economy. He puts the total estimated cost of construction of between €1.5 and 2bn and running costs at €150M a year, hence the need to get as many partners on board

The sky's the limit for the potential development benefits for South Africa

as possible in the consortium of countries that will build the telescope. Daan du Toit, Minister Counsellor for Science and Technology at the South African Mission to the European Union says that the African Union gave backing to the project at the 15th session of the assembly of heads of state and government in July 2010.



Dr. Bernie Fanaroff © TechCentral



Artist's impression of SKA
© SPDO/TDP/DRAO/Swinburne Astronomy Productions

The project gives the opportunity for the whole of the African continent to gain a reputation for scientific development and move a step away from an unsustainable future in raw materials

The sky's the limit for the potential development benefits for South Africa; construction projects, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) development and human capital investment, even new solar energy projects to power the SKA. The winning of the bid would also be a huge psychological boost for the country, similar to that experienced in hosting the football World Cup in 2010. Dr Fanaroff anticipates that the project will become a development laboratory for communication infrastructures since the rate at which vast quantities of data will be transferred to the supercomputer will far exceed the current data rate for internet traffic transfer via the internet.

SKA also has a precursor in MeerKAT. Construction is already underway to build one of the world's largest and most powerful telescopes in South Africa near Carnarvon in Northern Cape Province. Its 64 dishes – seven of which already been put in place – will form the core of the larger SKA array and will be fully operational by the end of 2016. Astronomers from the world over have already subscribed for time on MeerKAT to pursue individual research projects.

Scientific generation

Both the MeerKAT and anticipated SKA projects will also create a whole generation of scientists. Already launched in 2005, the SKA Human Capital Development Programme has awarded 293 bursaries, grants and fellowships to all levels of students. Dr. Fanaroff also emphasises that such skills are transferable. Physics graduates, for example, often go on to create very successful business enterprises. South Africa's Department of Science and Technology and the National Research Foundation have also created SKA research chairs for professors from the United Kingdom, South Africa, Italy

and Canada. Several African nations; Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique Namibia and Zambia have all set up undergraduate courses in astronomy and the University of Mauritius is launching an MSc programme.

The development of SKA would also fill a gap in the global Very Long Baseline Interferometry Network (VLBI) network which will boost engineering and science skills throughout the African continent involving the conversion of 30-metre in diameter dishes in many African countries into radio telescopes. The construction of terrestrial and marine optical fibre networks throughout Africa has rendered these obsolete. There are currently 26 ground dishes spread out over the continent which can be commissioned, explains Dr. Fanaroff. Governments are currently talking to telecommunications operators to gain access to the redundant dishes. The VLBI programme will kick off with the conversion of a *Vodafone* 32-metre satellite communications antenna at Kuntunse, Ghana.

African body plays a leading role in capacity-building

Established in 1991, the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), a partnership between African governments and the international donor community, is enabling Africa to build its own capacity, says Executive Secretary, Frannie Leautier. She was recently in Brussels to explain more about ACBF's aims and activities to European Union (EU) institutions. The body has, to date, funded 246 programmes in 44 Sub-Saharan African nations at both national and regional levels to the tune of \$US400M.

Many donor agencies, including the European Union (EU), provide capacity-building support to Sub-Saharan Africa, notably within budget support programmes. This is targeted at building professional skills within administrations and other institutions. They frequently involve the participation of European expertise.

ACBF's aim, says Frannie Lautier, is to be the leading African institution in building sustainable human and institutional capacity. It runs a range of programmes to improve public sector economic policy

management, financial management and accountability; strengthen national parliaments and parliamentary institutions; develop national statistical systems; and also increase professional skills in the private sector and civil society. The body is largely funded by the African Development Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and The World Bank. ACBF has 48 member countries, including Sub-Saharan African nations, some EU and other developed nations. **D.P.**

Find out more on www.acbf-pact.org

EU Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps piloted

The pilot phase to set up a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps was launched in Budapest, Hungary on 17 June. The vision of an EU voluntary corps is set out in the EU's Treaty of Lisbon which came into force in 2009.

After extensive consultation with stakeholders on the design of the future corps, EU officials say that this test phase will build on existing volunteering schemes across EU member states. A total of 90 volunteers will receive training and will finally be deployed by the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) who have been selected to manage the pilots. An allocation of €1M was made in 2011 to enable the preparatory phase to get off the ground.

Commissioner Georgieva will draft a legislative proposal on the design of the fully-fledged corps in the first few months of 2012

The first project will be mounted by Save the Children (UK) (plus Network of Humanitarian Assistance NOHA and Bioforce France as partners, and Caritas/Czech Republic, Save the Children/Denmark and Die Johanniter/Germany as associate organisations).

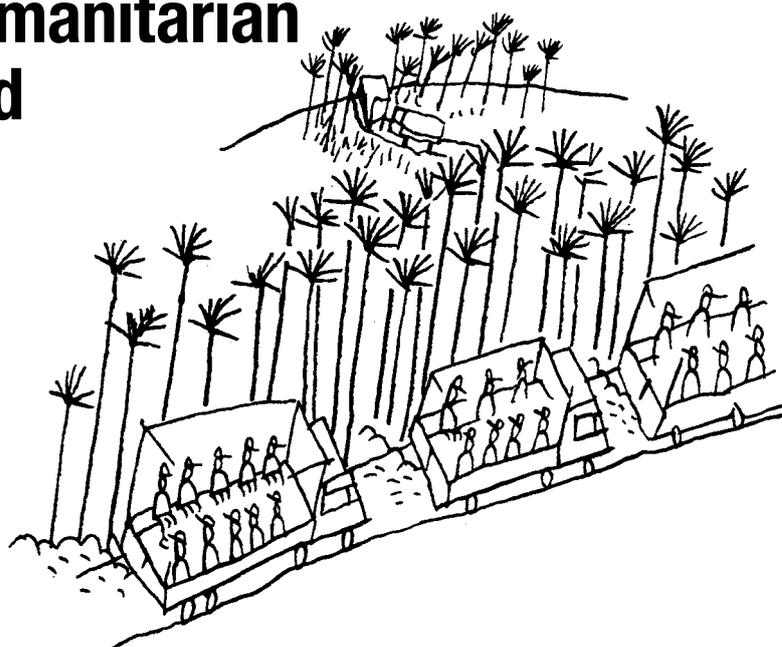


Illustration © Loïc Gaume

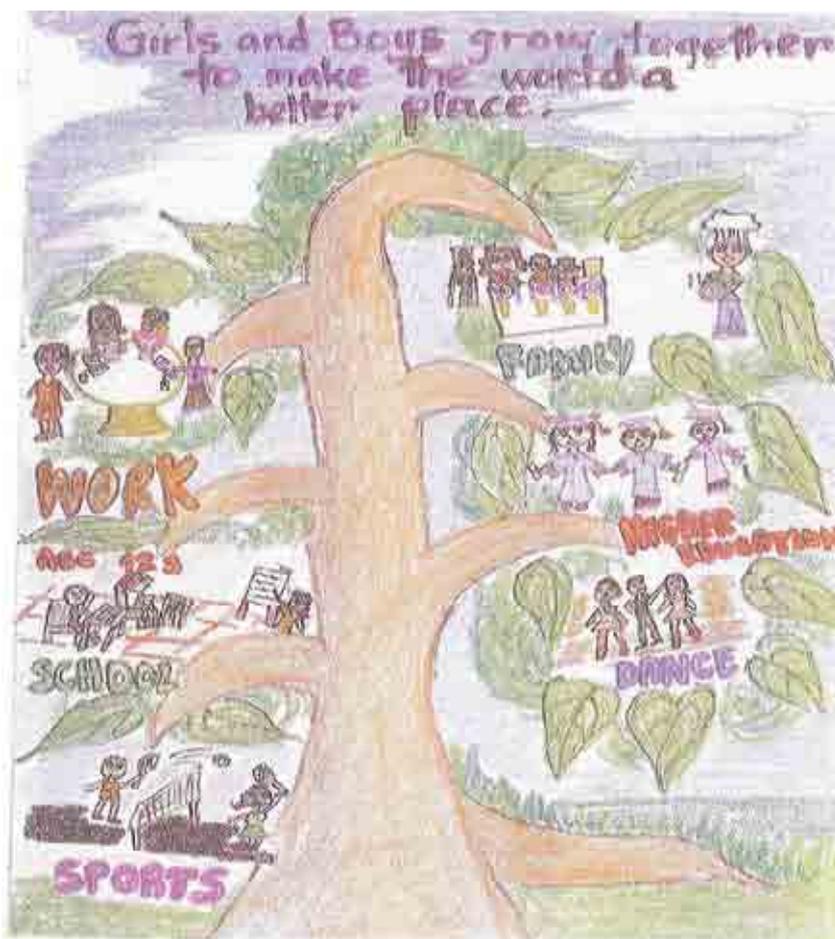
The French Red Cross (and other partners the Austrian, Bulgarian and German Red Cross organisations and the International Federation of the Red Cross, IFRC, in Switzerland) are involved in another project which will identify, recruit, train, prepare and finally deploy 21 volunteers for six months. Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO/United Kingdom – with partners VSO/The Netherlands and Pro Vobis, the national Resource Centre for Volunteering in Romania) will mount the third project. Forty volunteers will be selected for deployment to disaster preparedness and post-conflict recovery sites.

"The pilot projects will give us a clear blueprint to move forward. We have two goals first, to create an exciting opportu-

nity for Europeans to make a difference in the world, and second, to bring collective value to individuals' willingness to volunteer in the humanitarian area. I am excited that the European citizens' solidarity with the world's most vulnerable people will now have its first ambassadors – our volunteers", said Kristalina Georgieva, European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response at the launch. Commissioner Georgieva will draft a legislative proposal on the design of the fully-fledged corps in the first few months of 2012. **D.P.**

For details of the scheme: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/evhac_en.htm

ACP winners of 'Drawing a better world'



One of the winning drawings by Trinbagonian, Shalinda Ragbir © European Commission

School children from Zimbabwe, Eritrea, the Central African Republic, Mauritius and Trinidad and Tobago are among the winners of the European Commission's (EC) International Drawing Competition on Gender Equality, announced on 29 June.

Each winner will be given €1,000 to spend on computers, books or pay for school, library fees or other educational materials. The winning drawings were picked by pupils of between eight and 10 years of age at the European School in Brussels, Belgium, the same ages as the entrants.

It is the fifth year that the European Commission has organised the compe-

tion. It was open to children in countries in the seven regions: Africa (two regions), Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific, Latin America, Mediterranean, the Middle East and the European Neighbouring Countries of the EU. Over 40,000 children sent in their visions of how to make the world a fairer and more equal place. The 14 prize winners came from 13 countries.

Aristotelis Bouratsis, Director for Human and Social Development at the EC's Development and Cooperation Europaid Directorate General (Devco) said: "This drawing competition, although a simple idea, is a very successful tool in helping to bring about change in gender equality through future generations, so I am

delighted to see so many children keen to be a part of it".

The entries were judged on their success to put over the theme and ability to relate it to the entrants' respective countries, as well as the degree of originality of subject matter and artistic flair.

In Africa, this year's overall winners are: Zimbabwean Tapawa Kabaura, aged nine; Eritrean, Abigail Alem, aged 10; Nestor Bassou, aged nine from the Central African Republic and Mauritian, Fardeen Jumun, aged 10.

The winners for the Caribbean and Pacific, Shalinda Ragbir, aged 10 and Kelly Sammy aged 10, are both from Trinidad and Tobago. An exhibition of the best drawings will be mounted at the Musée des Enfants in Brussels, Belgium, 7-26 December 2011. **D.P.**

For more on the competition:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/gender/drawing-competition-2011_en.htm



"Gender Equality" Fardeen, Mauritius © European Commission
"We can be anything we want to be" Kelly, Trinidad and Tobago © EC



ACP-bound tourism buoyant

More scope for cooperation with EU in fast-growing sector

Debra Percival

Bar the occasional shock, in terms of arrivals numbers, there has been virtually uninterrupted growth in the tourism sector since the 1950s, according to the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), a specialised United Nations agency. The sector creates employment - especially in small island nations - and triggers development in other areas of the economy; construction, agriculture and telecommunications. Recognised for its potential to harness socio-economic progress, there are calls for more cooperation at an EU level, notably with Africa.

Globally, tourist arrivals rose by nearly 7 per cent in 2010 to 940 million arriv-

als, generating US\$ 919 billion (€693bn) in export earnings, says the UNWTO. The body predicts an increase of between 4-5 per cent in 2011. Confidence is high in many ACP regions. Arrivals in Sub-Saharan Africa climbed from 6.4M in 1990 to 30.7M today with 8 per cent growth recorded last year. South Africa accounted for over a quarter of the total figure of visitors to Sub-Saharan Africa, the country attracting 15 per cent more tourists in 2010 in the wake of the FIFA World Cup. Other countries that attracted many more tourists last year were: Madagascar (+21 per cent), Cape Verde (+17 per cent), Tanzania and the Seychelles (both +11 per cent last year).

Some Pacific destinations also performed strongly in 2010. In Fiji, one of the region's leading destinations arrivals moved ahead 16 per cent in 2010 compared with 2009, according to UNWTO statistics. The

Caribbean also saw 4 per cent more visitors in 2010, making up for the decline in 2009, says the UNWTO. Three destinations recorded new visitor peaks: Jamaica (+5 per cent), Cuba (+4 per cent) and the Dominican Republic (+3 per cent).

Caribbean faces competition

For the Caribbean region, the onus is now on staying ahead of the competition. At the annual Caribbean Tourism Summit held this year in Brussels in March 2011, Chairman of the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO), Ricky Skerritt, who is also Minister of Tourism of St. Kitts & Nevis, told European partners that Caribbean hotels and related businesses had to become more competitive in view of vigorous competition from nations as diverse as China, India and Dubai. “Our two strongest friends traditionally, the USA and Europe are also now more actively prospecting for visitor arrivals in the same markets as the Caribbean,” said Skerritt. The CTO’s Secretary General, Hugh Riley, suggested to *the Courier* that the EU and its Member States should explore the scope for wider cooperation, particularly in relation to the services chapter of the region’s Economic Partnership Agreement with the EU (see article on Caribbean).

The establishment of flexible and efficient tourism bodies could improve the environment for tourism-related businesses in Africa

In the past the EU has funded national and regional tourism projects in ACP countries and continues to do so. This dossier details, for example, a new regional project for the Pacific financed under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) which is designed to bolster the tourism sector. A recent EU-financed international marketing campaign (2009-2010) to promote Kenyan tourism enabled the broadcasting of television spots on CNN, BBC World and Euronews. “Both Kenya and the EU are satisfied with the outcome of these marketing campaigns that contributed to tourism recovery after the sad events following the Elections 2007. Kenya has almost recovered the numbers (tourist arrivals) recorded in 2007,” Ibrahim Laafia, Counsellor at the EU Delegation in Kenya, told *the Courier*.

The Treaty of Lisbon signed in 2007 contains a chapter on the strengthening of the EU as the foremost tourist destination of the world. EU Member States, France (number one global destination) Italy and Spain are still in the top five most visited tourist destinations worldwide but according to UNWTO figures, have been recently joined by China. To give teeth to

the Lisbon Treaty, Daniel Calleja-Crespo, Deputy Director General of the European Commission for Enterprise and Industry, believes co-operation in the sector with Africa should be explored at the EU level. “European Commission Vice-President Antonio Tajani [Ed: EU Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry] gives the highest priority to reinforcing relations between the EU and Africa which he considers to be the “continent of the future. Tourism, in particular, can play a very important role in strengthening the links between both continents,” the Deputy Director General told *the Courier*. He added: “Our task now is to work towards these goals to encourage the creation of a favourable environment to develop the undertakings in this sector, in particular SMEs, and to promote cooperation between both continents. The establishment of flexible and efficient tourism bodies could improve the environment for tourism-related businesses in Africa. I believe there are huge opportunities for cooperation that should not be missed.”



Illustration © Loïc Gaume

Indian Ocean tourism weathers global recession

The islands of Mauritius and Seychelles are extending what they have on offer but are mindful of doing it in an environmentally sustainable way.

Seychelles has managed to weather the storm of global recession and is on course for a third record year of visitors, largely due to a robust government/private sector partnership which has given the tourism sector a valuable boost, says Ralph Hissen of the Seychelles Tourism Board. Tourism is still the main pillar of the economy and the country is seeking to build on its “suite of niche activities” such as fishing tourism and its platform of events-based tourist activities. These include the ‘Carnaval International de Victoria’ and ‘SUBIOS: Seychelles Festival of the Sea’, the annual festival of the underwater photography and film to take place this year from 4-6 November. “Almost half of the country’s limited landmass has been set aside as national parks and marine reserves and this sets the tone for future development”, says Ralph Hissen.

To the South, the island of Mauritius is the 10th most popular destination for tourism on the African continent, according to World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) rankings, although figures dipped in 2009. Roselyne Hauchler of the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority says tourist arrivals numbered 871,356 in 2009, accounting for 6.6 per cent of the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This compares with 930,456 arrivals in 2008, making up 7.9 per cent of GDP. She adds that last year a recovery was signalled with arrivals picking up to 934,827 (6.9 per cent of GDP). Future development plans include fewer hotels and more “integrated tourism projects”, such as those combining hotel and residential accommodation. The country has a wealth of tourism products, from medical to wedding tourism. She too stresses the importance of future development being environmentally sustainable.

To the West of Seychelles and Mauritius, Comoros, one of the least visited places on the globe, has tourism potential given its unspoilt beauty.



Waiter in Nosy Iranja, Iranja Island, Madagascar © Majority World / Reporters

“Africa is a tourism success Story”

Interview with Taleb Rifai, Secretary General of the World Tourism Organisation

Tourism in Sub-Saharan Africa has escaped being bruised by the global economic downturn, explains Taleb Rifai, Secretary General of the Madrid-based World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), a United Nations agency. His organisation, which has 154 country members and over 400 affiliates, promotes the development of sustainable and universally accessible tourism, particularly in developing countries.

The Courier: How do you account for the expansion in arrivals in Sub-Saharan Africa last year in spite of a global downturn?

TR: Africa has been a tourism success story. It was the only region to show growth in international arrivals during the crisis year of 2009 and strongly consolidated this in 2010.

Sub-Saharan Africa actually grew by 8 per cent in 2010, receiving 31 million international tourist arrivals. Adding the 19 million tourists arriving into North Africa (+6 per cent), Africa as a whole grew by 7 per cent in 2010 (50 million international tourist arrivals). In terms of receipts, the region as a whole increased by 4 per cent to reach \$US31M.

Product diversification is hugely important for destinations if they wish to remain competitive and sustainable

Africa has maintained growth in 2011 up 2 per cent between January and April. Within the continent, Sub-Saharan Africa grew by an impressive 8 per cent, while North Africa decreased by 11 per cent in the wake of the recent events in the region.

Growth in Africa has been supported by the worldwide exposure created by the FIFA World Cup in South Africa and the clear improvement of the region's economies. The Cup offered an invaluable boost to South Africa, but also to other destinations in Southern Africa and indeed, the entire continent. Many tourists travelling long distances to see the event took the opportunity to visit other countries during their trip, highlighting the importance of regional tourism cooperation for growth. This momentum spilled over into 2011 and has further benefited from increasingly dynamic economies, improved image and government support of the tourism sector in the region.

Tourism is currently among the top three sources of export earnings for nearly half of the LDCs

Is any region in Sub-Saharan Continent showing particularly robust growth?

In 2010, growth was very strong in all African sub-regions, but particularly so in West, East and Southern Africa. South Africa, which accounts for over a quarter of total arrivals in Sub-Saharan Africa, saw international tourist arrivals increase by 15 per cent in 2010 to eight million, thanks largely to the World Cup. Other countries to show particularly strong growth in 2010 included Madagascar (+21 per cent), Cape Verde (+17 per cent), Tanzania and Seychelles (+11 per cent).

Will the expansion by the continent into new tourism products lead to even stronger growth in the sector?

Product diversification is hugely important for destinations if they wish to remain competitive and sustainable. Diversification not only leads to stronger growth, but also reduces dependency on often vulnerable areas – developing cultural tourism to diversify the traditional beach offer, for example.

Africa's principal tourism products for the major source markets currently revolve around culture and nature. However, these cultural and nature-based trips could be packaged in combination with African's numerous other attractions such as beach tourism. The meetings indus-

try is another example of a growing and lucrative tourism product that could be capitalised on in Africa, in particular as its economic and trade links increase with other world regions such as Asia.

At the same time, other factors such as improved air access could also strongly benefit the further growth of tourism in Africa. Another important opportunity lies in increased regional cooperation in areas such as travel facilitation (visas) and marketing.

To what extent can the tourism industry contribute to poverty alleviation on the continent?

The potential of tourism to lift people out of poverty in Africa is huge.

International tourist arrivals to the world's 48 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) – the majority of which are found in Africa – grew from 6 million in 2000 to over 17 million in 2010. During the same period, international tourism receipts climbed from \$US3bn to over \$US10bn. Indeed, tourism is currently among the top three sources of export earnings for nearly half of the LDCs, meaning it is a key sector for their participation in the global economy. These tourists flowing into and around the continent give rise to vital foreign

exchange, investment and know-how for African countries; with a significant multiplier effect on many other areas of the economy. Tourism can also be a driver for the development of infrastructure – transport, water supply and sanitation.

Tourism is an extremely labour-intensive sector and offers a fast entry-point into the workforce, especially for women and young people. As such, it provides crucial opportunities for fair income, social protection, gender equality, personal development and social inclusion for the most vulnerable. The sector caters for all degrees of skills and is a sector within which opportunities for growth, qualifications and career advancement are plentiful.

We are pleased to see that tourism is increasingly recognised as a tool for poverty alleviation and is finding its place in the development agenda. Much is still to be done in this regard, but we are advancing. For example, tourism was included in the agenda of the recent UN Conference on the LDCs, held in Istanbul, Turkey, for the first time and was referenced for its development potential by the UN Secretary-General, opening this important meeting to debate the ten year action plan for the LDCs. **D.P.**



Secretary General of The United Nations World Tourism Organization Taleb Rifai © Imago / REPORTERS

West Africa moves up rankings

West Africa's plans to move up the world tourism rankings are taking root, both at regional and country-levels.

Francis Kokutse*

Nigeria's Delta State is aiming for one million visitors a year by 2014 on completion of a water theme park. According to Richard Mofe Damijo, state commissioner for tourism, it is the first of its kind in West Africa and will help propel the country's tourism sector to a different level. "Currently, tourist arrivals have been low because most people are wary of the fragile nature of the area. The federal government is working together with the state authorities to improve peace and security in the Delta region. It is because we are confident about the return of peace that we are investing in these facilities", he said in an interview.

Across the region, visitor numbers have also been boosted by recent political unrest which has made North Africa a less attractive destination.

Multilateral agencies pledged assistance to the West Africa Park Project at a donor conference organised by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNTWO) in Dakar, Senegal in June 2011. The participating countries are: Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Sierra Leone. They are drawing up plans to share a network of parks and protected areas, ensure their conservation and jointly promote the region as a tourism destination.

A development tool

UNTWO Secretary General, Taleb Rifai, told delegates at the meeting that, "today, major international organisations have pinpointed tourism as one of the most effective tools for Africa's economic growth and development." [Ed: see interview with Taleb Rifai in this section]. He added: "With their support, sustain-

able tourism can flourish, generating jobs and income for local communities, while protecting the region's rich biodiversity".

Nigeria's Delta State is aiming for one million visitors a year by 2014 on completion of a water theme park

Ghana is aiming to climb up the world tourism rankings. It is currently the 105th most preferred tourist destination in the world and 10th in Africa. "We want to do all that is possible to improve the ranking in order to make the sector generate enough revenue for the country", said Tourism Minister, Akua Dansua.

"Last year there were 931,224 tourists in the country. The figure was an increase over the previous year's 802,779", said

Frank Kofigah, Director of Operations at the Ghana Tourist Board (GTB).

The country is investing in improvements to its forts and castles along the country's coast that particularly attract visitors from North America who are the descendants of slaves. Ghana's many sporting successes have endeared it to many around the globe whilst the achievements of personalities like former United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, have brought media attention to the country. Alongside historical sites, Kofigah said Ghana has also developed several eco-tourism centres around the country. He feels that the many festivals which take place year round up and down the country, showcasing its cultural heritage, could be used to attract more visitors.

*Ghana-based journalist



Elmina Castle, Ghana. Popular with visitors from the African Diaspora in North America © www.kit/nl/publishers

EU project to boost Pacific's tourism

The region seeks to fulfil its potential

A four-year European Union-funded project is targeting increased visitors, foreign exchange and jobs for the Pacific states of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of countries. Financed under the regional budget of the 10th European Development Fund (2008-2013), the 'Pacific Regional Tourism Capacity Building Programme' is due to lift off before the end of 2011.

Tourism is one industry the region's countries have in common. Many of the islands are increasingly dependent on tourism but this could be boosted further, say EU officials. For the Cook Islands, the industry generates ninety per cent of foreign exchange and 50 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Tourism is now the leading income earner for Samoa, Fiji and Vanuatu, according to EU officials, and is increasingly important to the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea, promising jobs and improved living standards in remote areas where it is difficult to start up any other sort of enterprise.

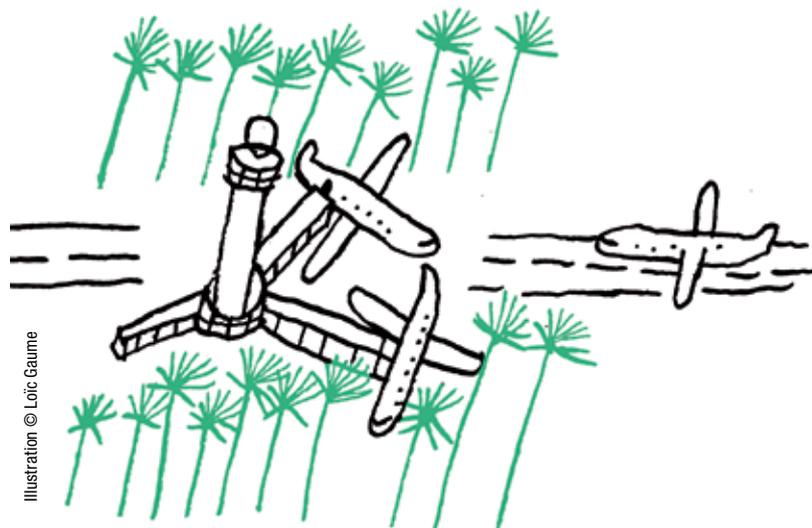
In their Business Plan 2010-2012 for the South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO), the region's tourism ministers spelt out that, "tourism will inspire sustainable economic growth and empower the Pacific people". The SPTO, the body with the mandate for marketing and developing tourism in the region, comprises thirteen country members and over 200 private organisations.

It is not the first time that the EU has pledged funds to the sector in the region and the new programme will build on previous ones.

Three-pronged programme

The project will focus on three areas; regional policy development and coordination, regional and national market research and building human resources.

Workshops will be held to bring Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), who make up the majority of tourism opera-



tors in the region, and government authorities together. The programme will also strengthen collation and analysis of regional and national tourism data. Pacific Aviation and South Pacific Cruise Shipping strategies will be drawn up as well as a revised Regional Tourism Strategy for 2014 and beyond.

Tourism is seen as an alternative to other unsustainable industries such as logging and mining

Improved market awareness is another aspect of the programme. This includes tourism research by regional and national bodies and internet marketing and increasing skills for e-marketing at both regional and national levels. The programme's third prong is all about boosting human resources for the sector through vocational

training, scholarships and temporary overseas attachments

EU officials emphasise tourism's potential to alleviate poverty in the region. Six of the region's nations are classified as Least Developed Country (LDCs). Tourism is seen as an alternative to other industries such as unsustainable logging and mining, points out the EU's document.

Main arrivals are from Australia and New Zealand (over 50 per cent of total arrivals in 2008) with North America and Europe making up a further 30 per cent, while Japan and Asia together account for about nine per cent. The rest of the visitors come from Pacific and other countries. **D.P.**

Find out more on:
www.delfji.ec.europa.eu
www.spto.org

More visitors spending less in the Caribbean

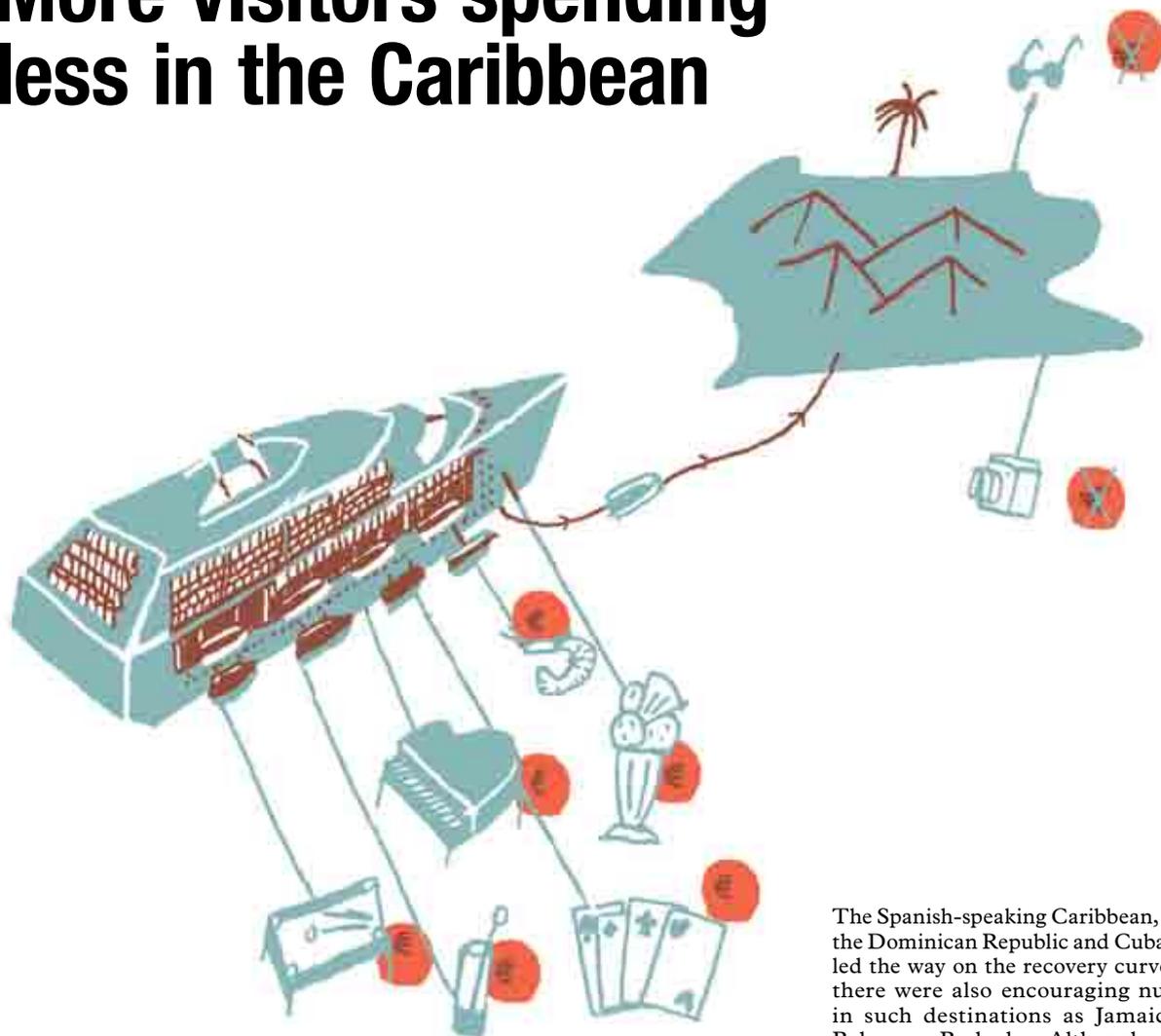


Illustration © Loïc Gaume

Caribbean tourism has been showing signs of recovery in 2011, following two of the toughest years on record. But while international arrivals have been improving and returning to 2008 levels, visitors have been spending less leading to worries about the sector's diminishing profits in a still unpredictable global environment.

Bernard Babb*

Tourism in the Caribbean is the region's biggest employer after the public sector and the largest single contributor to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) bringing in US\$40bn to the region annually. According to the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO), over 23 million tourists visited the region in 2010, up from the 22.1 million in the previous year, but spending was disappointingly close to 2004 levels. Growth in Caribbean tourists has come mainly from the United States and Canada, with experts blaming a drop in European visitors on prolonged economic recession in the United Kingdom and the dampening effect on travel by the APD (Air Passenger Duty) imposed by the British Government (see box).

The Spanish-speaking Caribbean, mainly the Dominican Republic and Cuba, again led the way on the recovery curve while there were also encouraging numbers in such destinations as Jamaica, the Bahamas, Barbados. Although encouraging numbers of global travellers are expected in the region again this year, tourists are continuously looking for bargains and are more inclined to book late. Against this background, the CTO said it expected that travellers will continue to hold onto their purse strings tightly. "By the end of 2010 the number of arrivals over the year had increased by six per cent, but revenue lagged behind. Our industry has had to do all kinds of things to convince people to come to the Caribbean and figures for the first quarter of this year also indicated that revenue was still lagging," says CTO Secretary General, Hugh Riley.

Tourism inducements

Caribbean hoteliers and tourism marketers have had to place various kinds of inducements in the market to drive business forward including heavy discounting on accommodation and in some cases, airfares have been subsidised in partnerships with major airlines. This measure

has had an impact on profitability. Some recovery in certain destinations has also been driven by cruise-tourism traffic, as the cruise-industry has consistently promoted its products as greater value for money. However, cruise-passengers are commonly known to spend less than long-stay visitors, especially given that the huge ships carry almost all supplies onboard when they leave their respective departure ports. This was reflected in the Bahamas where a record number of visitors - in excess of 5 million - entered the country in 2010 but the amount spent was nowhere near the 2008 levels prior to economic crisis, according to the country's Tourism Minister, Vincent Vanderpool-Wallace.

The Barbados Tourism Authority recently formalised a three-year contract worth millions with Rihanna to assist in promoting the country

In seeking to lure travellers to their shores, many islands have increased advertising budgets in their major markets, while others have created Festivals and other major events as attractions. "Staycation" campaigns have been launched where Caribbean residents and nationals are being encouraged to take their vacations at home. The Jamaican government, for example, increased its normal marketing budget of \$US30M by US\$5M. Also adding \$US5M to its annual advertising campaign of \$US50M, Barbados is hoping to attract more tourists from the United Kingdom and Canada.

As well as creating an international summer sports camp, the nation is seeking to ride on the star-power of globally recognised Barbados-born entertainer, Rhianna. The Barbados Tourism Authority recently formalised a three-year contract worth millions with the pop-star to assist in promoting the country. One of the best-selling artists of all time with more than 30 million records and 100 million singles sold, Rihanna was officially due to kick-off the partnership in Bridgetown, Barbados on August 5, where she was scheduled to perform as part of her 2011 'Loud' world tour. As an ambassador for the island, Rihanna will exclusively promote the destination through advertising campaigns, promotional appearances and via her social media activities. She will also

encourage Brazilians to visit Barbados during her tour appearances in the South America nation this September.

Significantly, Cuban tourism which welcomes more than two million visitors a year seems poised for another wave of growth as travel restrictions on US citizens are expected to be lifted in August 2011. Up until now, tourists to Cuba have mainly come from Europe, Canada and South America but with the lifting of U.S. travel restrictions, major growth from American visitors is anticipated with the destination billed to become the Caribbean's new hotspot.

*Barbados-based journalist



Popstar Rihanna, back home in Barbados. She will promote her country for the BTA © Reporters/Fame Pictures

The Caribbean: Increasing pulling power

The Caribbean wants to attract more visitors. It is reaching beyond its mainstream market with high calibre hotels and products and niche products such as sports, nature, spas, diving, weddings, honeymoons, meetings and conventions, explains Carol Hay, the Caribbean Tourism Organisation's (CTO) Marketing Director for the United Kingdom and Europe. The Waitukubuli Nature Trail, the Caribbean's first and only long distance walking trail in Dominica, due to open at the end of 2011, is one example. "At our State of the Industry Conference in September 2011, we will be discussing the way the Caribbean can work together, continuing to develop our existing products and looking at new areas to ensure the profitable future of our tourism industry and development," says Hay.

Hugh Riley, Secretary General of the Barbados-based CTO, says there is scope for regional tourism cooperation with the EU under the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), a free trade agreement signed between the EU and the CARIFORUM group of nations in 2008 : "Through the signing of the EPA, the government of CARIFORUM and the EU provided access to European markets for

Caribbean services, including tourism. The specific services are almost entirely private sector oriented." He continues: "Beyond the EPA, the Caribbean has a number tourism development needs in areas related to research, climate change adaptation, energy efficiency, marketing, standards and measurement and overall competitiveness." He also calls for, "EU support for the Caribbean's position on the perplexing issues of aviation taxation and carbon emissions." The introduction by the UK of an Air Passenger Duty in 2010 on outbound aircraft was one of the reasons that countries like Grenada saw their tourist arrivals fall 6.4 per cent last year compared to the previous year, says Carol Hay. High air fares in the Caribbean and sluggish growth in the United States also explain the dip in tourist numbers last year.

¹The EPA was signed on October 15 2008 with CARIFORUM members: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Christopher and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago. Guyana signed on October 20, 2008 and Haiti signed the Agreement on December 11 2009.



Giving help and hope to children in need

Ten years and thousands of child beneficiaries later, we report on a unique British charity whose aim is to put itself out of business.

Sylvia Arthur

When Georgie Fienberg visited Ghana on a gap year almost fifteen years ago, she couldn't have known the impact it would have on the rest of her life. Not just hers, but those of thousands of children in northern Ghana whose lives she would touch through the work of the charity she would create. Now, fifteen years later, AfriKids is a salvation for many young people who would otherwise be living without hope.

Fienberg started AfriKids, a child rights organisation based in Ghana's Upper East Region, in 2002. Inspired by the resourcefulness of those she met while travelling

around the country, she felt compelled to do something. Contrary to the images shown on television of helpless natives, Fienberg found a creative and determined people who were making the best out of difficult circumstances.

Rather than go in and tell them how to do things, Fienberg worked with local people to support them in what they were already doing and knew needed to be done. In the process, she created an organisation which now employs 160 local staff in Ghana with just a small, supporting team of ten in London.

What distinguishes AfriKids from other development charities is its approach. It works to solve the root causes of children being denied their rights by improving community support services and ensur-

ing access to basic education and primary health care.

“Our mission has always centred on children,” says Andy Thornton, Director of AfriKids UK. “We recognise that, in order to change the lives of children, you have to work with all of the surrounding factors. So we work very inclusively and holistically.”

Tackling child trafficking

AfriKids runs a number of projects. Its reach ranges from more traditional initiatives, including foster homes, schools and street child centres to ground-breaking projects which tackle complex cultural issues including child trafficking, child labour and the spirit child phenomenon. Working with the indigenous communities is key to the success of their work.

The story of how AfriKids recruited its Ghana Director, Nich Kumah, is typical of the way in which the organisation engages, cultivates and retains its staff. Kumah was a member of a local church group who, along with two friends, had converted a public toilet into a home for street children. It was through his hands-on activism that he came to the attention of AfriKids, and it is this appreciation of local knowledge that has enabled the charity to have such a big impact.

“Nich was in a lorry park one Sunday when he saw young, unaccompanied children

getting on a bus to go south to Kumasi. He was really shocked by it. In that case, they were economic migrants but there was an undertone of people taking these children down as well, a mix of trafficking and economic migration,” says Thornton. “He went down to Kumasi to follow up with contacts there, where these children were ending up in slums at an old, colonial racecourse. They were living in container boxes, end to end, huge numbers of people in appalling squalor. And he realised that some of it needed to be dealt with in a local way but, from a distance of 600 kilometres, it’s a very difficult thing for local people to do.”

Public-private partnership

In response to this dilemma, AfriKids set up a number of core projects to tackle the bigger issues, and joined with partners already running effective projects to maximise the impact of their work. The charity is also focused on developing major social enterprises designed to financially sustain the running of the Ghana operation, while creating and enhancing local opportunities and supporting wider economic growth.

“We’ve been working with the Ghana team to identify, fund and run social enterprises in Ghana, the largest of these being our hospital,” says Thornton. “When we took over the AfriKids Medical Centre, it was seeing 5,000 patients a year. Now, with a public-private partnership with the Ghana



One of the 60,000 patients receiving care annually at the AfriKids Medical Centre © AfriKids

Health Service we see 60,000 patients a year and made £100,000 profit last year.” Revenue from the medical centre alone pays for the salaries of three quarters of AfriKids’ Ghana staff, of which 60 are healthcare workers at the centre.

Sustainability

The next phase in AfriKids development is the building of an Eco Lodge. It will employ 30-50 local people in the tourism industry and generate £180,000 annual profit, enough to fund one third of AfriKids’ work. This will be achieved by providing on-the-job training in new vocations, by providing long-term employment and by bringing new revenue streams into the region.

Next year, AfriKids celebrates its tenth anniversary. The organisation’s ultimate goal is not to celebrate another ten. It wants to close its UK office by 2018, as a result of the Ghana operation becoming self-sustaining. And if any charity can do it, it’s AfriKids. “AfriKids Ghana was always very clear that they wanted our projects to be sustainable for the beneficiaries. As an organisation, our Ghana team saw so many good organisations in their community fall victim to the vagaries of western funding. They didn’t want that. They were aware of some of the limitations of western funding and they wanted to continue their work in a locally appropriate way,” says Thornton. “We’ve defined a very clear goal for our organisation. This is very much our USP.”

To find out more about AfriKids please visit www.afrikids.org



AfriKids Ghana Director, Nich Kumah © AfriKids



East Africa, a geothermal showcase

The hot underground rocks in East Africa's Rift Valley are thought to be a promising solution for energy production. The first results were recorded in Kenya, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the expertise of the Icelanders.

Marie-Martine Buckens

In Africa, high-temperature geothermal resources – used to generate electricity – are usually found in areas of tectonic and volcanic activity, particularly in the East African Rift area. The Great Rift Valley is characterised by volcanic and fluvial deposits, marked by an enormous geographical fracture which extends across the whole of Africa, from the Red Sea to Mozambique. Of all the countries that the rift crosses, Kenya is considered, at least at the present time, as a key area for the production of electricity from geothermal energy. The exploitable potential for electricity is estimated to be 2,000 MW. Today, this potential is partially used.

Using their expertise in the art of converting the Earth's energy into energy, Icelanders (see the separate report on Iceland) provide advice and technical assistance. They provide assistance to projects in Africa, as well as in Papua New Guinea, the Comoros, and even in China, New Zealand, the Philippines and Latin America. That is to say, wherever Vulcan's forces are at work.

Around the world

In Iceland, there is a growing number of companies specialising in geothermal power. One of the largest companies, Iceland GeoSurvey (ISOR), is State-owned. Since it was set up in 1945, it has worked on geothermal projects in more than forty countries, particularly in East Africa. Geothermal energy is

“a way for countries to free themselves from dependency on other countries for energy”, the Icelandic Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ossur Skarphedinnsson, said in 2008, underlining to the United Nations General Assembly the important role played by his country in geothermal energy. It is thus within the framework of a UN programme that ISOR has been entrusted with an important task, that of training countries in the use of geothermal energy. Training courses in Indonesia and Kenya are already underway.

Founded in 2008, Reykjavik Geothermal is already working in Abu Dhabi, Kenya, Papua New Guinea and India. Reykjavik

ARGeo

The African Rift Valley Geothermal Development Facility (ARGeo) project was launched five years ago by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The project receives funds of almost 15 million Euros, including from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Bank.

The project, which mitigates the drilling risks in Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, began in early 2009 and has made it possible to use the equipment and techniques tested by the Kenyan electricity company, KenGen, with crucial support from the Icelanders.

Kenya and private-sector investors are also looking for financial assistance for the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) under the Kyoto Protocol in order to extend the addi-

tional 35 MW in the validation phase. The current demand for electricity in Kenya is approximately 1,000 MW, according to UNEP. The country is heavily dependent on hydro-electric power stations, which in recent years have suffered from low rainfall and diminishing water reserves. The country has set itself the target of generating 1,200 MW from geothermal power between by 2015.

“Combating climate change while simultaneously getting energy to the two billion people who do not have access to it are among the central challenges of this generation” announced Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director.

“Geothermal energy is 100% indigenous, environmentally-friendly and a technology which has been underutilised for too long.”



Geysers-Iceland © Marie-Martine Buckens

Energy Invest, subsidiary of Reykjavik Energy, was instrumental in setting up a geothermal power plant in Djibouti, where four 2.5 km boreholes have been dug.

Combating climate change while simultaneously getting energy to the two billion people who do not have access to it are among the central challenges of this generation

University courses

The Icelandic International Development Agency (ICEIDA – see the report on Iceland) is fully involved in these projects, particularly the ARGeo programme (see box). Thus, courses in geothermal exploration have been organised by the United Nations University in Reykjavik and the Electricity Generation Company of Kenya (KenGen). These courses are part of the Geothermal Training Programme of the United Nations University in Reykjavik (UNU/GTP). The funding for the programme is part of Iceland's contribution to promoting the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. Participants have come from the Comoros Islands, Egypt, Eritrea, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, Yemen and Algeria.

Flowers and electricity

Geothermal energy is extracted, depending on the temperature, to produce electricity or for heating.

If water, which circulates through tectonic fractures, reaches a temperature higher than 100°C, we talk about ‘high enthalpy resources’. Water can be captured as steam (so called dry steam) or as a mixture of both liquid and steam (wet steam). Depending on the nature and properties of the water at the surface, different systems are used to produce electricity. This is particularly true of the geothermal plant in Olkaria, Kenya.

However, low-energy resources whose temperature is between 30°C and 100°C are mainly used for local heating and for heating greenhouses. At one of the largest farms in Kenya, managed by the Oserian Development Company, 70 hectares of greenhouses heated by geothermal energy produce flowers which are sold in Europe.



Iceland, where unpredictability has been elevated to a way of life

Report by Marie-Martine Buckens

You mention Iceland? Images of the financial crash and the eruption of Eyjafjallajökull immediately come to mind.

Two “crises” that Iceland survived without too much difficulty. Certainly the Icelanders will be paying for a long time to come for the mistakes of their financiers – these ‘*utrasarvikingar*’ or modern-day Vikings blinded by easy

profit – and nobody has forgotten the terrible eruptions of the 18th century, so murderous that the population of the time very nearly decided to desert this land of fire and ice located just outside the Arctic Circle.

The Icelanders have learned to adapt to an unpredictable and sometimes murderous natural environment. An ability to adapt that no doubt in part explains the relative ease with which the country has today emerged from the economic recession that followed the collapse of its three leading banks in 2008.

Yet the financial crisis also showed the Icelanders the limits of their independence. An independence that is all the more fragile as the country’s economy depends essentially on exports of fishery products.

One year to the day after the financial bubble burst, the new centre-left government officially submitted its application to join the European Union. Negotiations have just begun.



Lava beach © Marie-Martine Buckens



Thingvellir © Marie-Martine Buckens

From the Althingi to the European Parliament

After 20 turbulent centuries of history, Iceland - an island that came into being just 20 million years ago by virtue of a whim of nature - straddling the rift between the American and Eurasian continental plates - is expected to join the European Union within the next two years. That's provided its population, shaken by the 2008 financial crisis, gives its approval.

The country's history goes back to the first century AD. Irish monks in search of solitude are believed to have been the first to set foot on Icelandic soil followed by the arrival of the Vikings not long after. These Norwegian colonisers fleeing the conflicts in the Kingdom of Norway gradually settled on the island's coastline, and particularly in Reykjavik, a natural harbour and today capital of the Republic of Iceland.

In 930 AD, the Viking tribal leaders decided to create an assembly: the

Althingi. This was to be the world's very first parliament. Even today its creation is affectionately marked by all Icelanders who make the pilgrimage to the vast plain of Thingvellir, where the ancient free men of Iceland used to gather in June of each year for 15 days of deliberations: an event that also saw popular celebrations, including poetry recitals and storytelling. During this period, the Vikings quietly converted from paganism to Christianity. The Vikings might, or might not, have been aware of the fact that, a 30 km long fault in Thingvellir also marks the boundary between the two continental plates.

The single chamber Althingi continued when the country came under the authority of Norway in 1262, and also under the country's Danish domination, from 1536 to 1799. Denmark imposed its Protestant reforms and took total control of all of the island's trade. Poverty resulted. The 18th century was a bleak

period for Icelanders, during which time Laki, one of its most fearsome volcanoes, spewed its ash for more than nine months, destroying all crops and suffocating both farmers and their animals. Less than a quarter of the population survived the ensuing famine.

In the 18th century, inspired by the July revolution in France, the Icelanders fought for their independence. The Althingi was restored - but in 1844 was relocated to Reykjavik - and the country acquired a relative independence. It was not until the end of the Second World War, in 1944, that Iceland gained full independence and proclaimed itself a republic. The main task of the succession of coalition governments that followed was to make independence effective. After 1950, Iceland's political life was dominated by the Independence Party, which entered into various coalitions with the Social Democratic Party, the Progressive Party or the Liberal Party.

The 2008 financial crisis caused political unrest, resulting in a crushing defeat for the Independence Party and the first government of the Left, led by Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir. As Iceland's first woman prime minister, she has made no secret of her homosexuality and in 2002 entered into a civil union with her partner, the writer and journalist Jónína Leósdóttir: which was accepted by the people of Iceland without any controversy.

In July 2009, the Icelandic Government filed its official request to become a member of the European Union. **M.M.B.**

Ethics and finance

Following the financial crash, the Icelandic government set up a special investigative commission to look into the ethical aspects of the collapse. This was a unique exercise. A meeting with the president of this commission, Vilhjálmur Árnason, professor of philosophy at the University of Iceland.

“**T**he financial crisis of 2008 was on an unprecedented scale. Iceland’s three biggest banks went bust. It was more than a financial crisis, it was the collapse of the economic system” explains Vilhjálmur Árnason, adding, “the country’s debt, held mainly by the banks, reached almost 10,000 billion Icelandic krona, ten times the country’s GDP. This is a world record, both in relative and absolute terms”.

The commission, appointed by the Icelandic parliament and made up of two philosophers and a historian, delivered its report in April 2010. It was a much awaited report and hugely successful. “Our commission’s task was not to limit our analysis of ethics and work practices to the banking world, but to set it in a wider social context. It was not a question of making judgments, but of analysing why this greedy behaviour – and it was greed that we were dealing with – was possible.”

The ultrasarvikingar

It was therefore an analysis of Icelandic society that the investigating commission performed. “Icelandic society is strange; there are not very many of us and in many ways we are a nepotistic society”, points out the philosopher, before continuing: “In our report, we highlighted a crucial event which took place at the turn of the century, namely the privatisation of banks. This privatisation was accompanied by a relaxation of financial regulations.”

“The politicians are responsible for this state of affairs and the banks are responsible for having engaged in very risky operations. At the time, the risk was perceived as an advantage and the young bankers as modern Vikings, or ultrasarvikingar. The media also lacked critical thinking. Their weakness is that the majority belong – with the exception of State radio and TV – to financial groups.”

“Before the crisis, there was a relationship of ‘trust’ between the politicians and economists. In fact, this trust was a lack of impersonal professional distance. Maybe Iceland still needs to move towards a civil society!”

Vilhjálmur Árnason’s main concern is the rhetoric used by the ultra-nationalists who present the Icelanders, “once the great conquerors in the golden years, as being bullied by the institutions and unfriendly countries”. “I am more saddened by the way that Iceland is managing the after-crisis than the crisis itself. We are exploiting people’s weakness rather than strengthening the democratic system. Clearly, a lot of people made

mistakes, but the most important thing we must remember is that the democratic institutions failed to foresee the crisis.”

EU membership? “This is something great and I am also saddened that the crisis is being used by those who are against Iceland’s entry into the European club, diverting people from their responsibilities.” **M.M.B.**



In Reykjavik © Marie-Martine Buckens

Next objective, Europe

On 27 June, Iceland began in-depth negotiations on entry to the European Union. The negotiations should run smoothly, with the exception of a disagreement on the fisheries industry, which is of great importance to the island's economy.



Reykjavik harbour © Marie-Martine Buckens

The close ties between Iceland and the European Union are deep rooted and still very much alive. They are also a reflection of the economic situation, as more than two thirds of Reykjavik's foreign trade is with Member States of the EU.

Iceland may be a small nation, but we're a giant when it comes to fishing

Since 1970, Iceland has been a member of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA); two years later it concluded a bilateral free-trade agreement with the European Economic Community. In 1994, Iceland joined the European Space Agency and the Schengen-zone, which allows Icelanders to travel and work freely throughout the European Union. Lastly, Iceland is also a signatory of the Dublin Regulation on asylum policy in Europe and a founding member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, NATO.

July 2009 : the country was barely coming out of an economic recession caused by an unprecedented banking crisis. The new centre-left government was in favour of the country applying to join the European Union and presented an application to the European Council. The application was accepted and the European Commission decided to amend the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance in order to include Iceland as a beneficiary. The aim of this assistance to Reykjavik was to facilitate its alignment with European regulations, commonly called 'community acquis'.

Mackerel war

The alignment process should be relatively easy. "The screening process (evaluation of the degree of harmonisation of Icelandic legislation with EU law) has confirmed what we knew: Iceland is very well prepared for the accession talks and there are only a few issues to be negotiated," Iceland's chief negotiator Stefan Haukur Johannesson told Agence France Presse in June. The issues are few in number, but very important. Firstly, there is Iceland's policy on the fisheries industry, which is responsible for almost 80% of Iceland's exports; the rest being made up mainly of the re-exporting of aluminium which, thanks to an abundance of hydroelectricity on the island, is refined at low cost from bauxite reserves in Africa or North America.

"Iceland may be a small nation, but we're a giant when it comes to fishing," said Left Green MP Arni Thor Sigurthsson, who serves as the chair of Iceland's Foreign Affairs Committee. "If Iceland were to join the EU, it would increase the EU's resources from fisheries by 50%," he said, insisting "it is of the utmost importance for Iceland to get fair treatment in this matter." The MP alluded to the clash between the EU and Iceland on fishing rights, recently illustrated by Iceland's unilateral decision to increase its mackerel quota. The island is also in disagreement with the EU over whaling.

Financial services is another potentially difficult sector in which the EC believes that Reykjavik will need to make "serious efforts". **M.M.B.**

Targeted and effective cooperation

Iceland offers developing countries its expertise in geothermics and fishing where it has a second-to-none reputation.

The international cooperation budget was not spared when the Icelandic Government was forced to make drastic spending cuts in the wake of the 2008 financial crash. Since 2000, public development aid had experienced a steady rise reaching, 0.36% of Gross National Product (GDP) in 2008 shortly before the collapse of the banks. Three years later, in 2011, development aid is below 0.20% of GDP but the Icelandic Government has plans to increase the figure.

Just approved by the 'Althingi', the Icelandic Parliament, the government's 2011-2014 Development Cooperation Strategy, foresees a new increase which should see the country's development budget rise to 0.23% of GDP by 2014. The government plans to give a boost to the share of public expenditure allocated to development from 2013, when the Strategy will be revised, with the aim of reaching 0.70% of GDP in 2021, in line with the goal set by the United Nations.

Strengthening African fisheries

"We are going to continue to pursue the policy of the past two years, which means consolidating the current programmes," explains Engilbert Gudmundsson, newly-appointed head [Ed: this arti-



Engilbert Gudmundsson © Marie-Martine Buckens

cle was written in June 2011] of the Icelandic International Development Agency (ICEIDA), which is directly attached to the Foreign Ministry. The new Director General has 26 years' experience in the cooperation sector, first with the Nordic Development Fund based in the Finnish capital Helsinki, followed by a post at the World Bank, where he was responsible for harmonising aid in the framework of multilateral cooperation.

Our development policy conforms to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and should not need any adjustment when Iceland joins the European Union," believes the ICEIDA director general

Iceland gives support to peacekeeping in Afghanistan and to Palestinian refugees, through financing or providing expertise to international organisations. "But we are above all present, and have been for a long time, in three African countries: Mozambique, Uganda and Malawi. There are two reasons for this: they are very poor countries and all have fisheries," says Engilbert Gudmundsson. [Ed: In land-locked Uganda and Malawi, this includes fresh water fishing on lakes]. "Fisheries are the traditional backbone of Iceland and a field in which we can contribute our know-how," adds the Director General.

Iceland has thus made its services available to help the authorities in these countries improve their fishery resources management. This has enabled some of them to resume their fish exports - in particular to the European Union - after being suspended for sanitary reasons. "In Uganda, where fishing activity is intense in Lake Victoria, but also in other lakes such as Lake Edward, exports fell from 150 million to one million tons a



ICEIDA in Mozambique © ICEIDA

year in the space of a decade. We helped the authorities to introduce quality controls,” says Engilbert Gudmundsson. Similar actions were implemented in Mozambique, especially in the prawn fishing sector, and in Malawi.

“Subsequently,” adds the Director General, “we extended our aid to fishing communities. As part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we lent our support to two key sectors: education and health. Under all these actions we give priority to working with the district governments. We are a small country and local institutions correspond to our own organisation.” In 2007, 21% of Icelandic aid was hence allocated to the fisheries sector, 31% to education and 13% to health.

The priority of training

Apart from bilateral aid, from which Sri Lanka and Nicaragua also benefit, albeit to a lesser degree, Iceland contributes to four multilateral agencies: the World Bank, UNICEF, UN Women and the United Nations University. “In the framework of this university, we provide training in the fisheries and geothermal sectors,” continues the ICEIDA Director General. This training gives nationals from developing countries the opportunity to specialise in managing environmental resources, mainly fishing and geothermics.

Know-how

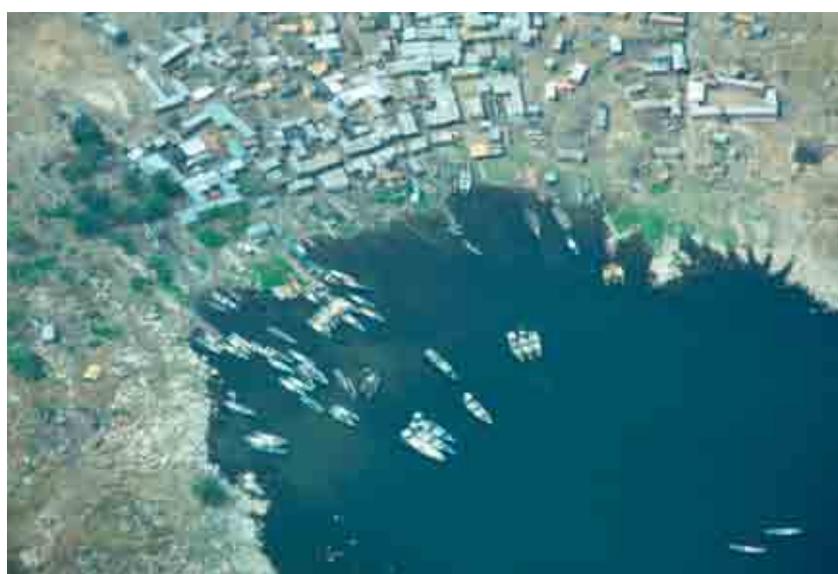
In Geothermics, Iceland has made its know-how available throughout the world, notably in China and Indonesia, in Central America and also in Africa. Working through the ICEIDA, Icelandic experts also provided vital support in setting up the African Rift Geothermal Development Agency, ARGeo, a grouping of six East African countries with high geothermic potential. “In all these countries training is provided with the

support of our experts and UN agencies,” explains Engilbert Gudmundsson. “We also carry out tests and studies to ensure that the geothermal potential is profitable. While Kenya, for example, already produces 800 megawatts of electricity thanks to the studies we financed, in the case of Uganda our tests have to date proved negative.”

Tradition of openness

“Our development policy conforms to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and should not need any adjustment when Iceland joins the European Union,” believes the ICEIDA director general.” This is based on the conclusions of meetings already held between European and Icelandic development experts. Furthermore, development policy is one of the few fields in which there is agreement among both the supporters and opponents of EU membership.

The Director General adds: “We have a long tradition of openness – necessarily so, having never been self-sufficient – and even if our aid budget may seem small compared with the respective budgets of our Nordic neighbours, who remain are our principal reference in this field, we nevertheless have a very active cooperation programme. It is enough to make a difference.” **M.M.B.**



Fishing on Lake Victoria © Marie-Martine Buckens



Auður Ava Ólafsdóttir © Auður Ava Ólafsdóttir

Literary Reykjavik

In February 2011, the Icelandic capital submitted its candidacy to become City of Literature. This seemed a natural step for the capital of a country which has the highest number of books published per head of population anywhere in the world.

Reykjavik hence looks set to join a select club of literary cities currently numbering just four: Edinburgh, Iowa City, Melbourne and Dublin. In March 2011, the Paris Book Fair celebrated Icelandic literature, alongside that of other Nordic countries, all of which share a love of detective stories. Icelandic authors Arnaldur Indriðason, Arni Thorarinsson and Jón Hallur Stefánsson have a loyal following in the genre. There were many other types of Icelandic literature on display in Paris. So rich is modern Icelandic literature that it is often said that, “half of Icelanders are writing for the other half.”

Transparency of language

When in Iceland, there are constant reminders of the long history of the

country’s literature dating back to time of the medieval tales of heroes; Egill Skallagrímsson or *Burnt Njal*, still read by today’s schoolchildren in the language of that time. This illustrates that the Icelandic language - a source of Icelandic pride alongside the Althing and the country’s volcanoes - has remained virtually unchanged since these tales of heroism were first recounted. Icelanders display real ingenuity in adapting their language and are today able to express the most complex of technological terms. Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, the first woman to be democratically elected as leader of a European country in 1980, who is also a linguist said: “The Icelandic mind prefers - does not demand - that words should be transparent, meaning that it should be possible to deduce the core from the stem. One example is the Icelandic word for radio, ‘hljóð-



© Marie-Martine Buckens

varp’, which means ‘sound projected to the exterior’. ‘Sjónvarp’, the word for television, is formed in the same way, and literally means ‘projected vision’.”

The beauty of being inaccessible

A rising literary star: Auður Ava Ólafsdóttir. Her latest and third book, *The Offspring*, received unexpected but well-deserved rave reviews among French, English, Danish and German readers. The story is a simple one: On his way to restore a monastery garden on the continent, with two or three shoots of *Rosa candida* in his bags, Arnljótur – an anti-Viking – is about to meet, although he does not know it, Anna and her little girl in another Eden, forgotten by the world and guarded by a monk who is a film buff.

Due to this lack of accessibility to the world, Icelandic literature has a head start in terms of the mystical

“As a writer,” the author explained to one critic, “I consider it a privilege to speak a language that very few understand. Due to this lack of accessibility to the world, Icelandic literature has a head start in terms of the mystical. I wanted to approach the illogical part of the human psyche in a musical manner, to elevate everyday concerns, even give them a religious dimension as in *The Offspring*.” It’s a captivating book. **M.M.B.**

The mind and the word

“It has been said of the Icelanders that they are not swayed by logic, scarcely by money and even less by arguments of faith, but resolve their problems by quibbling over words and by cultivating arguments over insignificant matters that have nothing to do with the problem at hand. But once you come to the heart of the debate you find them disoriented and silent. On the other hand, if a friend or relative asks them for something, they are ready to overcome the greatest difficulties for them, and if that were not the case the Icelandic countryside would have been deserted for centuries. There is

another way of discussing things that is the last recourse of the Icelanders when all else has been tried, and that is humour, even the most trivial. As soon as someone tells an amusing story, society as a whole regains its enlightened kindness and the soul becomes welcoming once again.”

These are the words of Halldór Laxness, the “giant” of Icelandic literature. Winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1955, his works include, *Independent People*. He began writing at 17 and lived until the age of 95. Icelandic writers of the 20th century often felt they were working in his shadow.

Lava in its veins

Without volcanoes Iceland would not exist. The Icelanders know it and have not only learned to live with the fact but to welcome it as a life source. Despite - or perhaps due to - being always on the alert, they cultivate a gentle way of life and show genuine affection for their rumbling mountains.

“**V**ery often when people see our car they come and ask us about the latest seismic activity in the area or if something extraordinary is about to happen,” says Karolina Michalczewska, one of the many geologists at the Reykjavik Institute of Earth Sciences. “In fact a lot of information is posted regularly on the Internet by the Icelandic Meteorological Office. Everybody can follow the seismic activity and deformations of the earth’s crust thanks to the GPS instruments that monitor the situation continuously,” she explained. Also, since the eruption of Eyjafjallajökull shut down the European air space in April 2010, the EU has set up a crisis unit and adopted guidelines to be followed in the event of volcanic ash emissions. Measures that the European Commission says made it possible to adopt a more scaled response following the eruption of Mount Grimsvötn in May 2011.

Midway

“It is hard not to be interested in these things when you are in Iceland. You only need to drive a few miles outside of the capital to find yourself in the middle of lava fields, in a landscape untouched by civilization,” continues the geologist. Iceland has more than 200 craters, including 170 active volcanoes. An island of lava, ice and meadows extending to over 100,000 km², the country is the emerged part of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. The two edges of this ridge are moving away from one another at a rate of 2 cm a year, therefore increasing the distance between Europe and America. An enormous rift or graben cuts across the island, running from the southwest to the northeast, the most impressive section of which can be found on the Thingvellir Plain, site of the first Icelandic parliament.

Laboratory

“A typical Icelandic eruption is characterised by the emission of basalt lava along the fissures, often creating what is known as a central volcano,” explains Karolina Michalczewska. “But - and last

year’s eruption of Eyjafjallajökull was a powerful reminder - this is not always the case. Iceland is a volcanic laboratory providing incredible opportunities to study and observe the way the earth’s crust was formed, making it a special place for scientists.”

“In Iceland,” continues the volcanologist, “it is easy to see that our planet is a living organism. Earth tremors are recorded every day and on average there is a volcanic eruption every 4 or 5 years.” In the autumn of 2010 a jökulhlaup was observed from Iceland’s biggest glacier, the Vatnajökull. There are six volcanoes beneath the 8,300 km² of this ice cap, including the famous Grimsvötn (‘hidden lakes’). The presence of a jökulhlaup - a pocket of water that accumulates beneath the glacier and then suddenly bursts - is an indicator of volcanic activity. “We were already expecting the Grimsvötn to erupt then, but it finally

came in May of this year. Which shows how difficult it is to predict an eruption with any exactitude.”

Iceland is a volcanic laboratory providing incredible opportunities to study and observe the way the earth’s crust was formed

All eyes are now on the volcano Katla, which lies beneath the Mýrdalsjökull glacier and was shaken somewhat by the Eyjafjallajökull eruption. Finally, if the interval between each eruption is taken as the reference, then the next volcano on the list is the Hekla. “It should erupt in the very near future.” **M.M.B.**



Broken bridge after the eruption of Skeldararsandur in 1996 © Marie-Martine Buckens



General view of the buildings of the European Investment Bank © EC

EIB and ACP

New dynamic for financing SMEs

Hegel Goutier

The European Investment Bank (EIB) has moved up a gear in the past two years when it comes to financing small and medium-sized enterprises in the ACP countries. This is in line with the pressing demands of the ACP Group, which on 15 July held a workshop on “Enhancing access to finance for SMEs”; seen as the backbone of ACP economies.

According to the December 2010 figures, the EIB set aside a total of €180 million for microfinance in the ACP countries in the form of debt and equity. This represents 80% of the EIB’s total microfinance portfolio. The EIB deals either directly with specialised institutions or through commercial banks and on occasion with micro-entrepreneurs. In this way, since 2005 the EIB has acquired shares equivalent to €15.6 million in three holdings operating in Sub-Saharan Africa: Advans SA SCAR*, MicroCred SA** and Access Microfinance Holding AG, Germany.

Priority for rural and/or very poor areas

At the beginning of this year these three holdings had already created nine micro-

finance institutions with 54 subsidiaries in eight countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, serving 97,000 clients each having access to an average of €1,046. A very low rate of on average 1.48% of portfolios after 30 days were at risk. The three holdings often team up with regional institutions or local banks. This is true in Liberia, where the German company Access Microfinance Holding joined with various partners, including the African Development Bank, to develop Access Bank Liberia, the country’s number one bank in providing services to SMEs. The EIB is committed to seeing this model develop even further in the ACP countries.

In the Pacific and Caribbean countries the EIB selects local partners. As in the Dominican Republic, where for more than a decade now it has contributed, for example, to developing the Banco de Ahorro y Credito Ademi and the Banco Adopem, which support many microfinance institutions whose clients are mainly entrepreneurs in rural and/or very poor areas.

Technical assistance

The EIB’s intervention in the Dominican Republic includes a technical assistance programme to assist present and aspiring entrepreneurs in gaining access to the means to implement their projects and to ensure that the financing is as effective as possible. This is a

component of many of the EIB’s direct or indirect interventions in the sector.

Expectation and homage

The success stories of microfinance granted to SMEs in the ACP countries are so numerous that expectations are very high that there will be significant expansion in this area. The statement by ACP Secretary General Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, for example, represents both encouragement and recognition of the dynamic developed by the EIB, which “through the Investment Facility has the potential to assist ACP countries in the structural transformation of our SMEs into competitive ones”

* Advans SA SCAR (created by Horus Development Finance, formerly Horus Banque et Finance, France),

** MicroCred SA (investment company created by PlaNet Finance and partners: the International Financial Company (IFC) of the World Bank group, the Société Générale and AXA Belgium)

Zoom



Zinkpè, the Beninese artist

The mirror to the soul

Zinkpè, or Dominique Zinkpè in full, is among the most surprising of artists. This Beninese designer, painter, sculptor, video director and installation artist grapples with the most difficult aspects of the human condition, without sacrificing the beauty of his art in conveying his personal revolts. His work is even more significant and full of humour when he paints what is unjust and even unbearable. Zinkpè spoke to the *Courier* during his last major exhibition, 'Metamorphoses', at the Fine Art Studio (22 June – 20 August 2011) held in Brussels.

Hegel Goutier

Zinkpè has exhibited in some of the most prestigious venues of every continent and has won highly coveted prizes such as the Young African Talent Prize at the 'Grapholies' in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, at the age of 23, and the UEMOA award at the Dak'art Biennial of 2002.

A new vocabulary to describe his art

Zinkpè's art is brimming with inventiveness. His sculptures are often reductions, reassociations and metamorphoses of the same base elements, like a small Ibedji statuette from Nigeria. In describing some of his installations, such as his vehicle installations with their utterly natural aesthetic, moving about with their luggage and passengers, it is hard to avoid having

recourse to use newly create expressions such as *move art* and *move artist*. "Taxi Shut up Jealous!" (2000) and "Taxi Petro CFA" (2010), for example, are simply amazing.

"I had to be resourceful. I was lucky enough not to have passed through the academies of art of the former Soviet bloc. Some young artists did their training there and on their return got access to good posts provided that they airbrushed the



Zinkpè beside his painting 'Mascarade', 2010 © Hegel Goutier

Why Zinkpè?

Sandra Delvaux Agbessi, director of the Fine Art Studio in Brussels confides to *the Courier*, "There was a strong attraction at first sight with his work, but there has been a long progression over the past ten years since I first presented his work in group expositions. Now the artist has matured, not that his work wasn't of very high quality from the beginning. Each artist experiences that time of fluctuation in their work and then they reach a point where they have nothing left to prove. Zinkpè has reached this pivotal period. He has to become known. I'm willing to bet on it."

Recent Fine Art Studio publications:
www.fineartstudio.be

- Zinkpè. *Metamorphosis*, 2011
- Pierre Armouche *Just the body* 2011 (photos taken at Lomé)



Sandra Delvaux Agbessi © Hegel Goutier

portraits of the head of state and his nearest and dearest. Others, like myself, used pieces of string, earth or natural pigments, anything we could get hold of."

Then he encountered the work of Christian Lattier. "When I was 23 years old, at the Grapholies, I discovered Christian Lattier, who used all kinds of string and just one colour. That was a slap in the face for me, as I have always been drawn to kitsch. I hadn't studied fine arts, and I had all sorts of self-doubts and I wondered what I was doing there in such company. There was also Frédéric Bruly Bouabré, whose work I found too simplistic and banal, and yet who had won one of the most prestigious prizes. I became confused. But what was my opinion worth? And then the prize for young talent was announced, and it was me. I almost wanted to run away and I cried. I was afraid of this weight over me. I went back home in a state of confusion. That was 1993, and I set to work"

The mirror to the soul

The painting of Zinkpè is all about fluidity. When he tackles subjects that are dear to him, sacred or very personal, it becomes clear that his art is an external reflection of his soul. Though a draughtsman to the core, Zinkpè quickly took to painting and sculpture, and often blurs the borders between the disciplines. The sculptures are painted, and light plays a major role in his installations, which are inspired by the aesthetics of the circus and theatre sets. It is a fantasy which enables him to better represent the commedia dell'arte of this world, with all its pettiness and all its grandeur.

Art with a sting in its tail

The painted sculpture 'My hen' (a hen with the body of a woman, her genital organs on view, crucified) shown at the exhibition "Metamorphosis" is symbolic. The piece is hugely powerful and beautiful but is neither vulgar, nor aims to provoke. It is the first preliminary sketch of a planned series of the 14 stations of the 'Way of the Cross', a work aimed to amuse the onlooker, "without disrespecting the church and religion". Zinkpè was excommunicated by the archdiocese of Cotonou for a picture in the same style inspired by the Pope's banning of the pill by the pope. Fortunately peace was later made and the excommunication revoked.

"I spent a large part of my youth under a Marxist-Leninist regime in my country. I had artist friends who were imprisoned. I understood that one had to subvert one's intentions in order to express oneself. And I felt that with art I had in my hand an incomparable tool. Becoming an artist was a political act, and I forgot about all the doubt about the quality of my work. The purpose of my art was to say something, not necessarily to provoke, but to assert myself, not only where I lived but in the entire region."

Expansion of the field of plastic arts

Sure enough, his art soon spread throughout the region, and at the expense of the Togolese dictator Eyadema. Invited by the French Institute and the Goethe Institute of Lomé, he took his inspiration from the city's rickshaws. The work exhibited is a typical example of move art. "The supporters of the regime often used leaflets to summon the population to rallies in honour of the president, and I, puny as I am, was there driving a rickshaw with a dummy of Eyadema in the back, distributing around some mock leaflets for one of the president's meetings. The subterfuge went on for quite a long time. At the press conference on the event that followed, I announced that I was going to wash my face and I jumped out of a window and headed straight for the border with a friend." The police who thought had come to pick the president up were left speechless.

For a long time Zinkpè was sad that his art, which he saw as a political tool, did not reach the villagers of his area as much as he would have liked: they told him that his art was beautiful, but that it was for Europeans. He told them: "But it's you that I'm painting!" Boundless energy for his work has little by little, he believes, brought him closer to the essence, the portrait of the soul that art must reflect.

One day, in the market of his local town, where he shows his works on principle despite his great fame, an old lady pressed 200 CFA francs (€0.30) into the palm of his palm of his hand, saying "I cannot buy the painting, but take that as my thanks for expressing our thoughts like this." Tears welled up in Zinkpè's eyes as he told us, "I always treasure this note. It is the highest price that I've ever received for one of my works".



Nigeria: Waiting to join the ranks of emerging nations

Nigeria has a landmass of almost one million square kilometres and a population of more than 150 million. The world's sixth biggest oil producer, it builds observation satellites, boasts a large number of universities and research centres, and is second in global statistics for the number of fiction films made each year.

Hegel Goutier

The country's economy is currently in the midst of the boom, despite experiencing a recent wobble. A number of foreign companies have already carved a niche for themselves in many different fields: the pharmaceutical industry, construction, telecommunications, oil production... Nigeria has up to now been largely off the tourist track, but it will probably not be long before people become enamoured by its charms. Local and foreign companies alike are already planning to invest in the tourism sector.

The successful holding of the last presidential election was acknowledged by both internal and external observers, and the newly-elected president is enjoying the widespread approval of the

population, above all the young. This seems to have created an atmosphere of optimism in Nigeria, which was only a little dented by the recent attacks of an extremist group claiming to represent Islam. Prior to his election, Goodluck Jonathan had been temporary head of state and had managed to achieve more or less what he pledged, including the consolidation of peace in the Niger Delta, which for a long time had been the epicentre of violence - carried out particularly by young hoodlums - and oil pollution.

The situation did obviously not augur well for tourism. Now, however, improvements in the Niger Delta region have provided the first rays of hope for the tourist industry, and both local and foreign investors alike are appearing. The region boasts blue lagoons and dream-like landscapes. Nigeria has in total 800 kilometres of sandy beaches,

peaks approaching 2,500 metres, and 300 metre-high waterfalls, as well as national parks and a host of other attractions. Fortified cities dating back to ancient times are found in the north and are still ruled by emirs or sultans.

Economy gathers pace

In the 1970s, Nigeria was ranked the 33rd richest country in the world, after which it experienced a slump that reduced it to the 26th poorest by the start of the current millennium. Since the restoration of democracy in 1999, however, and despite all of the handicaps, the economy has started to grow again at a dizzying pace, with a boom in sectors such as telecommunications and finance. Nigerian banks are increasingly found in many foreign countries, with branches as far away as America and Asia. Whilst still comparatively low, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per inhabitant doubled between 2003 and 2009, and oil income has allowed the country to clear the majority of its foreign debts, something rarely seen in the African continent. It is not a matter of whether Nigeria will once again join the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) group of emerging economies, but rather when.

The new capital, Abuja, is witness to the boom. To picture it, forget about all the clichés about African cities. The federal district spreads out over an area of more than 9,000 square kilometres, giving it the possibility to expand. The decision to construct Abuja was taken in 1977, and fourteen years later, it was ready to host central government. With its urban expressways, gigantic buildings and impressive shopping malls, it has the look of many North American cities. There are fast roads, such as the six or ten-lane highway that links the city with the airport, but the city has style and a cosmopolitan feel. By 2009, its population had grown to an estimated 1.5 million inhabitants compared to 350,000 just inhabitants in 2001.

Lagos: Mega-city

The former capital, Lagos, is a megacity of some 15 million inhabitants. Despite its shanty towns and the relative lack of security, it's a fascinating place, full of charm and surprises. It's a hotbed of invention too: it is here that Nigeria's lively music and film industry were born. The movers behind all this are mainly former pirates of foreign productions, who gave local artists a

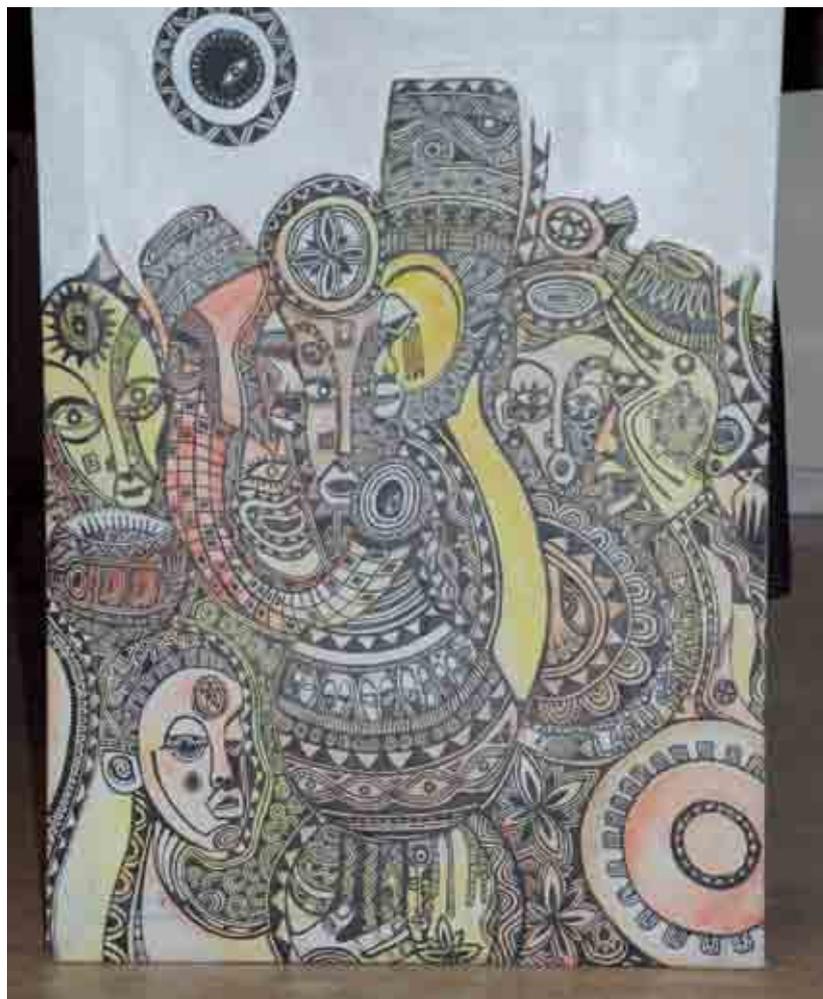
simple choice: work with us, or allow your work to be pirated. A number of the producers of pirate films and foreign recordings hence became the first film makers in Nollywood – a fictitious place referring to the Nigerian movie industry. Nollywood is now, after India, the world's second biggest producer of films, with the United States relegated to third position – just one of the city's many surprises.

Another little-known fact is the high-level of scientific research carried out in this African nation. At the moment of going to press, Nigeriasat-2, preparations for the launch of the second satellite developed by Nigerian scientists were in progress at a Russian base. The Nigerian satellite is to operate in conjunction with the satellites of the major players in space research. Nigerian institutes are carrying out research in a wide range of disciplines, such as nanotechnology, nuclear power, solar energy and

data processing, and the country also boasts a winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in Wole Soyinka.

Nigeria is still an underdeveloped country. Power cuts are so frequent that every building, every home and every office resounds with the deafening noise of electricity generators, the mains water is just drinkable, and half of the population still lives below the poverty threshold. It is also one of the few countries where polio remains endemic. Nigeria's own political classes themselves denounce problems of governance and corruption – above all the new president, who has vowed to combat these scourges – as well as the industry of the production and sale of pirated products, run by organized crime.

The clean-up to which the new government is committed is eagerly anticipated as is the country's membership of the BRICS.



La'olu Senbanjo "Chiefs" © Hegel Goutier

History

The fault line between the tribes of North and South, and Islam and Christianity



Lagos National Museum © Hegel Goutier
The car in which the president, General Murtala Ramat Muhammed was assassinated

The spread of Islam at the end of the first millennium A.D. can be taken as the starting point. Its expansion occurred through Portugal's development of trade with India via the Middle East at the end of the 15th Century. Later on, the slave trade migrated further to the south and the Gulf of Guinea, which also became the gateway for Christian evangelisation, thus forming a fault line in Africa's western region.

The region split into small territories. The unification of Nigeria occurred under a British National, Frederick Lugard, who was Governor-General from 1914 to 1919. It was in fact his wife who came up with a name for the country in 1898, formed from the words 'niger' (a Latin word meaning 'black-skinned') and 'area'. Shortly after, the three most important groups that make up the country, the Hausa in the north, the Ibo in the east, and the Yoruba in the west pressed for independence. The period leading up to

an independent state was administered by the United Kingdom, but there were scant negotiations with the leaders of the state-to-be over about how to go about bringing together some 250 individual tribal and linguistic groups. Nigeria officially gained its independence on 1 October 1960.

A series of coups d'état

The first government, headed by Prime Minister Sir Akubakar Tafawa Balewa and with Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe as first Governor-General was overthrown by a coup d'état in 1962 and another, instigated by an Ibo military officer occurred in 1966. In the same year, a third coup saw 31-year-old Hausa officer, Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu 'Jack' Gowon, become head of state. The terrible Biafran War broke out a year later, in the wake of the slaughter in the north of 20,000 Ibo by the Hausa, followed by reprisals against the latter in the south. In 1967, a declaration of Ibo sovereignty in their region was made by General Ojukwu. The Biafran

War continued for another three years by the end of which some three million Biafrans were confined to a tiny area of a few square kilometres. A compilation of evocative poems, 'A Shuttle in the Crypt', was written about the tragedy by the Ibo poet and novelist, Wole Soyinka, during his two year imprisonment.

An enlightened dictator

Post-war, General Gowon had the foresight to issue a pardon for those behind the secession attempt, and decided to overlook the support of some countries for Biafra. He spawned major investment in the reconstruction of Ibo lands, an initiative that probably cemented the young nation. Soon after, oil was discovered. Gowon remained in power for nine years, during which he launched a major crackdown on corruption with his "X Squad", the bane of politicians and businessmen alike. He also set in motion the country's industrialisation, restricting certain sectors of industry to only local companies. No sooner had he decided to reestablish civilian rule, however, than it was overturned by General Murtala Mohammed.

Murtala was replaced by the Yoruba General, Olusegun Obasanjo, who took the decision to establish a democratic system of government. It lasted five years, until 1983. Sixteen years of military rule followed before Obasanjo was himself democratically elected as president in 1999 and was subsequently re-elected in 2003. In 2007, Obasanjo was succeeded by a Hausa, Umaru Yar'adua, who died during the final year of his mandate and was replaced for an interim period by the vice-president, Goodluck Jonathan, a native of the south. In just a few short months, Jonathan won over the Nigerian public and was comfortably elected in the presidential elections of 2011. A degree of optimism has since prevailed in Nigeria, despite being dampened by the recent attacks of the Islamists group, Boko Haram. Nigeria must continue to strive to seal the fault line. **H.G.**

Nigeria.

Development goals within reach

Interview with Dr Martin Uhomoibhi
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Dr Martin Uhomoibhi © Hegel Goutier

The recent holding of free and fair presidential elections, Nigeria's role in conflict resolution in Africa, its global peace-keeping activities under a United Nations mandate and an average 7 per cent economic growth are all positives. The country is expected to achieve its development goals and become a member of the club of emerging countries. Nigeria is also taking a leading role in advancing the interests of the African diaspora, says Martin Uhomoibhi in an interview with *The Courier*.

HG - Do you feel that Nigeria is at the dawn of a new era, especially in the wake of the recent presidential elections?

MU - There is a feeling that Nigeria is at the dawn of achieving development goals. Every Nigerian, I think, feels that a new era beckons because of what we saw during the elections where people spoke in a way in which they have never previously spoken. We now have a president elected in a free, fair and credible election. He comes from a minority part of the country with a voter population of around half a million. The majority of ethnic groups in the nation voted for him. He has a pan-Nigerian mandate of 22 million votes, the next placed candidate winning just half that number. Progress has not just come as a bolt out of the blue. For the past couple of years, Nigeria has seen tremendous economic growth averaging 7 per cent. There is a lot of momentum in the country and the administration has identified its priorities. We might very possibly see take-off within the next two or three years.

HG - How quickly do you think Nigeria could enter the club of emerging countries?

MU - Nigeria has the same growth potential as this group of countries. We have huge human capital and natural resources. Nigeria really has all the ingredients for take-off and entrance to the club of developed nations.

HG - The EU feels that the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) is of crucial importance to Nigeria's development. What's your response?

MU - Portugal and Spain had close relations with African nations in the 14th and 15th centuries. The United Kingdom and France took over during the era of industrialisation. It's logical to think Europe should have an edge on our continent. Of late, Europe has faced competition from Asia, China and India. It's no longer Europe's world alone but a globalised one. A lot will depend on how Europe capitalises on its historical and geographical advantages and plays fair in creating a genuine partnership, and a mechanism which means that the EPA is not just another tool for forging trade links but an agreement with a concrete development objective.

HG - What about the concerns aired in both the national and international press about insecurity, poor governance, corruption and inequality between regions which can give rise to violence?



Abuja © Hegel Goutier



Lagos National Theatre and Gallery © Hegel Goutier



Tafawa Balewa Square (horse racing court in the colonial days) © Hegel Goutier
Iron metallurgy probably emerged from ancient Nigeria

MU - Nigeria emerged from centuries of colonialism. It has just celebrated its 50-year anniversary of independence. It was an agglomeration of over 250 ethnic groups, brought together by a colonial administration. The country had challenges of nationhood to grapple with. A 30-month civil war followed independence in 1967. We're trying to build a nation out of multiple entities. Nigeria cannot be expected to resolve such challenges overnight.

Nigeria declared there were no winners or losers following the war, and has since proceeded to build one strong, formidable united nation. Peace is tangible today. In relative terms, Nigeria has not done badly, and the same goes for many other African countries. But we realise that to develop our resources, we have to put our own house in order and deal with the challenges of governance and corruption and we are doing this.

HG - What are the priorities of Nigeria's overseas strategy?

MU - Nigeria is the fourth largest contributor to the peacekeeping forces of the UN and the first in Africa. Today, 3,400 Nigerians keep the peace in Sudan and our positions and proposals for Ivory

Coast were consistent with our peace-building policy for the country.

On the business front, Nigeria is an open market. We do not pick and choose. We value our friendship with traditional partners in Europe and America, likewise our new friends in China, India and elsewhere who are helping to build our economy. We have no enemies and want to have many more friends.

HG - What part does the African diaspora in your foreign policy?

Many of those who went to Haiti are from the eastern part of Nigeria. We are running a special programme for the diaspora, sending experts, physicians, lawyers, teachers to African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. Nigeria's diaspora organisation, Nido, reaches out to the entire African diaspora. Our destiny is inextricably linked to the Blacks in the diaspora. Our foreign policy reflects a black consciousness. Wherever a black person is oppressed, the Nigerian feels he too is oppressed and has a moral duty to assist. Strengthening relations with the diaspora is one of our top foreign policy objectives. **H.G.**

Space research and technology

At the time Dr. Dere Awosika, Permanent Secretary of the Nigerian Ministry of Science and Technology met with The Courier, her department had completed an outline of the new science policy in the country.

This will provide more resources to the twenty plus parastatal research institutions that collaborate in a network with over 100 universities. Research in Nigeria covers areas of health (use of nanotechnology), new materials, engineering raw materials, information technology, biotechnology (gamma rays in the service of food processing, tissue culture, modification of plants) and space technology. The first earth observation satellite built by Nigerians, N-SAT1, has been in operation for over 7 years. At the time of going to press, two others; N-Sat2 and N-SatX with higher resolution power, also built in Surrey, UK were ready to launch from a Russian base.

Nothing less than helping Nigeria to become... a world power

Interview with David Macrae, EU Ambassador



David Macrae, EU Ambassador © Hegel Goutier

David Macrae, a British national, was appointed Ambassador of the European Union's delegation to Nigeria in May 2010. An economist and specialist in agricultural science, after working at the European Commission Brussels headquarters on cooperation with ACP countries, he acted as Permanent Representative of the EU with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). In his earlier career, Ambassador Macrae was also economics advisor to the British government and went on to teach economics at the University of Nairobi in Kenya. Ambassador Macrae spoke to *the Courier* about the main themes of European cooperation with Nigeria, analyzing the country's economic and political potential on both an African and global scale.

Interview

David Macrae – The aftermath of the elections, is a very special moment in Nigeria's history. As regards the cooperation between this country and the EU,

2010 was the year when the projects under the 10th EDF began to be implemented, since the Strategy Document for the country and the national indicative plan were signed only in November 2009. In spite of this, 84% of the total of €677M allocated has already been earmarked.

The sum under the 10th EDF while significant in itself, represents less than 1% of the country's total budget. The aid we provide is therefore limited in the context of the needs of a country with a population of more than 140 million inhabitants, out of which 60% live below the poverty line. This is, of course, yet more reason to use the money advisedly, in sectors where its added value can be maximized.

HG – What are the priority areas for cooperation between the EU and Nigeria?

DM – First of all, governance, to help the country set up a legal and institutional framework strong enough to allow it to make better use of its resources than in the past. Ever since its independence, back in October 1960, Nigeria has had to face up to the challenge of unifying a divided nation with a coastal region where living conditions are better than in the rest of the country. War and military dictatorship then followed, until the establishment of democracy with the 1999 elections. Even then, it was not until 2009 that a long-standing war in the Niger Delta area came to an end, or at least ran out of steam. In addition, the level of corruption is high, mainly because of the weakness of the systems for controlling it.

We have provided a great deal of support for the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), providing it with computer equipment and some of the required expertise. This aid has contributed to the recovery by the State of

\$11bn, nine of which came from financial institutions involved in money laundering. The role of politicians has also been examined, such as that of a former governor of Delta State, who was arrested and extradited from Dubai at the United Kingdom's request and had to return some \$US500M.

Nigeria is experiencing serious problems with the provision of basic services like education, health and electricity. A year ago, the president made this issue and solving the conflict in the Niger Delta his main priorities, along with the holding of fair elections. The EU was the source of significant aid in the run-up to the elections, which were faced with a number of threats. The year 2010 had started with the death of the incumbent president and the swearing in of the vice-president, Goodluck Jonathan, in peaceful circumstances. The elections held in the wake of these events were won by Jonathan, and were far better organized than the three preceding elections that had taken place since the end of the military regime. The INEC (Independent National Electoral Commission), headed by the academic and figure from civil society, Attahiru Jega, enjoys a well-founded reputation for integrity. The European Union provided important support both to the INEC and on a wider scale, to ensure that the elections were adequately resourced.

HG – Did these successful elections lead to increased optimism, both in the country itself and on the part of its backers?

DM – Yes. The president's agenda seems to enjoy widespread support. There is a feeling of hope, but a lot of expectations too. We cannot say that everything is perfect just yet. Public administration must be improved, and the Millennium



Third mainland bridge linking Lagos Island to the mainland © Hegel Goutier
Nigeria is experiencing serious problems with the provision of basic services

Development Goals must be reached as regards, for example, the provision of drinking water, immunization against TB, HIV-AIDS and polio. Nigeria is one of the last countries where this disease is endemic. This is what the EU will stress when the time comes for mid-term evaluation in 2015. We would also like to see ic Partnership Agreements (EPAs).

HG – What kind of progress on EPAs?

DM – Ideally, we would like to see progress at the ECOWAS level, given that Nigeria represents half of the population of the organization, and so we are strongly encouraging the country to work with us with a view to concluding an agreement by the end of this year. In October, politicians and high-level experts from both two sides will meet in Abuja to evaluate progress so far.

HG – Given the problems that you have highlighted, is optimism regarding Nigeria – and by extension Africa, for which it acts as an economic engine – not misplaced?

DM – The world sees Africa differently from how it did ten years ago. Six of the ten highest figures for economic growth have been recorded on this continent, and one of these six is Nigeria, with a growth

rate of 7.5%. There was a lot of interest in China, India and Brazil, but eyes are now on Nigeria. And not only the eyes of Europe: this is a global phenomenon. But the question of governance is still a crucial one. Healthy development implies noticeable improvements in the standard of living, and after peace and security have been established, what is needed is good governance.

To sum up, EU aid is focused on peace (for example, we have prioritized the peace process in the Delta of Niger Delta), on the fight against corruption undertaken by the government and the fair running of elections, and on good governance in general in terms of the State providing better services to the population. We always bear in mind the fact that our cooperation with Nigeria has consequences for other African countries. Owing to the country's resources (gas, for example), if good governance enables it to flourish, this progress will have a knock-on effect elsewhere, and all the more so because of the country's access to a large and dynamic diaspora, with three million people in the US and one and a half million in the UK. Many of these people have established careers in sectors such as banking, finance and the sciences, not only in these countries but in the western world as a whole. **H.G.**



Lagos City Hall © Hegel Goutier
A priority area to allow Nigeria to make better use of its resources than in the past

EU Aid to Nigeria

Combatting poor governance to unleash a vast potential

The fundamental aim of European aid to Nigeria, comparatively small in relation to the country's needs, is to assist it in bringing about improvements to governance at both federal and regional levels. This will enable the nation to make the most of its resources to fight poverty.

EU and Nigeria cooperation was slowed by a payment freeze resulting from the lack of credibility of the 2007 presidential elections, the European Parliament demanding the suspension of development aid. Dialogue between the two parties resumed in 2009, prompting the EU's earmarking of €677M* for Nigeria under the 10th EDF (2008-2013).

Within this sum, the sectors prioritised by the two parties are peace and security (€166M)*, good governance and human rights (€297M)*, trade and regional integration (€105M)*. Other key sectors are energy, environmental protection and the mitigation of the effects of climate change (€99M)*.

Eight initiatives are detailed in the EU's 2011 Annual Action Programme (AAP) on EU-Nigeria cooperation. They include a programme of support for the Niger Delta which aims to tackle the causes of the violence in the region, poor governance, chronic unemployment and the flagrant lack of public services and facilities.

Other projects contained in the 2011 AAP concern good governance at a national level and in numerous regions. Specific projects will be implemented to fight corruption, drugs and organised crime, such as medical and social aid for drug users and programmes to raise awareness in schools, the home and in the community about how to live healthier and more productive lives.

Other support is foreseen to the justice sector to facilitate access to the courts for poor people and other marginalised

groups including women, children, the infirm and people who are HIV-positive. Funding will also be used to strengthen the respective legal systems of the federal government and regional authorities. Money has also been allocated to bring about reforms in governance at federal, State and local levels in three northern and three southern States.

In addition to the sum allocated improving basic services in the Niger Delta, six states will benefit from an €80M allocation for the "reform of the provision of water supply and sanitary services".

Together the eight projects contained in the 2011 Action Plan come to €475, half of which will be channelled through the United Nations and World Bank agencies with the remainder disbursed through open calls to tender. **H.G.**

*http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_9243_en.htm
European Union @ United States partnership in action



Abuja. City highway under construction © Hegel Goutier
EU funding supports regional integration among other priorities

Permanent ministerial dialogue between Nigeria and EU



Michaela Wright © Hegel Goutier

Nigeria and the European Union have a permanent political dialogue at ministerial level. "This dialogue," explains Michaela Wright, Desk Officer for Nigeria at the European External Action Service (EEAS), "centres on the same priorities as our relations with the African Union; peace and security, good governance and human rights, trade and regional integration along with a focus on energy environment and other key factors for development". Given the importance

of Nigeria in the region and in Africa as a whole, it is only natural that in addition to Nigeria-specific issues both parties are also keen to extend discussions to regional issues.

The political dialogue takes place on a partnership basis, says Michaela Wright. For example, when the subject of migration and development was recently on the agenda, Nigeria was not slow to defend the rights of its diaspora in European countries. **H.G.**

Opposition critics

Anti-system rather than anti-Head of State

Opposition critics of the new president, Goodluck Jonathan, have yet to single out a line of attack. They are more critical of the closed nature of the actual system of governance which, they say, is open to police violence and corruption, than of the President himself. However, they also cast doubt over the new President's ability to combat such scourges.

General Muhammadu Buhari, who came second in the presidential elections of April 2011 with 32.4% of the vote compared with Jonathan's 58.89%, is the most ascerbic opponent. Leader of the CPC, (Congress for Progressive Change), a party based in the North, he has demanded the annulment of the elections and filed a complaint against the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the institution that ran the election process.

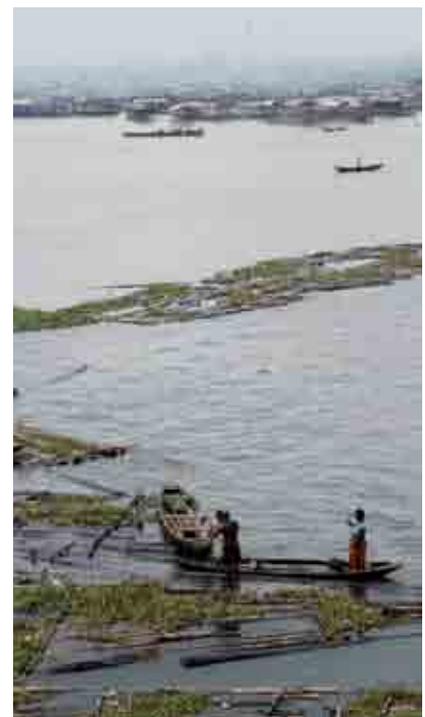
The Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) whose leader, Nuhu Ribadu, came 3rd in the presidential race, but whose party is the main opposition party in the House, has a reputation as a moderate. However, his 'elder', Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, does not mince his words: "*The People's Democratic Party (PDP) government has shown its failure to provide basic infrastructure to the people. Electricity is the most essential service, a propeller of every nation, yet we cannot enjoy it. Isn't this enough to send them packing?*"

The CPC, ACN and the ANPP (All Nigeria People Party) of Ibrahim Shekar, all highlight President Jonathan's indecisiveness. They say that he has failed to submit on time the names of prospective ministers to Parliament so that by the beginning of July, a full two months after his inauguration, only eight of about 36 ministers had already taken office. The opposition raises questions about his ability to tackle the challenges ahead, such as reining in the police force

in order to respect better basic human rights, or to getting to grips with tackling corruption. On the latter point, the political parties share their cause with a section of civil society, except that civil society prefers that the President, rather than his opponents, lead the fight. **H.G.**



Lagos Island downtown © Hegel Goutier
The solution is to provide more education and health service



Fishermen at the Lagos island coast © Hegel Goutier
A better society needs to be built

Nigerian NGOs: more pragmatic and less critical



Lagos © Hegel Goutier

The PDP government has shown Nigerians its failure to provide basic infrastructure for the people

One explanation why NGOs are presently less vocal in levelling criticism against the government could simply be that honeymoon period traditionally enjoyed by new heads of states. Although NGOs continue to take the government to task on what it should be doing in the short-term, they seem to be more focused on finding practical ways of dealing with current concerns.

Chom Bagu, head of Search for Common Ground, an NGO set up in 2004, explains that the violence that has spread through the country since the end of the military regime in 1999 is concentrated in two hot spots, the North, and especially the states of Kano and Kaduna, where it has a religious character, and the Niger Delta, stemming from the region's demand for control of its own wealth. The organisation uses the media to promote "commonalities" - interests shared by the whole of the population. Since September 2010, the NGO has re-integrated into society young men from the Niger (3,000 to date) who were formerly recruited by armed groups.

Maryam Idris Othman is chair of directors of the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN), which is based in Abuja but groups associations from all of Nigeria's states. Religion has a significant influence on political decisions as she explains, "Islam encompasses all aspects of life". The director goes on to detail some of the group's activities "As well as setting up education centres for adults, more than 200 Islamic schools, four hospitals and three orphanages for girls, FOMWAN is working to raise awareness among Muslim women about democratic values and governance. The association tries to work for a better relationship between the two communities," she says. But she adds: "we are women, and we cannot be impartial when our husbands and children are killed. But after the crises, we provided both practical and psychological assistance throughout the country." FOMWAN dialogues with a number of Catholic women's associations on a regular basis. Maryam Idris Othman says she's optimistic in the wake of the last elections, but believes that the new government must work quickly since, "time waits for no one."

Early warning system

The Accra-based West Africa Network for Peace building (WANEP) has focused on alerting civil society and the public to the unintended potential consequences of untoward declarations of politicians, by setting up an early warning system. The group also tries to involve women in peace building. Ifeany C. Okechukwu, coordinator of the Nigerian branch, highlights women's long history way in this field such as in Sierra Leone. WANEP was behind the setting-up of the Africa Peace Building Institute, and works in collaboration with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The Cleen Foundation is active in the areas of public security and justice. The group's director, Chinedu Yves Nwagu, says that its most important role is to contribute to the building of a fairer society through practical actions, or, focusing on supply rather than demand. This is why CLEEN is working, for instance, on training programmes for the police in the fight against crime. "The solution is not to buy more weapons, but to provide more education and health services", he explains. Nigeria, he says, is a society in transition, one which has only held four elections since the end of dictatorship. "The average Nigerian was satisfied with the outcome of the recent elections. There is still a lot to do, of course, such as improving electricity supply which would bring down production costs, and creating jobs etc." This is all the more reason, concludes Nwagu, for complete transparency in the awarding of public contracts, for example. He is positive about the future, but at the same time, is keeping a watchful eye on identifying possible areas of abuse in the sectors covered by his foundation. **H.G.**

Femi Kuti: Afrobeat's undisputed heir

Okechukwu Umelo

When Femi Kuti was 18 years old, his father, afrobeat pioneer Fela Kuti, gave him the opportunity to perform a solo. The Nigerian musician had been playing with his father's band since he was 16, so was no stranger to concerts. Today, Femi, now 49, inspires other types of shaking. His music entralls listeners with its universal appeal, thanks to funky melodies, conscious lyrics and highly danceable rhythms.

Born in London and raised in Lagos, Nigeria, Femi quit school in 1978 to play alto saxophone in his father's band. This was the heyday of Fela and the genre he created – afrobeat. Femi essentially launched his career in 1985, when he was forced to front Fela's 40-piece band, 'Egypt '80', during a performance at the Hollywood Bowl in the United States. His father had been arrested. Femi stepped up that night, wowing the packed crowd by blowing his saxophone in that rude,

muscular and over-confident style that Fela fans had grown to know and love.

Distinct, with a familiar fervour

Femi ended up leading the band for the next two years but broke away to form his own group, 'Positive Force', upon his father's return in 1986. A major turning point in Femi's life was in 1997, when his father died of complications from AIDS. Since that day, Femi has been the foremost standard bearer of afrobeat, bringing it to new audiences.

Comparisons to Fela are inevitable. Like his father, he is a dynamic multi-instrumentalist and exuberant performer but with his own distinct afrobeat sound. Like his father, his lyrics are fuelled with socially conscious, anti-establishment fervour, albeit less controversially. Songs such as 'Sorry sorry', 'Truth don die' and 'Day by Day' lambast corruption, shed light on rampant poverty and other social ills and call on the African masses to strive for change and never forget their past.

Fela would be proud.

Nigerian ingenuity fuels Nollywood's surge

It's 1992. A Nigerian businessman desperately trying to sell a large shipment of blank video cassettes uses them to produce a cheap local film. 'Living in Bondage', the story of a man haunted by his deceased wife's ghost, becomes an instant hit, selling more than half a million copies. Nollywood is born.

Nigeria's film industry is the world's second largest in terms of the number of films produced annually, surpassing Hollywood and hot on the heels of Bollywood. It is also one of the largest employers in Nigeria. With an average shoestring budget of US\$20,000 each, around 200 films are digitally produced every month, mostly for the home video market where they sell for less than two dollars apiece. This cuts production costs, produces healthy profits and ensures that the African masses – many of whom cannot afford to go to the cinema or reach one easily – can purchase a copy. To ensure their global appeal, most heavily marketed Nollywood films are in English, with plots that Africans worldwide can truly relate to.

Annual industry revenues are between US\$250-500 million a year, in spite of trying conditions, rampant piracy, scarce resources and criticisms of poor quality. What's more, Nollywood's success has helped inspire the rise of other African film industries, such as Ghana's 'Ghallywood'.

While the industry continues to call for increased government and foreign investment, new funding sources are becoming available, and producers are increasingly choosing enhanced quality and industry training over quantity. The Oscars are not far away. **O.U**



Before his concert in Belgium, October 2008 © Marie-Martine Buckens



Cynthia Amadi, famous Nollywood star © Hegel Goutier

Nollywood - the new film empire - documented

Frank Ikegwuono is the embodiment of Nigeria's young and vibrant cinema industry. In recent years, it has overtaken the American film industry to become, after India, the second largest producer of films worldwide. Ikegwuono is an actor, director and producer for *Urbanmingles Entertainment*, a Canadian corporation. He is the publisher of an annual, 'Who's Who' of entertainment in Nigeria, where the majority of space is taken up by film industry names.

The publication has been officially endorsed in Nigeria by the Federal Ministry of Information and Communications. "I am conscious that the sudden appearance of Nigerian cinema (known as 'Nollywood') is both a symbol and an announcement of the arrival of Nigeria, and also of Africa, on the world scene," Ikegwuono told *the Courier*.

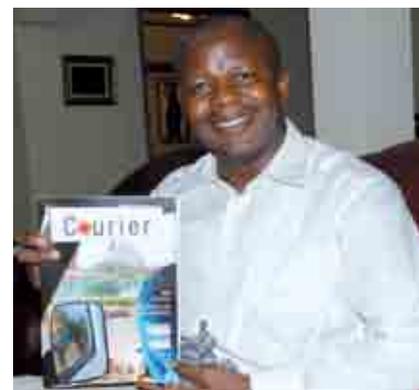
Ikegwuono is highly knowledgeable about Nigerian cinema, its roots, the fruition single project and the industry's highs and lows. He talks about Nollywood as if it were a screenplay. In its early years in the 1990s, young pirates copied American and Indian films. Those who earned money from the activity managed to buy basic film

equipment and started to imitate foreign productions, but with a unique African flavour. These films were firstly sold cheaply on video, and then shown on TV stations chains, some of which had been specifically set up for the purpose.

Africa watches Africa

These former pirate producers and directors then began to use real scriptwriters. Some of the beautiful actresses and handsome actors who featured in the films rapidly became stars commanding ever higher salaries. Six different directors frequently adapted the same script which was acted by the same small group of stars whose appearance would guarantee a film's success. The screenplay, acting and quality and picture quality were not important: the magic ingredients were melodrama, tears, situation comedy and lots of laughs. Nigerian film directors won over their audience with something new that could not be found in imported films. They touched on something close to the heart of their fellow Nigerians who stopped watching the American blockbusters, and even the Bollywood films that they had been passionate about. Nollywood meant that for the first time, Africa was watching Africa.

Ikegwuono says that Nigerian cinema now needs a quality revolution. It has to reach out to other directors and attract foreign productions, he says, and above all, European film companies who would be able to save 40% of their respective budgets by shooting their films in Africa. "We must be more demanding about quality", he concludes. This is what is behind his brainchild, the Nigeria Entertainment International Film Festival and Awards ceremony. **H.G.**



Frankie Ike (Frank Ikegwuono) © Hegel Goutier

Buzzing Abuja

Abuja is packed with creative people, almost all of whom are young and cosmopolitan - just like the city itself. To name a few of its up and coming residents: La'olú Senbanjo, a designer and singer known for his 'Africa mystical art', especially charcoal on canvas where people and symbolic objects are entangled with the intricacy of lace. The song 'God has given me', which has become almost a second national anthem, was released by Styl-Plus, the group of producer and musician, Sunky who recorded the track in his own studios. Many talented artists also regularly record at Iroko Record Marketing. 'Caku republic', the recently-released album of Chics, a composer, rapper, and saxophonist, is a must have. The young Jamaican, Roberta Millerm, is bidding her time as a backing singer while she awaits her own opportunity for stardom. Her voice is both husky and as smooth as velvet ...

Another to watch is Tom Saat, a photographer and reporter for the BBC's, 'Time Out' programme. Jeneviève Aken



Jeneviève Aken © Hegel Goutier

has shown outstanding creative talent as a fashion designer, photographer and fashion show organiser and has been a model herself for the brilliant designer, Chris Aire. Zainab Mohammed who works for TOP25, a magazine distributed free of charge, writes about all the movers and shakers in Abuja. **H.G.**



Chics, Roberta Miller and Sunky © Hegel Goutier

NIDO: Nigeria's flagship Diaspora platform

The Nigerians in Diaspora Organisation (NIDO) is a non-profit organisation that helps Nigerians in the Diaspora harness their skills and resources to support the country's development.

Established in 2000, NIDO is an initiative of former President Olusegun Obasanjo, with departments in Europe, the Americas, Asia and Africa. NIDO branches organise networking activities between Nigerian

Diaspora communities and partners and help build national capacity through investment, volunteering and mentoring. They champion the views of their Diaspora communities on issues affecting their home and host country relationships and promote a positive image of Nigeria abroad, while helping attract investment in the country.

NIDO actively supports the annual Nigerian Diaspora Day, a knowledge-sharing event organised by the Nigerian

Caribbean Diaspora

Three Caribbean countries: Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago and Cuba have embassies in Abuja and a consular representative in Lagos. For Robert Miller, High Commissioner of Jamaica, "Nigeria offers tremendous opportunities for cooperation with Jamaica. We are trying, for instance, to attract Nigerian investors to Jamaica and promote the export of our packaged food products to Nigeria as well as to stimulate joint ventures between the two countries in cultural industries".

The Caribbean community in Nigeria is largely Lagos-based. Lorna Opanubi, one of its spokespersons said that Caribbean citizens number around 300 including 200 Jamaicans who are mainly well-qualified experts, doctors, lawyers, laboratory technicians and teachers. Ms. Opanubi graduated as a nurse in the United Kingdom and arrived in Nigeria in 1973. She has created a training school for hotel restaurants, currently attended by 80 students.

The contest to elect Miss Global Nigeria held on June 19 2011 in Lagos, whose winner will participate in the Miss Global International contest, was sponsored by the High Commission of Jamaica. It brought greater public awareness of the Caribbean community in Nigeria. **H.G.**



Miss Global Nigeria 2011, Judith Illechukwu crowned on June 19th, 2011 by the High Commissioner of Trinidad & Tobago to Nigeria, Mr Nyahuma Obika. © Hegel Goutier

National Volunteer Service and gathering hundreds of professionals from Nigeria, the Diaspora and other entities around the world. In 2008, NIDO Europe launched a US\$200 million Nigerian Diaspora Investment Fund. **H.G.**

NIDO Europe website: www.nidoeuropes.org



Africa-EU Strategy meeting homes in on democracy and economic growth

The annual meeting of the respective African Union (AU) and European Union (EU) Commissions took place in Brussels, 31 May-1 June. Known as the College-to-College (C-2-C), it further strengthened political and technical cooperation between the two institutions and provided fresh impetus to implement the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and debated political issues in some African nations including South Sudan and Ivory Coast. For the first time, several Chief Executives of the African Regional Economic Communities took part in discussions.

Led by President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, and Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Jean Ping, there was a particular focus on democracy and economic growth at this fifth 'C-2-C', given the political turbulence in North Africa and global economic flux.

The Strategic Partnership between Africa and the EU has set common objectives beyond the traditional donor-recipient focus, in a dialogue of equal counterparts. The EU is the biggest trading partner for the African continent. In 2009, 36% of total imports to Africa originated in Europe. For Africa, the EU institutions are also the second biggest donor worldwide for Africa. Under its various financial instruments, the European Commission has committed €24.4bn between 2007-2013 to support the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and its thematic partnerships¹, EC president, José Manuel Barroso, reiterated EU support to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), leading to a fairer distribution of the continent's resources. "Africa's resources should serve its own stability and prosperity. In the Commission, we support the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and will table a legislative

proposal in October to oblige companies to publish information about their activities in developing countries", he told a press conference. The proposal falls in the ambit of the Strategy's aim to improve economic governance.

In the areas of trade, infrastructure and regional integration, the EU and AU agreed to hasten the pace of negotiations on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) and make fisheries agreements more sustainable and mutually beneficial.

Action on the MDGs

"Urgent and decisive action" on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was highlighted in the joint statement on the meeting.

Both parties strengthened their resolve to accelerate implementation of the Africa Land Policy Guidelines including support of establishment of international guidelines on land access and other natural resources. The importance of organic farming was recognised. A kick off workshop aimed at drawing up a Strategy on Organic farming development in Africa, took place in Brussels, 11-12 July 2011. In the science and technology and innovation sphere, the first senior officials' meeting of Africa-EU

High level Science and Technology policy dialogue is due to take place, 10-11 October, 2011 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The AU and EU jointly voiced their on-going support for the African space agency project and establishment of a space sciences institute in the context of the pan-African university. **D.P.**

¹ European Commission statistics

The eight partnerships

- Peace and security
- Democratic Governance and Human rights
- Migration, Mobility and Employment
- Trade, Infrastructure and Regional Integration
- Environment and Climate Change
- Economic Governance
- Millennium Development Goals
- Science, Technology and Innovation

Find out more on:
www.africa-eu-partnership.org

Proposal for a new global agricultural policy

Following their Paris meeting on the 22 and 23 June 2011, the G20 agriculture ministers decided to improve the regulation of agriculture markets and prevent food crises. Dacian Ciolos, European Commissioner for Agriculture, said these measures were “entirely in line” with his proposed reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), due to be put forward in September 2011.

Agriculture was the focus at the negotiating table of the G20 - formed by the European Union and the 19 richest countries in the world. This is a first for a members' club which was set up in 1999 after a succession of financial crises. It's an 'intrusion' that is justified by the spectre of speculation in food commodities, an activity that plays a part in creating food crises. Not forgetting the increasing effect that oil prices have on food prices ever since biofuel cultivation began to emerge on a grand scale. However, this subject was only alluded to in Paris.

The action plan agreed in June, designed to regulate the markets and curb price volatility, has several objectives: to regulate the agricultural derivatives markets; to strengthen international policy coordination in order to respond more effectively to food crises; to develop risk management tools for the poorest countries; and to increase information on and transparency of markets.

Dacian Ciolos welcomed the proposals, which he said were “entirely in line with the challenges of reforming the CAP”. The correlation between sustainable development and agriculture was one of the common points: “The increase in agricultural production has to go hand in hand with proper management of resources. More account must also be taken of agricultural systems of all sizes, from smallholders to major producers.” The Commissioner was at pains to point out that all these issues will be addressed in the CAP reform proposals.

Under the G20 action plan, the EU has also committed to provide better statistical data about the European agriculture

market. If detailed figures are published, so the G20 thinking goes, this should limit speculation. The data will be incorporated into the new Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS), housed at the FAO in Rome. All that remains is to convince the private sector to participate. This is no small challenge when you consider that just four agribusiness cor-

The increase in agricultural production has to go hand in hand with proper management of resources. More account must also be taken of agricultural systems of all sizes, from smallholders to major producers

porations, known collectively as ABCD (Archer Daniels Midland, Bunge, Cargill and Louis Dreyfus) control over 90% of the global grain trade.

The CAP: a less negative impact on developing countries

In its conclusions, the G20 warns that food security could be compromised by commercial barriers. “As far as export restrictions and bans are concerned, I do not deny that, in certain circumstances, these measures may sometimes be necessary,” Dacian Ciolos conceded, while also saying that “the CAP is having a less negative impact on the other partners”.

The G20 ministers also announced their support for a pilot project to create a humanitarian food reserves system. Responsibility for conducting the feasibility study has been entrusted to the World Food Programme, which would have access to sufficient food reserves to react to crises in a timely manner. Some questions remain unanswered, something that the European Commissioner for Agriculture recognised: “Where will these reserves be produced? Who will pay for them? Who will manage them? In what circumstances will they be released? How do we coordinate the use of these reserves with international trade?” **M.M.B.**

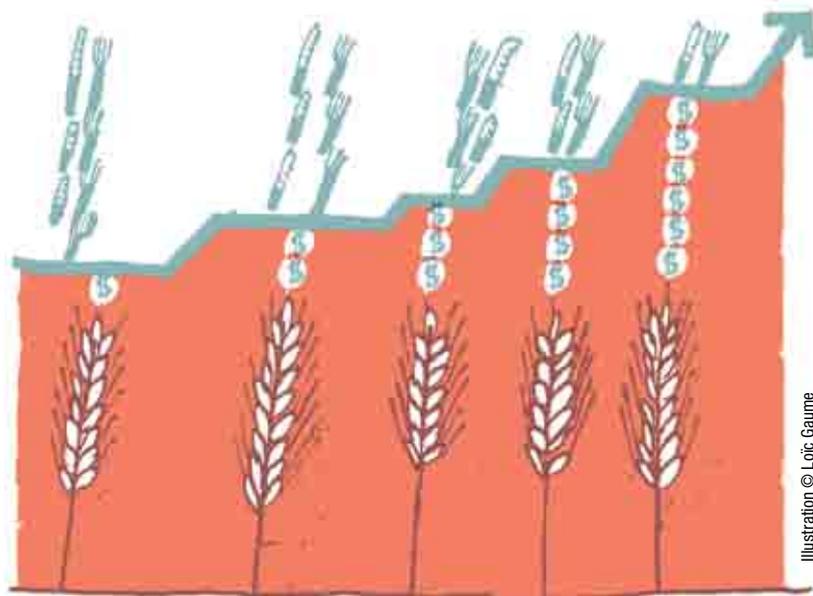


Illustration © Loïc Galume

ACP and EU Ministers talk migration, trade and South Sudan

Migration, European Union support to South Sudan and trade issues topped the agenda of the ACP-EU Council of Ministers held on May 31st in Brussels.

Chairing the meeting, Hungary's Foreign Minister, János Martonyi, whose country was, at the time, in the EU's rotating presidency chair, said that migration is currently a very sensitive issue in the EU. Migration problems will only be resolved, he said, if the EU strengthens its cooperation with the countries of origin of migrants: "We will keep the issue on the agenda and continue our work."

The joint ACP-EU Council reached an agreement on easing the way for South Sudan's admission to the Cotonou Convention, if the country applies for membership. South Sudan became inde-

pendent on June 9th 2011. ACP Secretary General, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, who was acting co-chair of the meeting, said that the country faces huge challenges such as a complete lack of transportation, energy and social infrastructure. The EU has, to date, allocated €200M to help develop the new state. The Hungarian Foreign Minister stressed that the EU should not forget about North Sudan, which also faces serious economic and social problems.

EU Ministers also regretted the slow pace of negotiations on concluding Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) - free trade agreements - between EU and ACP states. The Caribbean region, CARIFORUM, is the only regional grouping to have signed so far. "In spite of the gaps between the philosophical and legal approaches of the negotiating partners, reaching an agreement is in the interest of both parties," said Minister Martonyi.

ACP Ministers also debated trade issues at their meeting 27th-28th May in Brussels, which preceded the joint Council. "To all intents and purposes, the international trading regime is not evolving in a manner as would take on board the development needs of the poorest countries," said Secretary General Chambas. Rising fuel and food prices were both hindrances to poverty alleviation as well as the challenges of climate change and the phenomenon of land-grabbing for biofuels cultivation, which threatens to undermine food security and livelihoods of millions of people.

The future of the ACP group after the expiry of the Cotonou Convention (2000-2020) was also on the agenda. The ACP has set up its own working group to look at options under the auspices of Ambassador of Mauritius in Brussels, Sutiawan Gunesssee. "In my humble view, the ACP group must take a lead in the process and decide on its own future rather than to be caught by surprise on the eve of the expiry of Cotonou 2020," Secretary General Chambas told assembled journalists. The ACP working group in the EU Council is expected to set up a reflection group to define relations with ACP nations post-2020. **D.P.**

European Commission proposes €30bn for new EDF

The European Commission's proposals for the EU budget 2014-2020, foresee €29,998M for ACP countries under a new European Development Fund (EDF) and a further €321M for the EU's Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs). Discussions with the 27 EU Member States, who must approve the final package, are still at a very early stage. All ACP countries, bar South Africa and Cuba, receive development funding from the EDF, which has traditionally been financed directly by EU Member States. The proposed sum compares with the 10th EDF's (2008-2013) €22,682M budget out of which €21,966M is allocated to ACP countries and €286M to the OCT with €430M going to the European Commission to support EDF implementation.

In the EU's proposed financial perspectives, 2014-2020, a €70bn sum is proposed for external relations under the budget heading, 'Global Europe', or an increase of 71 per cent for external policies - other than with ACP countries - compared with the current 2007-2013 budget. This budget heading includes a €16bn sum for European Neighbourhood Policy countries of the Middle East and North Africa and €21bn for a development and cooperation instrument to contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in particular, poverty alleviation and improving education and health.



Migration high on the EU's agenda. Boat carrying migrants arrives at Lampedusa Italy, May 2011 © Associated Press/Reporters



Musa: 'Autopportrait Noires' © Hegel Goutier

Musa. A Sudanese art icon

Musa (Hassan Musa) is an African artist whose work has been exhibited in an impressive number of prestigious venues, among them the Venice Biennale, Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, San Diego Museum of Art, Mori Art Museum in Tokyo and the Johannesburg Art Gallery. He was in Belgium for an exhibition at the Museum of Tapestry and the Museum of Fine Arts in Tournai and to present a paper at the "Icons of Globalization" conference at the Pascal Polar Gallery, Brussels.

Hegel Goutier

Musa has created a technique, a tapestry of a new genre. Another of the artist's hallmarks include revisiting the classics in the history of art like Manet's Olympia or icons of history in general like Josephine Baker, the Hottentot Venus, Bin Laden or Ché Guevara. He often borrows their bodies for his self-portraits. This ping-pong between him and the icons of art, history or fantasy could be summed up in one of his dictums: "The images are like blows: you get them, and you give them."

Interview:

HG-You have captured a portrait of a particular icon, the image of Bin Laden released by the U.S. authorities reflected in a mirror. Don't you run the risk of being misunderstood?

M - No, my point is so obvious that it is not possible. Except for the very few people in Sudan who do not appreciate that my work shows female nudes. But overall, people do

see things in perspective and understand the meaning of my work.

HG Many people consider that Art and how it is perceived today have become globalised. This would make you like all of the artists of the world, a Western artist. Do you agree?

M - Yes. Globalization did not begin with the fall of the Berlin Wall which brought together East and West but during the period of colonialisation when European states divided Africa amongst themselves. Each nation took its own share and tried to form people in its own image. Today, there are Africans who cannot write in their mother tongue.

HG-How would you describe your work – soft paintings almost like portrait photography and tending to abstract, frolicking with an image of Epinal?

M-I reflect upon the images, shapes and colour. My pleasure lies in starting from pure technique and creating something that pleases the eye. My passion is drawing. I do Arabic calligraphy, watercolour and oil paint. I mix it all up to create images on

transparent fabric that I paint and repaint, creating layer upon layer. This is a job requiring a lot of energy, but the pleasure of seeing the image appear after a while is extraordinary.

HG – If we take your self-portrait 382 003, how did you create it?

M - Occasionally, I do self-portraits. When I do not have a specific project at hand, it allows me to start again. When I worked on images of Josephine Baker and Sarah Baartman (*Ed*: one of two South African women exposed as Hottentot Venus) who were abused in London and Paris, there was an abhorrent debate in France on 'Black' as if it were a political category. I put myself in this self-portrait between Josephine Baker and Sarah Baartman. I call them self-portraits with dark thoughts. I have other ideas of colour too.

* Along with Fabian Bocart, specialised in the econometrics of the art market who discussed on "Contemporary African Art: a promising investment."

Couleur Café 2011 Brussels' musical cocktail



Alborosie wows the crowd at Couleur Café 2011 © Kevin Manneback

Debra Percival

The Couleur Café music festival in Brussels, 24-26 June 2011 had a big party feel. Eighty thousand people went through the gates at the Tour and Taxis venue and were treated to headliners: Seal, Ziggy Marley and Ivorian, Tiken Jah Fakoly, as well as up and coming artists like Belgian Ghanaian afrobeat singer, Gloria Boateng.

When first launched in 1990, the event was "a tolerant and exotic festival dedicated to fusion music, taking place against Brussels' colourful backdrop rather than in the middle of a no man's land field", says one its organisers. Back then, it featured a

cocktail of African and Afro-Cuban artists. Today, there's a wider mix of music: R & B, hip hop, world afro, reggae, raga, dub, dancehall, Latin, salsa son, raï, rock and dance performed by musicians from Belgium and continents the world over.

This year, Tiken Jah Fakoly's wowed with tracks from his new album, *African Revolution* and Ziggy Marley, son of Bob Marley, sang tunes from his new release, *Wild and Free* as well as covering some of his late father's songs. Former policeman, 'Alborosie', a white Sicilian with blonde dreadlocks who emigrated to Jamaica, gave the crowd a taste of his latest releases: *Soul Pirate* (2008) and *Escape From Babylon* (2009) which pay homage to some of the reggae 'greats': Black Uhuru, Burning Spear, Steel Pulse and Bob Marley.

'SFINKS Mixed' festival The shared discovery of music

Hegel Goutier

Europe once again played host to the SFINKS festival, where the greatest names in music headlined and the artists of the future were revealed. For its 22nd edition which took place from July 29 to 31, 2011 the 'SFINKS Mixed' festival (the festival has always avoided using the term "world music" since all music is considered to be world music) has transformed the small city of Boechout near Antwerp, Belgium into a cosmopolitan capital.

This festival is one of the very few to have managed to hold on to its relaxed feel and affordable entrance fees. It's a monument of the world's cultural heritage. This year, Gypsy culture and the Far East were in the spotlight. As ever, there was a strong African and the Caribbean presence.

More than in the past, the songs of Alpha Blondy, an African star, mirrored the sorrows of his country, Ivory Coast. He won the public over with his sadly topical laments and songs conveying rebelliousness. Joaquin Diaz from the Caribbean country of the Dominican Republic performed a very exciting 'perico ripiao' - a



SFINKS Mixed Festival © Jordi Bover

meringue combining rhythmic brilliance with mellow moments.

SFINKS is a festival where fans come to spot the next exciting thing rather than to listen to well-known musicians. They definitely got their money's worth this year. Lead singer of Bomba Estereo, Li from Colombia is someone to watch. She can be compared with Toto La Momposina or Soraya, two other great musicians from the most Caribbean country of South America.



Performers from all over the world at SFINKS Mixed Festival © Jordi Bover



Indigenous Papuan man wearing a DVD disc as nasal ornament - original photograph by Eric Lafforgue 2008 expo photo © Hegel Goutier

Fetish Modernity

Hegel Goutier

The exhibition on 'Fetish Modernity' which was held at the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren, Belgium, from April 8 to September 4, 2011, marks a trend that has been gaining ground for a few years now in this mecca of culture and numerous ethnographic museums in Europe. The Museo de América - Madrid, Náprstek's Muzeum - Prague, the Museum für Völkerkunde, Vienna, Museum Volkenkunde, Leiden and Etnografiska Museet, Stockholm will also mount their own exhibitions on the same theme. Fetish Modernity is linked to the European project known as RIME (Réseau international Des Musées Ethnographiques), International Network of Ethnographic Museums.

For the curators of the exhibition in Tervuren, Anne-Marie Bouttiaux* and Anna Seiderer, modernity is just a fet-

ishized concept, a cliché, a discrimination.

One section of the exhibition takes a critical look at, "the factory of clichés" that once filled ethnographic museums. Another, "Mystic Village" consists of an installation of objects of worship from diverse faiths, where it would be risky to try and detect modernity according to origin. As well as the simple pleasure of viewing works of great beauty and full of meaning, what you take away from the exhibition is that the real engine of modernism is simply the desire present, in any place or time, to renew artistic production and social practices. As shown in the photographic work of Eric Lafforgue of a Papuan with a CD-ROM as a nose ring, fetishism of any kind engenders the projection of desires, on which we create modernity.

* See our full length interview on The Courier's website www.acp-courier.eu

African Films Available on Demand

In Africa, the field of media and telecommunications is set to experience spectacular growth over the coming years. Operators are already investing heavily in the Internet, mobile phones and television, but the field of film production and distribution remains the weakest link, as African filmmakers often encounter problems in accessing both African and potential non-African audiences, who are often unable to easily buy or rent films. The number of commercial cinemas in Africa is decreasing and films are often distributed illegally in Africa and across the world wide diaspora. Most African producers still rely heavily on European programmes to produce and distribute their films.

In response to this, a new project supported by the ACP Films Programme

will enable viewers to pay a fair price to buy or rent a wide range of African movies and videos, "with the guarantee that money will benefit the directors and not the pirates". This project 'AfricaFilms.tv' is a VOD (video-on-demand) platform that will make African films, TV series, sitcoms, documentaries and cartoons about Africa and the Diaspora available online, all with French, English and Spanish subtitles. The portal is already online in pilot form, and the debugging of the website will be completed this summer. Users can select products by country or by type (film, soap operas, documentary etc.), with both new and older films available. The platform will form an interesting showcase for African products, as well as allowing copyright holders to increase their income and the public to enjoy easier access to these products. **A.M.R.**

MobiCINE: A New Initiative for the Distribution of African Cinema

Andrea Marchesini Reggiani

In April 2011, 70 pupils from the Elementary School of the Patte d'Oie Builders in Dakar enjoyed their first viewing of a film on the big screen: *Le ballon d'or* by Cheick Doukouré. This viewing was one of the first organised as part of the MobiCINE project, which is piloting an innovative system of film screenings in two major West African cities: Dakar and Bamako. In February, 7 “motorcycle units” were equipped with laptops, portable screens, loudspeakers and generators, and operators were trained to organise screenings in schools and social centres in both urban and rural areas. These screenings can be attended for an affordable price (300 FCFA, or 0.45 €), and can also be sponsored by NGOs and other institutions. This “guerrilla” project aims to bring film back to African cities, where cinemas have been closing down. In 1973, there were 80 cinemas in Senegal with 4,461,000 viewers per year. In Dakar, it is now only possible to attend film screenings in three locations: the Sorano National Theatre, the French cultural centre and the city's one cinema complex. The idea behind the project is the “three part” economic model, whereby each part wins: the projectionist, the producers and mobiCINE, which becomes self-sustaining.

In the next few months the feasibility of this model will be assessed and if results are positive the mobiCINE will be extended to other countries. The project was set up by IDmage (Paris) and SOON (Dakar), in partnership with SARAMA FILMS (Bamako) and Studio Sankara (Dakar).



An enraptured audience enjoys a MobiCINE screening in Dakar © mobiCINE



The entire portable cinema 'motorcycle unit' © mobiCINE

Death and Fertility: Haiti's First Appearance in Italy

The Venice Biennial of Contemporary Art saw four new countries presenting their own official pavilions this year: Andorra, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh and Haiti. The presence of these countries at the Biennial represented their participation in the most important global showcase of the contemporary art world. A year and half after its devastating earthquake, Haiti took up the challenge of asserting its position in the cultural world, alongside 88 other nations, with two parallel exhibitions.

The first is "Haiti Kingdom of This World", which was displayed in Fondazione Querini Stampalia, until 31 July 2011. This was an itinerant exhibition curated by the Haitian Giscard Bouchotte, which displayed the work of 15 Haitian artists, including Mario Benjamin and Maxence Denis. The exhibition had already been shown previously in Paris in April/May (see *The Courier* issue 23) and will now tour the globe for the next three years.

The second event was an outdoor exhibition entitled "Death and Fertility", which was held at Riva Sette Martiri until 28 July 2011. It was conceived by Italian artist Daniele Geminiani, and showcased three artists from Port-au-Prince's Atiz Rezistans collective. Along the narrow back streets around The Grand Rue, this community of artisans produce handicrafts for the tourist market out of recycled materials from the city's car repair district. Jean Hérard Celeur and André Eugène are two artists who have no formal training in the arts but grew up in this creative environment of junkyard recycling. Together they set up the Atiz Rezistans project, which expands the collective by training other artists. These artists use ready-made components, thereby combining economic need with creative expression and intellectual reflection.

The founders of the collective, Celeur and Eugène, along with Claude Saintilus, were the three artists featured in the Biennial exhibition. The displays consisted of sculptural collages of the human form made out of junk from Haiti's poor economy, including engine parts and computer entrails,

as well as colourful textile fragments. These expressive sculptures recall fetish effigies and explore aspects of the "Gede" family of spirits, which in the Voodoo religion embody both death and fertility and are celebrated with rituals. From a contemporary-political point of view, some of the pieces also allude to the tragedies of HIV, the earthquake, poverty and political unrest.

The exhibition was displayed in two 12-metre shipping containers, one blue and one red, arranged in a T-shape. Through these containers, the curators aimed to represent the colours of the Haitian flag and the poor neighbourhood near the port of the capital city where the artists live, as well as making reference to Haiti's economy, which is based on exploitation and maritime trade.

The curator, Geminiani, was supported by English photographer Gordon Leah, who has worked with the Atiz Rezistans group for a number of years, carrying out research, writing articles and helping produce texts and images for their website (www.atiz-rezistans.com), available in English, French and Creole. He also produced the videos featured on the



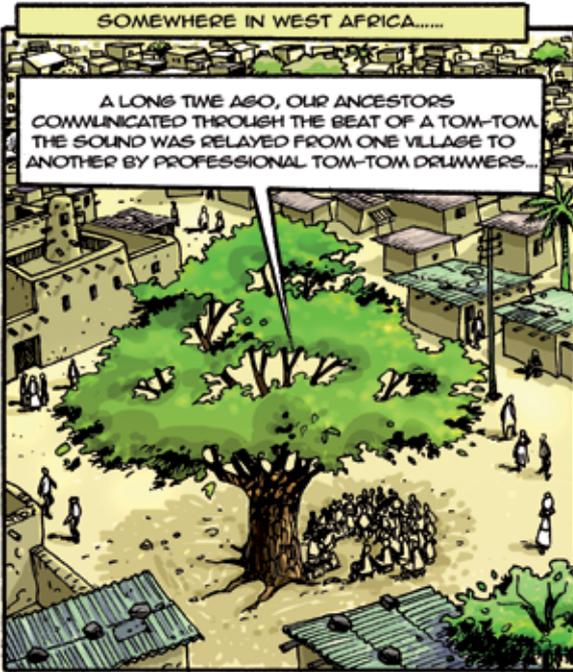
Jean Hérard Celeur, *The horsemen of the Apocalypse*, 2011, skulls, motorbike chassis, metal, wood, wax, paint, 150 x 220 x 110 cm © Daniele Geminiani

exhibition website (www.deathandfertility.org) in which the artists discuss their work from their studios in Port au Prince.

The exhibition aroused great interest in Venice, with the *Financial Times* quoting it as one of their five "must see" of the 2011 Biennial. **H.G.**



Jean Hérard Celeur, sitting on the Riva Sette Martiri. In the background, Russian Billionaire Roman Abramovich's yacht "Luna", is docked in front of the Haiti containers © Daniele Geminiani



SOMEWHERE IN WEST AFRICA.....

A LONG TIME AGO, OUR ANCESTORS COMMUNICATED THROUGH THE BEAT OF A TOM-TOM. THE SOUND WAS RELAYED FROM ONE VILLAGE TO ANOTHER BY PROFESSIONAL TOM-TOM DRUMMERS...



IN THIS WAY, THEY WERE ABLE TO DECIPHER MESSAGES ANNOUNCING A CEREMONY, BIRTH, MARRIAGE, DEATH, FUNERAL, OR DANGER, SUCH AS WAR... THAT CAME FROM A FAR-AWAY VILLAGE!

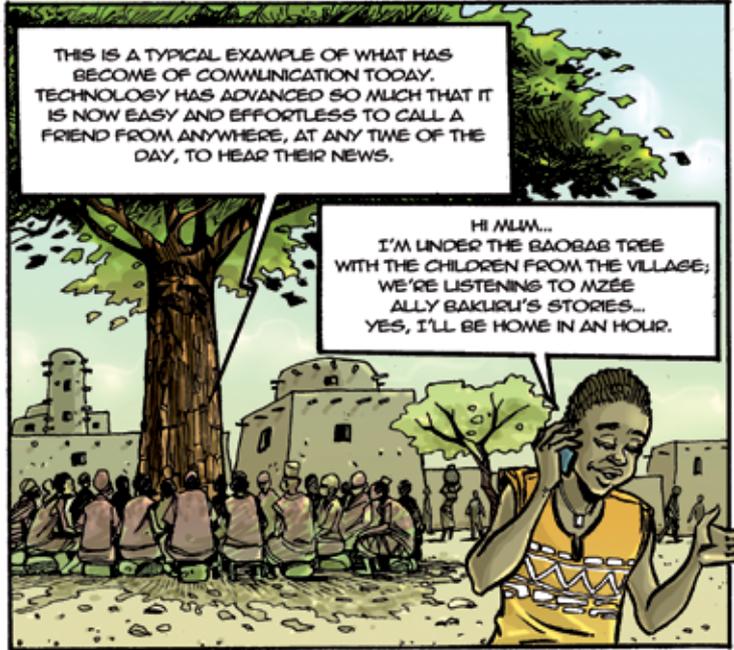


BRRRIING, BRRRIING...

?!



I'M SORRY MZEE ALLY BAKUR, IT'S MY MUM ON THE PHONE. SHE'S CALLING TO FIND OUT WHERE I AM

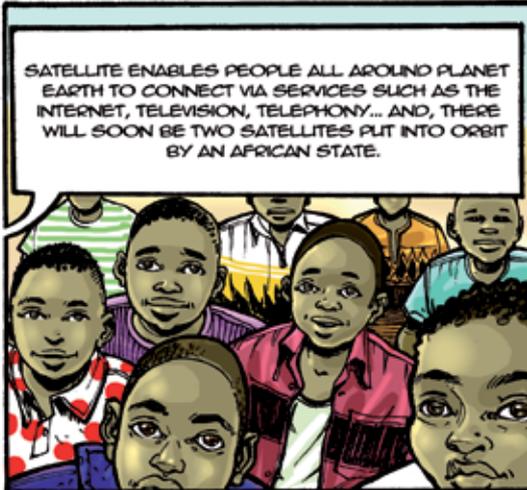


THIS IS A TYPICAL EXAMPLE OF WHAT HAS BECOME OF COMMUNICATION TODAY. TECHNOLOGY HAS ADVANCED SO MUCH THAT IT IS NOW EASY AND EFFORTLESS TO CALL A FRIEND FROM ANYWHERE, AT ANY TIME OF THE DAY, TO HEAR THEIR NEWS.

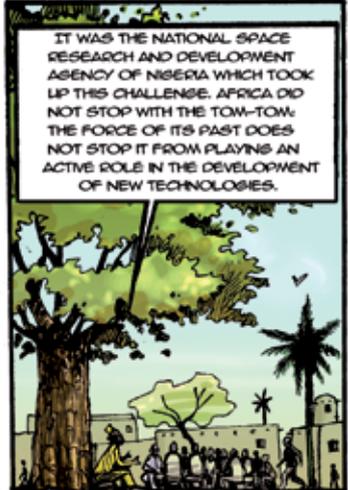
HI MUM... I'M UNDER THE BAOBAB TREE WITH THE CHILDREN FROM THE VILLAGE; WE'RE LISTENING TO MZEE ALLY BAKUR'S STORIES... YES, I'LL BE HOME IN AN HOUR.



WHEN I WAS YOUNG, PEOPLE IN THE VILLAGE CALLED THIS WITCHCRAFT, MAGIC. BUT REMEMBER CHILDREN: SAMBA IS COMMUNICATING WITH HER MUM THANKS TO AN OBJECT THAT WE CAN CALL "SATELLITE!"



SATELLITE ENABLES PEOPLE ALL AROUND PLANET EARTH TO CONNECT VIA SERVICES SUCH AS THE INTERNET, TELEVISION, TELEPHONY... AND, THERE WILL SOON BE TWO SATELLITES PUT INTO ORBIT BY AN AFRICAN STATE.



IT WAS THE NATIONAL SPACE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF NIGERIA WHICH TOOK UP THIS CHALLENGE. AFRICA DID NOT STOP WITH THE TOM-TOM: THE FORCE OF ITS PAST DOES NOT STOP IT FROM PLAYING AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES.

© Studio Malaika & Jason KIBISWA

Word from our Readers

I would like to confirm my appreciation for your articles, in particular the report on South Sudan in issue 22 –
Prof. Giovanni Livi, Brussels - Consultant Cooperation matters and Journalist AIACE International

Comment on issue 23 article on New Mercenaries: “To those who are interested by the privatization of war and the history of private military companies, I highly recommend the lecture of Mr. Bricet des Vallons’ book : ‘Irak, mercenary land’ , which constitutes one of the best analysis on the topic. Unfortunately only in French: “Irak terre mercenaire”-
Sandra X <http://www.acp-eucourier.info/Have-your-say.5.0.html>

Comment on issue 21 article about the village of Ganvie, the village of the water men: “This is a wonderful update and information document on Ganvie. Congratulations! However I found 2 mistakes. First Cotonou is not the capital city of Benin, Porto-Novo is. But you're right, Cotonou is the most populous and busiest town in Benin. Also, Ganvie has never been listed as World Heritage Site, it is just in the “tentative list” - thanks Souayibou X (on-line comment)

BAOBAB for Women’s Human Rights wishes to acknowledge the receipt “The Courier issue 23 in Lagos, Nigeria. The magazine is very useful for our advocacy and to our esteemed library users- thanks,
Linda Aina, Documentation Officer.

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Agenda

L10-12/09: **CIVICUS World Assembly, Montreal (Canada).**
 Event for civil society representatives about civil society's input into global decision-making and how to improve.
www.civicusassembly.org

17-18/09: **Africa Web Summit, Brazzaville (Congo).**
 Pan-African conference about latest web technologies.
www.africawebsummit

21-22/09: **Intermodal Africa, Casablanca (Morocco).**
 Biggest annual Container Ports and Terminal Operations Exhibition and Conference event on the African continent.
www.transportevents.com

14-16/10: **Agri Food Growth in Africa, engaging the private sector, Brussels (Belgium).**
 Forum aiming at strengthening the Agri-Food sector in Africa by encouraging partnerships,

the exchange of best practices and attracting investments.
www.emrc.be

14-16/10: **AidEx, Brusels (Belgium):** a new exhibition and conference aiming at helping the humanitarian aid community improve the delivery of aid The exhibition is dedicated to the supply of essential services and equipment for disaster relief and longer-term humanitarian aid.
www.aid-expo.co.uk.

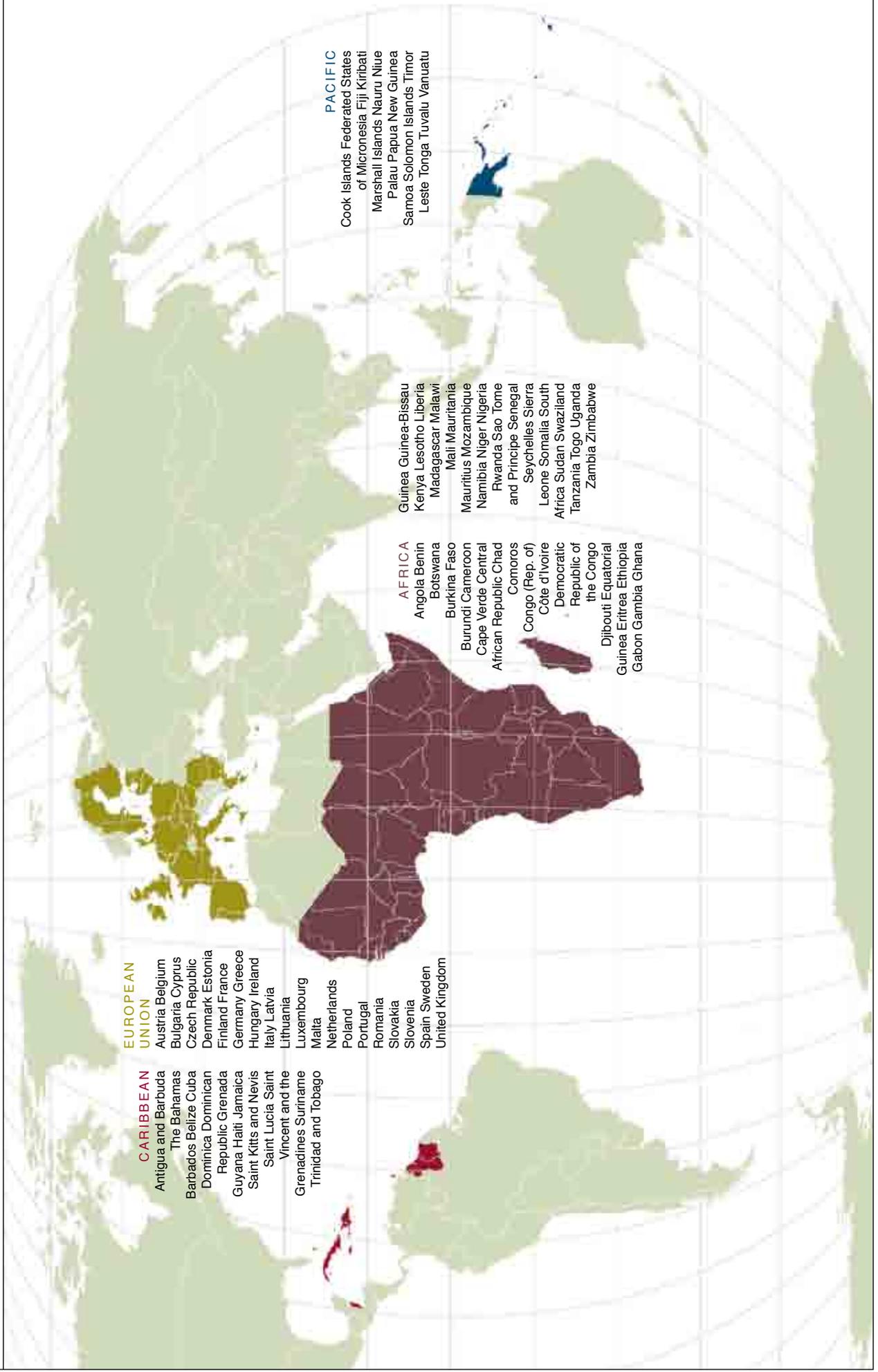
8-10/11: **Forum EURAFRIC Eau & Energie en AFRIQUE, Lyon (France).**
 Event and exhibition aiming at improving the supply of renewable energies in Africa
www.eurafric.org

14-15/11: **4th Euro-Africa Cooperation on ICT Research, Cape Town (South Africa).**
 The Euro-Africa-ICT initiative is an EU-funded project

whose main objective is to strengthen and support the development of Euro-African research projects on ICT.
www.euroafrica-ict.org

15-16/12: **European Development Days, Warsaw (Poland).**
 Yearly development event, the umbrella theme of EDD 2011 will be “Development and Democracy”. The 2010 edition of the EDD attracted 5.000 visitors.
www.eudevdays.eu

Africa – Caribbean – Pacific and European Union countries



The lists of countries published by **The Courier** do not prejudice the status of these countries and territories now or in the future. **The Courier** uses maps from a variety of sources. Their use does not imply recognition of any particular boundaries nor prejudice the status of any state or territory.



Ice sea – Iceland
© Marie-Martine Buckens