

Women: agents of change



Technology for development

Catalysts for progress and innovation
FAO's Jacques Diouf on the New Green Revolution

Interviews

Mary Robinson, Dambisa Moyo,
Kamla Persad-Bissessar and Demetris Christofias



Ministry for Women, Children and People with Disabilities, South Africa

***A fully inclusive society
free from unfair discrimination,
inequality, abuse and
exploitation***

Our core-function is the mainstreaming of gender, disability and children's rights into all programmes of government and society as a whole. We are responsible for monitoring and evaluating that the rights of these groups are protected and promoted in all programmes of government and across all sectors of society. We advocate and co-ordinate programmes to protect and promote the rights of these three groups.

***Impact on the lives of women,
children and people with
disabilities***

The output is prioritisation of the interest of women, children and persons with disabilities in all development programmes in the country. We set goals, monitor progress and report back to the United Nations, African Union, SADC and other multi-lateral organisations with protocols on women, children and people with disabilities that South Africa is party to.

www.wcpd.gov.za

The Honourable Minister Lulu Xingwana



**women, children &
people with disabilities**

Department:
Women, Children and People with Disabilities
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Women rise to the occasion

Richard Synge, Editor



The fact that women joined, fully and vocally, in the protests that led to the downfall of the dictatorships in Tunisia and Egypt is just one among many signals that female emancipation cannot be stopped. It is a powerful force for change, even in countries where traditional views about the place of women still hold sway.

Societies that have, over the centuries, limited the role of women to domestic responsibilities alone still have a long way to go if their females are to get a foot on the ladder of responsibility in politics, business and civil society. But the ongoing changes in the Middle East certainly hold the promise of wider opportunities for all women in future.

The struggle for emancipation and gender equality is ongoing, and it is universal.

In every society there are visible and invisible barriers to women's advancement. These may often be seen as a matter of culture and tradition, maintaining the familiar role of child-bearer and family carer, but they are as often imposed by harsh economic realities.

In the poorest parts of the world, women are frequently unable to move forward because of a stark lack of opportunity and choice. If, as young girls, they have been unable even to start at school, they can rapidly become the most marginalised people in their society, and their powerlessness is compounded as they grow up.

It is also true that girls and women, when given even small opportunities and choices, can become the very people that bring about some of the most beneficial changes in society. Overcoming the toughest barriers from an early age is very good training for the challenges that arise later in life.

But there is much work still to be done if both governments and the wider society in many countries are to recognise – and then change – the low status of women in different parts of the world.

In Africa, the challenge is not just to outlaw discrimination, as the African Union's Bience Gawanas points out, but also to translate commitments into meaningful change. And this means

involving women in leading the process, much as Rwanda is already demonstrating.

As is the case in many parts of Africa, India displays some daunting barriers too. Its women are widely deemed a burden, their work is not valued and they are often subjected to the most extreme humiliations, writes journalist Kalpana Sharma. And yet, this is also a country that now boasts of more than one million women holding some form of elective office, while there are even more who excel in business and the professions – in turn becoming role models for millions of others.

The work of change is clearly underway, and yet, as Sonia Gandhi noted in her recent Commonwealth Lecture: "Although the women's movement has already transformed the way in which we look at society in each of our countries, the search for equality is far from finished. History, culture and economics still remain weighted against women."

Mary Robinson is among those who see the need to maintain the pressure for greater women's leadership in dealing with the major challenges of our time, and especially that of climate change. She says that the impact of global warming is greater on women and so they are also best placed to propose solutions. In Bangladesh, for example, it is the women who have to go further for water, are more directly affected by food shortages and have to manage households devastated by flooding.

The search for greater equality is not only a developing country concern. In the global corporate world, some unexpected patterns show up in the data for women's advancement in boardrooms and senior management. The nations leading the way are not the supposedly more enlightened countries of the West, but Thailand, Georgia, Russia, Philippines and China. This suggests that all countries have lessons to learn from each other.

No one need be in any doubt. Wherever one goes in the world, there is work still to be done to bring about an improvement in women's status. Perhaps the 21st century will yet give all women both their due place and their own distinctive voice.

global issue6

www.global-briefing.org

Nexus Strategic Partnerships

Alexander House, 1 Milton Road,
Cambridge, CB4 1UY, UK
Phone +44 1223 353131
Fax +44 1223 488815

Letters to the Editor editor@global-briefing.org

Enquiries

Advertising advertising@global-briefing.org

Subscriptions subscriptions@global-briefing.org

Nexus

Editorial

Editor Richard Synge

Deputy Editor Elissa Jobson

Design and Layout Henrik Williams

Production Manager Chrissie Eaves-Walton

Cover illustration mark@mackerel.co.uk

Research Hannah Cochrane, George Marrows

Web Manager Quinton Dippenaar

Publishing

Publisher Smuts Beyers

Sales & Marketing Director Simon Goodlad

Advertising Manager Terry Moor

Account Manager Norma McCaskill

Client Liaison Yvonne Gertenbach

Distribution Alan Grant



The views and opinions represented in this magazine are not necessarily those of the institutions to which they are affiliated, and should not be attributed to Nexus Strategic Partnerships or the Commonwealth Secretariat. While every effort has been taken in all cases to represent faithfully the views of contributors and interviewees, the publisher does not accept responsibility for errors, omissions or their consequences. Global aspires to bring Commonwealth values to bear in exploring the challenges facing the world: while it includes Commonwealth news, it is an editorially independent publication.

ISSN 2042-3985

We work to adapt, evolve and prosper as a 'House of Banking Excellence'



Dhaka Bank Limited (DBL) – a Bangladeshi bank that draws inspiration from the country's rich cultural diversity and heritage - adopts high standards in service delivery. Setting the pace since its inception in 1995, DBL is imbued with a passion for projecting Bangladeshi heritage in delivering products and services with technological excellence.

With 15 years inculcating corporate excellence as core values, DBL has consistently steered a course of success in establishing a financial house of corporate repute. In 2010, the bank earned several accolades in terms of achieving Key Performance Indicators: it maintained Capital Adequacy Ratio at 10.09% (well above BASEL II compliance ratio of 9%) on Risk Weighted Assets (31/12/2010 RWA base of \$1.26 billion Taka equivalent); improved ROA to 2% (from 1.29% in 2009); and reduced NPA ratio to below 5%. A strong Credit Rating (CRAB) which continues to be at A1 has substantiated DBL's performance and potential as a well positioned bank in Bangladesh for more than a decade.

Mission

To be the premier financial institution in the country providing high quality products and services backed by the latest technology and a team of highly motivated personnel to deliver 'Excellence in Banking'.

Vision

Our vision is to assure clients of a standard that makes every banking transaction a pleasurable experience. Our commitment is to offer customers seamless services through accuracy, reliability, timely delivery, cutting edge technology and tailored solutions to meet specific business needs, extend global outreach in trade and commerce and a high yield on investment turn out. Overall, our prime objective is to deliver service quality that demonstrates a true reflection of our vision: 'Excellence in Banking'.

Products and services

- DBL's **Global Trade Services** maintains correspondent Relationship Management Agreements with leading international banks/exchange houses in key financial markets in North America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia to facilitate issuances of letters of Credit/ Remittances.
- Non-resident Taka Account, Non-resident investors Taka Account and Foreign Currency Account facilities in all major currencies e.g. US Dollars, GBP and Euro. Foreign Currency Deposit facilities extended to foreign-owned entities/Non-resident Corporate/Institutional and Individual Investors.
- Wide network of **56 branches** providing on line connectivity includes **Off-Shore Banking** branches in Dhaka and Export Processing Zones to serve the needs of Foreign Direct Investors.

- Authorised Foreign Currency Dealer branches in collaboration with DBL's fully owned subsidiary company **DBL Securities Limited** offer domestic/international investors stock brokerage and custodial facilities.
- Member of Investment Promotion and Facilitation Fund (**IPFF**), a World Bank/IFC maintained initiative to sustain infrastructure support (power, inland ports, and elevated expressways) finance.
- Retail banking services provide countrywide ATM coverage, local and international (VISA) credit cards issuances.



Dhaka Bank Limited continues to foster its goal to be the most sought after commercial Bank in Bangladesh to both domestic/international investors/clients. Our vision is clear, our values are defined, our business model is designed to deliver excellence in banking services and our role and purpose is to make a discernable difference to our clients and to communities who entrust us with their financial future.



Khondker Fazle Rashid
Managing Director

Head Office

Biman Bhaban, 100 Motijheel C/A,
Dhaka, Bangladesh
Tel: +880 2 955 4514 • 2 957 1006-10,
Fax: +880 2 955 6584,
Email: info@dhakabank.com.bd
SWIFT: DHBLBDDH

www.dhakabankltd.com.bd

Contents

Arena



- 46 **Dambisa Moyo** speaks about China and development
- 49 Impact Investment Decoded
- 50 **Pressure Points:** North Africa's revolutions by **George Joffé**



- 53 Books and Arts



The Gender Agenda

- 26 **Mary Robinson** on women and climate change



- 14 Women changing the future – profiles from the frontline



- 19 India and Africa – progress and challenges
- 24 Women's struggles in the boardroom

Technology for development

- 28 Helping the poor to adopt and adapt new technology
- 30 The mobile revolution in Africa
- 32 Cobblestone paving: a durable solution
- 33 **Jacques Diouf** on the prospects for a Green Revolution

Opinion

- 9 **Globalist:** Understanding the battle to control the Internet, by **Professor John Naughton**
- 13 **Out of Africa:** Free media under mounting pressure, by **William Gumede**

Cyprus

- 36 **INTERVIEW:** President Demetris Christofias on the challenge of reunification, EU membership and his government's efforts to improve the economic outlook
- 41 Recent progress and setbacks in finding a lasting solution to the Cyprus problem
- 44 The secrets of Cyprus's success as a key financial centre
- 45 Keeping the water flowing despite the effects of climate change



Bangladesh

- 56 Good prospects for economic growth, with infrastructure investment fast becoming the major priority
- 61 The shifting political balance over 40 years of independence, and the army's key role
- 65 New challenges for the secular founding principles of the state
- 68 A strong tradition of cultural practices that blur differences between Muslims and Hindus

Rwanda

- 70 A small country that has made huge strides in development
- 75 The authorities look to the private sector to lead the way
- 79 Greater gender equality is an important goal, and big advances are in evidence
- 82 Ambitious education policy aims to promote the English language

83 Commonwealth Network

INTERVIEW **Kamla Persad-Bissessar**, the Commonwealth's first-ever female Chairperson-in-Office on progress towards gender equality

- **Sonia Gandhi** gives this year's Commonwealth Lecture
- **The Commonwealth People's Forum** raises its profile
- **Q&A – Noma Radebe**, South African TV producer



UDC...facilitating the nation's development

The Urban Development Corporation (UDC), the government's principal public sector organization responsible for planning and designing urban environments in designated areas of the country since 1968.

The focus currently is on Montego Bay, St. James, Falmouth, Trelawny, Ocho Rios, St. Ann, Caymanas, St. Catherine and Downtown Kingston and Port Royal, where the Corporation is embarked on a consultative approach with stakeholders to ensure the transformation of the areas.



Montego Bay, St James – *Tourism Mecca*

The Montego Bay Convention Centre in Rose Hall St. James is now accepting bookings. The Convention Centre, first of its kind in the English speaking Caribbean was officially opened on January 7, 2011, ahead of the Caribbean Marketplace, the premier event for the region's tourism industry players.

To ensure its functional success and financial viability, the Corporation is already looking to an expansion of the existing facility within the overall context of redevelopment plans for the city. The plans envisage an expansion of the existing city boundaries and a 500 key room hotel located on lands adjacent to the Palmyra development in Rose Hall.

The Centre which is being managed and operated by the well-known international conventions firm SMG, is already having a catalytic effect on the tourism product and augurs well for the continued development of the western region.



Montego Bay Convention Centre

Falmouth, Trelawny – *historic town and Jamaica's first themed port*

Thursday, February 17, 2011 was an historic day for the town of Falmouth. On that day, the town turned out to welcome its first cruise vessel, Royal Caribbean's Voyager of the Seas, which was making its maiden voyage into the newly developed port. Since then, weekly arrivals have been occurring, even as anticipation mounts ahead of the arrival of the world's largest cruise ship, Oasis of the Seas on March 22, 2011.

The cruise arrivals have already enhanced the economy of Falmouth as craft traders as well as corporate entities have participated both on the port as well as in the town to provide the visitors with a memorable "Falmouth Experience", showcasing Jamaica's rich culture in entertainment, art and craft and food.

The themed port development is a joint effort of the Port Authority of Jamaica and Royal Caribbean Cruise Limited. This will be complemented by the town upgrade which is being co-ordinated by the UDC. The Corporation is also spearheading redevelopment plans for the Greater Falmouth region.

The Falmouth Port



and Town



Ocho Rios- St Ann – *home of the world famous Dunn's River Falls*

UDC owned lands in the Ocho Rios will be the catalyst for the redevelopment of the town and its environs. The plans which are being spearheaded in consultation with the various stakeholders, seek to promote sustainable resort and residential development in tandem with a biosphere reserve. The existing commercial centre is also being revisited with the view to creating a festival village to further enhance the economic development of the town.



Proposed Festival Village

Caymanas, St. Catherine – *where the past and present coalesce*

Caymanas in St. Catherine, the one time sugar plantation, straddles the rich history of the past, while beckoning to the future with unparalleled opportunities for business and residential development.

The world famous Caymanas Golf and Country Club, located on the 4332 hectare Caymanas Estate, as well as equestrian and polo facilities will be complemented by a mega sporting complex, which will form part of the development plans for this property.



Caymanas Country Club and Golf Course

Downtown Kingston and Port Royal – *the heartbeat of the nation*

The UDC continues to coordinate a multifaceted group of stakeholder agencies in the quest to redevelop and restore downtown Kingston and Port Royal.

In Downtown, the Corporation was very instrumental in the implementation of a new transportation centre and system and continues to advance this process to its full development potential. The UDC has also facilitated the plans of telecoms giant, Digicel to relocate its "green" global headquarters to the Kingston Waterfront, where construction is moving apace.

Digicel has also partnered with municipal authority, the Kingston and St. Andrew Corporation (KSAC) and the UDC in the development of the market district, the hub of the commerce in the capital.

Across the harbor, the historic Fort Charles in Port Royal has already been restored and plans are underway for the development of the Chocolata Hole and the Naval Hospital.



Downtown Municipal Transport Centre



Making development happen...

12 Ocean Boulevard, Kingston Mall, Jamaica W.I.
Telephone: (876) 922-8310-4. Telefax: (876) 922-9326
Email: info@udcja.com Website: www.udcja.com

Earthquake aftershocks

The consequences of Japan's massive earthquake and tsunami of 11 March were quick to be felt beyond the immediate and enormous humanitarian concerns within the country, making an impact on global markets and economic policies and plans. Radiation emissions from the badly damaged Fukushima nuclear power plant not only complicated Japan's relief efforts but also caused governments around the world, including China, to take stock of their own nuclear power planning.

On the humanitarian front, governments from Asia, America and Europe sent in rescue teams to help Japan's aid efforts. Russia sent the biggest team of nearly 200 rescuers while China was quick to provide shipments of quilts and tents. Mongolia sent blankets and Thailand provided clothing and supplies of rice. South Korea designated a special team to assist at the stricken nuclear site. In terms of financial aid, the USA was the most generous among foreign governments, with an initial allocation of \$35 million.

As Japan had seemed to be emerging from recession when the earthquake struck, there was obvious concern about ripple effects for the global economy. "The economic and financial impact of this earthquake will largely be felt in Japan," declared Standard Chartered Bank. "The impact elsewhere will depend on how the disaster impacts the prices of

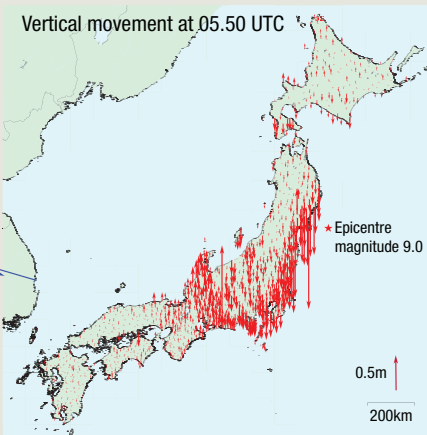
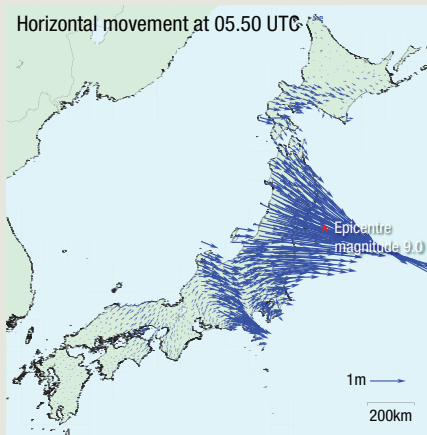
international goods, particularly given recent food price and energy inflation. There will also be a focus on financial flows, given Japan's status as the world's third-largest economy and one of the biggest private-sector savers."

Energy markets were in some turmoil. Japan was considered likely to have to increase its imports of conventional fuels – including coal, oil and natural gas – and

this buoyed up the prices of some fuels, although the threat of further recession in the country had a simultaneously dampening effect. The ongoing expansion of the nuclear power industry worldwide showed early signs of slowing. Germany seemed on the point of closing down some of its older reactors and China ordered an

urgent safety review of its new nuclear plants. China currently has 13 reactors in production and 25 under construction, and has been planning to install 70 new reactors by 2020.

Global prices of consumer electronic goods, including mobile phones and computers, could rise as a result of a shortage of components from Japanese factories, after some major manufacturers suspended operations following the earthquake. Japanese firms currently produce about 40 percent of the world's electronic components. Major car-makers were also among those affected by power shortages and damage to transport infrastructure.



Source: R. Grapenthin, J. Freymueller (Geophysical Institute, UAF), ARIA team (JPL, Caltech)

INTERNATIONAL

Cities undergo exponential growth

Most of the rise in the world's urban population will take place in China, India, Asia, Latin America and Africa, according to planning experts who addressed a conference of city mayors in Cannes, France, in early March. Currently, there are more than 400 cities with a population of more than one million, and 19 of these have more than 10 million inhabitants. London mayor Boris Johnson said: "The future of the world lies in cities."

Between 18 and 20 million people each year leave the countryside in China to move into its cities, it was noted, and this puts a strain on existing accommodation and infrastructure. The conference also heard warnings about the vulnerability of many cities to earthquakes and floods. The chairman of the Earthquakes and Megacities Initiative, Fouad Bendimerad, said that eight major cities are under continuous threat of earthquakes, including Istanbul, Turkey.

One of the fastest growing cities in the world is Dhaka, Bangladesh, which is estimated to have close to 15 million people in its wider metropolitan area and to be growing at 4.2 percent a year. Some 3.5 million of its inhabitants live in slum areas without sanitation or drinking water. The city authorities recently unveiled a detailed plan to resolve its major problems of waterlogged neighbourhoods and widespread traffic congestion.

A study by Citigroup says that, by 2015, the megacities with the fastest growing economies will be London, Chicago, Tokyo, New York, Los Angeles, Hong Kong, Sao Paulo, Mexico City, Shanghai, Buenos Aires, Mumbai and Moscow. A key issue will be the need to conserve fuel and energy, says Professor Tony Lloyd-Jones of the University of Westminster, who adds that cities need to become more efficient in terms of transport infrastructure, and that investment in public transport is one of the keys to achieving this.

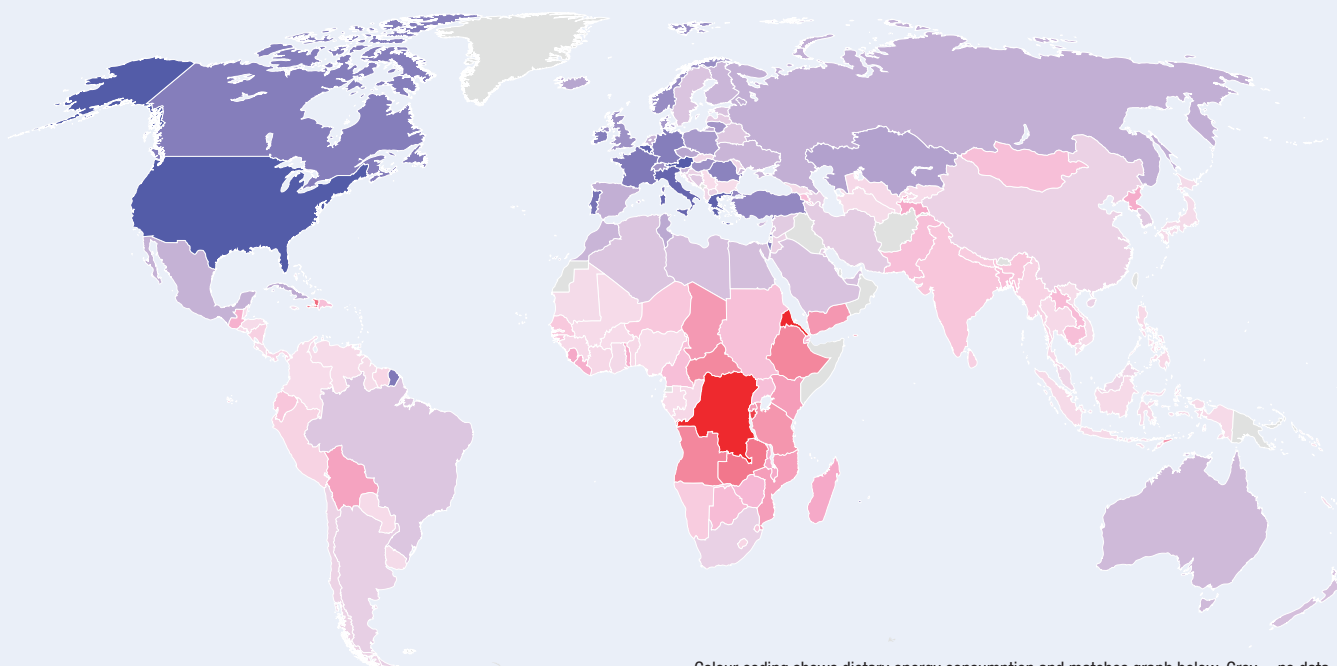


VITAL STATISTICS

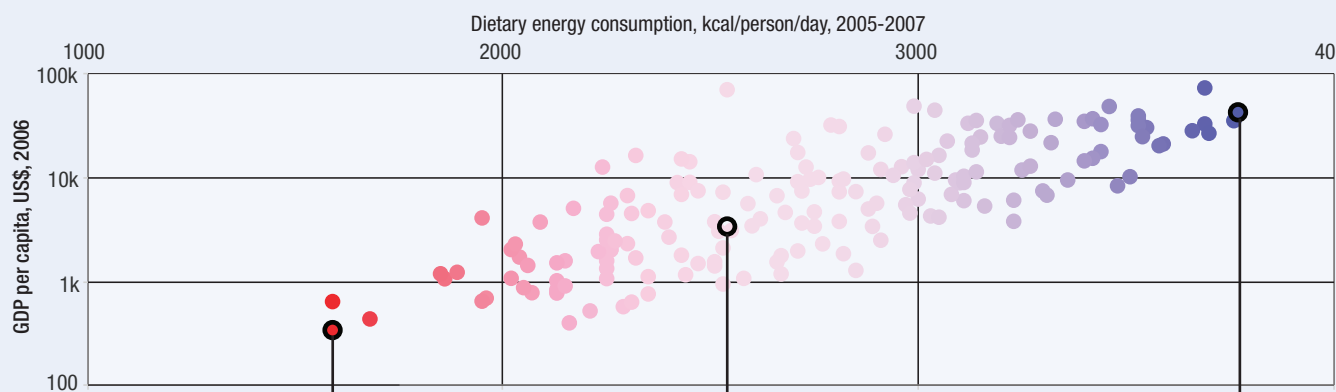
Behind the numbers

Calories count

The negative effects of hunger are felt beyond the individual's personal suffering – they have a substantial impact on the economic potential of people, families and countries as a whole. Productivity and earnings capacity are limited; undernourished mothers give birth to underweight children; and the concentration, memory and reasoning of a hungry schoolchild is poorer than that of a well-fed one. Breaking the cycle of poverty is therefore partly a matter of good nutrition



Colour coding shows dietary energy consumption and matches graph below. Grey = no data.



Democratic Republic of Congo

- Dietary energy consumption: **1,590 kcal/person/day**
- Percentage undernourished: **69**
- Fat consumption: **24 g/person/day**
- Protein consumption: **25 g/person/day**
- GDP per capita: **338 US\$**

Indonesia

- Dietary energy consumption: **2,540 kcal/person/day**
- Percentage undernourished: **13**
- Fat consumption: **51 g/person/day**
- Protein consumption: **56 g/person/day**
- GDP per capita: **3,367 US\$**

USA

- Dietary energy consumption: **3,770 kcal/person/day**
- Percentage undernourished: **n/a**
- Fat consumption: **161 g/person/day**
- Protein consumption: **114 g/person/day**
- GDP per capita: **42,385 US\$**

Source: UN Food and Agriculture Organization, Gapminder.org

ELECTION WATCH

Key polls around the world



Myanmar



Prime Minister Thein Sein was chosen to become Myanmar's first civilian President in 50 years on 4 February. A career soldier and general who resigned his commission to stand in last November's parliamentary elections, Thein was appointed by parliament, which met for the first time in more than two decades. The new President represents the army-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), landslide winners of the 2010 poll, which was widely held to be unfair due to pre-election voting, prohibitively high candidacy fees, the restriction of campaigning and media censorship. At the time, opposition parties lodged complaints with the election commission accusing the USDP of fraud. Pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi refused to take part in the election and urged her supporters to boycott it.

The office of president has a strong executive function, which includes the power to appoint the head of the armed forces, the cabinet and chief ministers of regions and states. Thein's record of loyalty to General Than Shwe, leader of Myanmar's military junta since 1992, makes it highly unlikely that the army's overwhelming influence on politics will be shaken.

Cape Verde



In parliamentary elections held on 6 February, Cape Verde reinforced its reputation for political stability in a region prone to coups and wars. Opposition leader Carlos Veiga, Prime Minister between 1991 and 2001, conceded defeat even before the official results were announced. Veiga's party, the Movement for Democracy, secured only 32 seats in the 72-seat parliament against 38 for the ruling African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV), giving Prime Minister Jose Maria Neves, who first took office in 2001, a third consecutive five-year term. The government's record of a decade of consistent economic growth, averaging 6 percent, served it well. Campaigning focused on two key issues: unemployment, which is high at around 13 percent, and energy supply – power cuts delayed the tallying of the election

results. With virtually no natural resources at its disposal, the government of this drought-prone archipelago faces challenges ahead if it is to maintain strong growth.

Uganda



Uganda's long-serving President, Yoweri Museveni, has extended his quarter-century reign over the country for a further five years. In elections on 18 February, Museveni polled 68 percent of the vote, up from 59 percent in 2006 but down from the 75 percent support he enjoyed in 1996. His nearest rival, veteran opposition leader Kizza Besigye – Museveni's former physician – mustered only 26 percent. Besigye rejected the result and, along with four other unsuccessful presidential candidates, called for peaceful 'Egyptian-style' protests. While opposition candidates were able to campaign more freely than in previous elections, international observers expressed concerns about the government's misuse of state resources to influence voters, candidates and electoral officials. There was a large turnout in the north of the country where, for the first time, people were able to go to the polls without fear of attack from the rebel Lord's Resistance Army.

Germany



On 20 February, in Hamburg, the first of seven German states to hold elections this year, the ruling centre-right Christian Democratic Union (CDU) suffered what Chancellor Merkel has called "a stinging defeat". In its worst electoral performance since it was founded after the Second World War, CDU support was cut almost in half, plummeting to 21 percent, while the opposition Social Democrats won enough votes to secure an absolute majority in the state assembly. Merkel attributed the results to local – not national – issues, blaming bungled educational reform and the resignation of a popular CDU mayor rather than disaffection with her government's handling of the eurozone debt crisis. The loss of Hamburg's three seats in the upper house of parliament, the Bundesrat, will make it harder for the centre-right coalition to pass legislation.

Ireland



Irish voters, angry at the mismanagement of the economy, dealt a humiliating blow to Fianna Fáil in elections on 25 February. The party, which has spent three out of every four years in power since 1932, lost three-quarters of its seats in the Dáil Éireann (the lower house) and was beaten into third place by Fine Gael and the Labour Party. For the centre-right Fine Gael, this was its most successful showing, although it only managed to secure 36 percent of the vote and fell short of the 83 seats required for an overall parliamentary majority, forcing it to form a coalition government with Labour. Enda Kenny, the new prime minister, has promised to renegotiate the terms of the country's €85 billion EU/IMF bailout loan.

Estonia



The decisive victory of the centre-right coalition in parliamentary elections on 6 March has been viewed by many analysts as a remarkable show of support for a government which had steered the economy through a severe crisis by imposing harsh austerity measures.

After the economy shrank by almost 15 percent in 2009, the government reduced its budget by the equivalent of 9 percent of GDP. Wages were cut by up to a quarter in some workplaces, and unemployment peaked at 19.8 percent in early January 2010, but a recovery is now well underway with growth of 4 percent projected for this year. Prime Minister Andrus Ansip's Reform Party gained two extra seats, giving it a total of 33 of the 101 seats in parliament. Reform's coalition partner in the previous administration, the conservative IRL, also did well, winning an additional four seats to reach a total of 23. The campaign of the opposition leader Edgar Savisaar was damaged by allegations that his Centre Party had received financial support from Russia – his party lost three MPs, slipping to 26 seats. The election was Estonia's first since joining the eurozone in January.



GLOBALIST

John Naughton, Professor of the Public Understanding of Technology, Open University, UK



The fight for control of the Internet

Recent events – notably the furore over the release of US diplomatic cables by WikiLeaks and the role of social networking in fuelling the revolts in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain and Libya – have refocused attention on the question: Is the Internet really an agent for revolutionary change? Or is it just a technology that will eventually be ‘captured’ and controlled by established power structures?

Answers are invariably refracted through ideological prisms. Optimists, who see the Internet as the first truly ‘uncensorable’ communications channel in history, draw comfort from the ways in which it ensures that news gets out from even the most tightly controlled domains. Those who are sceptical about its revolutionary potential see corroboration of their views in the apparent ease with which governments in Egypt, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Burma, Iran and China have been able to shut down the network in their jurisdictions, and in the speed with which WikiLeaks’s network access and financial services were terminated by US Internet companies like Amazon and PayPal, in the wake of the ‘Cablegate’ revelations. Surely a network so apparently vulnerable to such arbitrary actions cannot really be revolutionary?

The truth is that the relationship between the Internet and the established order has been more nuanced than either of these views might suggest. And the relationship has also changed over time. The Harvard scholar John Palfrey identifies four distinct phases in its evolution. Between 1983 and 1999, he argues, the Internet was indeed free of government interference, largely because it was exclusively an academic preserve and politicians were largely uninterested in it. Palfrey categorises the years 2000-2005 as the ‘access denied’ phase, when some governments tried to bar their citizens from using the Net, and 2006-2010 as a phase in which governments tried various ways of controlling or regulating Internet use. Palfrey believes that we have now entered a new phase, which he categorises as ‘access contested’.

The Internet that we use today emerged in a decade-long design process that began



Trying to censor the uncensorable

after the successful completion, in 1972, of the Pentagon-funded Arpanet project. It was in the first phase of the network’s working life (1983-1999) that libertarian and utopian views of its significance were forged, and it’s easy to see why. The community of academics and researchers that coalesced around the network was comprised of people who knew and trusted one another, shared a common culture (some would call it a counter-culture) and gloried in the fact that technological ingenuity had provided them with a communication system that was as sophisticated and cryptographically secure as anything hitherto enjoyed by military and security establishments. It also opened up – via news (i.e. discussion) groups – a debating space that was freer than anything available in the conventional media.

This was intoxicating and liberating in equal measure for the so-called ‘netizens’, but it was deeply shocking to mainstream political America when it first encountered it via the World Wide Web. The establishment’s first attempt to tame the unruly network was farcical: the US Congress passed the Communications Decency Bill in 1996, only to have it ruled unconstitutional within months of becoming law. This prompted John Perry Barlow, a lyricist with the rock band Grateful Dead, to issue a ‘Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace’. “Governments of the Industrial World”, it began, “you weary giants of flesh and steel, I come from Cyberspace, the new home of Mind. On behalf of the future, I ask you of the past to leave us alone. You are not welcome among us. You have no sovereignty where we gather.” Stirring stuff.

But what Barlow and his fellow techno-libertarians overlooked was that while governments might be willing to tolerate the activities of a small, insouciant technological elite, they would not take such a tolerant attitude towards the technology if it became an integral part of the everyday life of their citizens. And that is of course what happened as the Web brought the Internet into millions of homes.

Libertarians also overlooked the fact that the organisations that provided citizens with Internet access were no longer just universities committed to freedom of thought and inquiry, but commercial companies interested only in profit and committed to obeying the laws of the countries in which they operate, no matter how repressive. Far from being impossible to control or regulate, it turned out that in some respects the Net was all too amenable to control – as the legal scholars Jack Goldsmith and Timothy Wu elaborated in their study, *Who Controls the Internet?* (Oxford, 2008).

The WikiLeaks phenomenon illustrates the two sides of the Internet phenomenon. On the one hand, the project has shown that a technologically adroit operation can defeat the efforts of even the most powerful government to keep its secrets. On the other hand, it demonstrates the technological and legal lengths to which that government will go in order to bring the miscreant to heel.

But the vehemence of the US reaction to ‘Cablegate’, and the deployment of the Internet ‘kill switch’ by the Egyptian and Libyan regimes may prove to be counter-productive in the longer term. They have triggered a new wave of technological rebellion in which concerned ‘geeks’ have begun to use their expertise to frustrate the efforts of the established order to control the Net. The best example of this came when the Mubarak regime shut down Twitter and some engineers at Google and Twitter created, in a single weekend, a system that enabled Egyptians to broadcast Twitter messages by leaving voicemails at a number of overseas telephone numbers. The lesson for Mubarak & Co is one as old as Aesop’s fables: if you poke a hornet’s nest, you are likely to get stung.

ENERGY WATCH

Trends around the world



Harnessing the potential of wind power in Turkey

Turkey has recently been expanding its wind power sector more rapidly than any other country in the overall European region, according to the World Wind Energy Association. The country is reckoned to have excellent wind conditions, second only to those of the UK, and is now beginning to make the most of them. A massive project is being developed in Çanakkale by Siemens and local firm Enerjisa as part of a joint plan to install generating capacity of 5,000 MW by 2015. Some experts predict that the country's overall wind power capacity could eventually rise to 20,000 MW.

After lobbying by green energy firms, a new renewable energy law is expected to be passed this year, guaranteeing higher prices for all energy produced from wind, solar, wave, geothermal and biomass sources. Turkey aims to meet 30 percent of its energy demands from renewable sources by 2023.

Renewable targets become more challenging

The European Commission has issued a report on the progress of renewable energy in the European Union (EU) showing that the policy goals for 2020 are likely to be met and exceeded, provided that member states implement their national renewable energy action plans. But the latest data showed that the indicative targets the member states set themselves for 2010 were in fact missed.

The Commission called on EU members to ensure a doubling of annual capital investments in renewable energy to €70 billion a year – whether this comes from the big energy companies or household investment in solar systems or other forms of renewable energy. This will require substantial use of national support systems and improved management of different financial instruments. The Commission urged the need for further cooperation between member states and better integration of renewable energy into the single European market.

The European Renewable Energy Council says that a total of 22,600 MW of renewable energy capacity was installed in 2010, more than ever before, and a 31 percent increase on installations in 2009.

Buffett into wind power

MidAmerican Energy, a company owned by the legendary US investor Warren Buffett, says it will have a wind power generating capacity of 2,909 MW by the end this year, more than any other regulated utility in the USA. At the beginning of 2011 the firm placed a major order for wind turbines for its projects in Iowa. MidAmerican has invested \$5.4 billion in wind. Its biggest single investment was the purchase of Constellation Energy in 2008.

Working towards a trans-Mediterranean grid

Under the leadership of French power utility EDF, a new initiative known as Transgreen is promoting a European-Mediterranean electricity network that could supply Europe with 5,000 MW from renewable sources south of the Mediterranean by 2020. The idea is to work with the German-backed Desertec project, which itself aims to create a network of solar and wind facilities to provide up to 15 percent of European electricity consumption by 2050.

In particular, Transgreen hopes to promote “an investment-friendly regulatory and institutional framework” for viable projects on the southern shores of the Mediterranean. At present the only operational electricity connection between North Africa and Europe is that between Morocco and Spain. One of the founding group of companies of Transgreen is Spain's Abengoa.

Spain leaps ahead with CSP



Spain is the most active country in introducing Concentrating Solar Power (CSP), having overtaken the USA's installed capacity of 422 MW last year and with plans for substantial new capacity in the year ahead. Within two years, Spain is forecast to have an installed

CSP generating capacity of 2,500 MW. CSP systems use lenses or mirrors and tracking systems to focus a large area of sunlight into a small beam, which is then used as a heat source for a conventional power plant.

Chinese-German solar tie-up

One of the world's largest manufacturers of solar cells, JA Solar of China, has signed an agreement to supply solar products to Solar-Fabrik of Germany. JA Solar is now planning to build a giant new production base in eastern China at a cost of \$2 billion, with a projected annual output of products worth more than \$4.5 billion.

JA Solar is one of a few manufacturers worldwide that can supply the photovoltaic cells used in large solar generation schemes. It estimates the generating capacity of the products it will produce this year at 2,200 MW. Solar-Fabrik primarily installs large-scale roof-mounted solar units and is looking to expand its work in the USA.

New targets for van emissions

The European Parliament has agreed to long-term targets for cutting carbon dioxide emissions for light commercial vehicles – the main target for 2020 is 147 grams of CO₂ per kilometre per vehicle. The UK's Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders has welcomed the decision, saying that makers are fully committed to lowering emissions as part of ongoing introductions of low, lower and ultra-low carbon vehicles. Peugeot UK says its smaller fuel-efficient vans already meet the 2020 target.

UK offshore projects

The UK has been reported to have 1,400 MW in wind power generation capacity already installed around its coastline, with much more under development. Despite some slowing in the current phase of development, the Scottish Renewables trade association claims that 10,000 MW of offshore wind projects are planned for Scotland. At the same time, Energy Technologies Institute is supporting experimental work to establish the possibility of using floating platforms so that wind turbines can be located in deeper waters, and thus take advantage of stronger and more consistent wind speeds.

LIBYA

The high human cost of the crisis

The large numbers of people trying to escape from Libya since the rebellion there first broke out in mid-February have had relief agencies scrambling to assess and assist. More than 300,000 people fled the country in the first four weeks alone and some reports claimed a further 600,000 were trying to escape but were trapped.

"This is one of the biggest humanitarian evacuations in history," said the Director General of the International Organization of Migration (IOM), William Lacy Swing. During the first weeks of the crisis, both the IOM and the UN High Com-



mission for Refugees (UNHCR) succeeded in evacuating 50,000 migrants stranded at the Tunisian and Egyptian borders, while tens of thousands of others were taken home by ships and aircraft sent by various governments.

In late March, the IOM estimated that over 1 million foreign migrant workers remained in Libya, many of them from Sub-Saharan Africa. Thousands, mainly Nigerians, had begun to arrive over the border in Niger while thousands more were stranded in the southern Libyan town of Sabha.

Farming challenges in Latin America and Africa

Major reserves of potential farmland exist across the world, and especially in Latin America and Africa. So says the new 'Agrimonde' report published by two leading agricultural research institutions in France, INRA and CIRAD. Latin America and Africa offer the best potential for providing at least some of the extra land needed to meet the world's rapid population growth without the loss of existing pastureland and forests.

Africa's agricultural productivity is in any case rising, having doubled between 1961 and 2003, the Agrimonde report revealed, although its productivity stands at less than half the average rate found across Asia, where there have been huge productivity gains in recent decades.

A similar report issued by the UK's Government Office for Science agrees that African agriculture has been dynamic and adaptive enough to meet the demand arising from the continent's rapid popu-

lation growth. But the report on 'Global Food and Farming Futures' also warns of the continuing challenges facing African farming: "Continued population growth, changing patterns of consumption, impacts of climate change and environmental degradation are driving limited resources of food, energy, water and materials towards critical thresholds."

A more optimistic view has been presented by the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier de Schutter, who recommends agro-ecological methods rather than the use of chemical fertilisers for more efficient farming. In African projects, these methods have doubled crop yields over a period of 3-10 years, he says. It is argued that conventional farming relies on expensive inputs, fuels climate change and is not resilient to climatic shocks, while agro-ecology enhances soils and protects against pests by relying on the natural environment, such as beneficial trees, plants, animals and insects.

SOUTHERN SUDAN

Hopes and fears

The prospect of a transition to independence for Southern Sudan in July has turned into a serious political and diplomatic challenge for all concerned. Although a referendum in January on the future of the territory produced an overwhelming vote in favour of independence, the issues dividing north and south were sharply highlighted in the weeks that followed.

The head of the southern government, Salva Kiir, on 12 March suspended negotiations with the north over the most difficult issues: demarcation of the north-south border, and the division of the oil industry and Sudan's national debt. This breakdown in talks did not augur well for the preparations for partition. Because of the location of the oil fields, it has been generally assumed that the south could take control of about 75 percent of Sudan's oil production after July. Most of the oil fields are in the border states of Unity, Upper Nile and Jonglei.

Hundreds of people were reported killed in these states in February and March in series of clashes between the southern government's forces and renegade militias allegedly acting for the government in Khartoum. The southern government has produced documents supposedly showing that Khartoum started arming a militia commanded by George Althor, a former southern rebel chief of staff, in May last year.

Distrust between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and other parties in the south is a critical challenge undermining unity on the eve of the south's independence, according to the Carter Center, which deployed observers to monitor the independence referendum.



Salva Kiir, Southern Sudan's president-in-waiting



Overview/

United Airways (BD) Ltd. is one of the leading private airlines in Bangladesh and the first listed airline in the country's capital market.

On 10 July 2007, it took to the skies with the slogan 'Fly Your Own Airline' and has been providing committed services ever since. United Airways receives positive market response and presently holds a major share of the domestic and regional market. In a mere three and half year span, it has established its brand reputation for maintenance of schedules, efficient service delivery and an impeccable safety record, by using the latest technology.

The Airline has been designated to operate international flights to various destinations by the government of Bangladesh. It is currently operating from Sylhet to London, Dubai, Kuala Lumpur, Kathmandu, Bangkok, Kolkata, Dhaka, Chittagong, Jessore and Cox's Bazar; and also from Chittagong to Kolkata. By June 2011, the Dhaka-Jeddah and Dhaka-Singapore routes should be established.

Starting flights with only one Dash-8-100 aircraft, United Airways in just over three years has an airbus 310-325, two MD-83, two ATR-72 and two Dash-8-100 aircraft in its fleet. Another ATR-72 and an Airbus will join the fleet by June 2011.



Capt. Tasbirul Ahmed Choudhury
Chairman and Managing Director
United Airways (BD) Ltd.

United Airways (BD) Ltd, a public limited company by shares, was founded by an expatriate airline pilot, Captain Tasbirul Ahmed Choudhury along with a group of professionals, business people and entrepreneurs united in a shared vision to develop a world-class airline in Bangladesh. His vision as Chairman and Managing Director has brought the organisation to where it is today.

In the aviation history of Bangladesh, United Airways' name is written in golden letters when it became the only private airline in the country to generate 95% foreign investment, mainly from expatriate Bangladeshis based in the UK. It has created significant employment opportunities and contributes directly to the national exchequer.

Awards

- Desher Kagoj Business Award, 2007
- Begum Rokeya Shining Personality Award, 2007
- Arthakantha Business Award, 2008 and 2010
- Business Express Award, 2009
- EBL-Monitor Domestic Airline of the Year, 2010
- NRB Investment of the Year, 2010
- Development Council for Bangladeshis in the UK (DCFBUK) Award, 2011 presented by British Bangladeshi Entrepreneur in the International Airline Sector on 3 March 2011 at the House of Commons, Westminster Palace. ■



Make every experience a memorable one

Fly

**DHAKA, DUBAI, KUALA LUMPUR, BANGKOK
KATHMANDU, KOLKATA, LONDON, JEDDAH, SINGAPORE**

**CHITTAGONG, SYLHET, COX'S BAZAR,
JESSORE, BARISAL, SAIDPUR, RAJSHAHI**

United  **ইউনাইটেড**
AIRWAYS (BD) LTD. এয়ারওয়েজ (বিডি) লিমিটেড
... Fly your own Airline

Uttara Tower (5th Floor), 1 Jasimuddin Avenue, sector-3
Uttara Model Town, Dhaka-1230, Bangladesh

24 hrs. Hot Line
+88028933271 | +88028950758
+8801713486651 | +8801730315791-3

www.uabdl.com



OUT OF AFRICA

William Gumede



Free media under mounting pressure

Too many African countries are still encumbered by secrecy and anti-media laws that have blighted free speech over the years. Laws that were used against the independence or liberation movements by colonial or white minority regimes have all too easily been reinforced or re-enacted.

The continuing ability of African governments to block unfavourable news means that leaders and political movements can contrive to hang on to power without many of their supporters in far-flung rural areas ever knowing how they abuse it. This is how the likes of Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe can, even now, get away with blaming his government's appalling record on the work of Western so-called 'imperialists' – if not on the former colonial power, the white minority or the opposition groups supposedly linked to them.

A flourishing private media that can expose the corrupt activities of political leaders and ruling parties should be playing a crucial role in informing citizens of what is really happening in their name. Not surprisingly, 'peoples' power', the phenomenon where African citizens finally kick out bad governments that have ruled too long, is only possible where the private media has grown significantly – providing citizens (and ordinary members of the ruling parties) with the real story – and where there is a growing civil opposition.

In the uprisings against unpopular governments in Tunisia and Egypt, new social media that have circumvented the official press, and the rise of independent broadcasters, such as Al Jazeera, have also done the trick.

But in most African countries much of the media is still in state hands, so ruling parties can keep a firm lid on any stories of official corruption, mismanagement or wrongdoing. Private news organisations, where they exist, do not have a wide reach. And they are often financially vulnerable. With the state in many African countries still directly controlling most of the economy or else having indirect influence, private companies that don't toe the line can easily be squeezed or threatened with the loss of vital advertising revenues.

Independent FM radio stations are widely listened to across the continent, but in many

countries they operate on the strict condition that they don't cover politics. Community radio often suffers the same restrictions. The Internet may be a freer medium, but access is not yet as widespread south of the Sahara as in Egypt or Tunisia. However,



How much longer will South Africans be able to continue to enjoy freedom of the press?

Internet usage is increasing – in South Africa it has now passed the 5 million mark in a population of 50 million, and a growing community of (mainly middle class) citizens use Twitter to complain to politicians about poor service delivery.

Clearly, a revolution in Sub-Saharan Africa could one day arrive via the mobile phone. Its political mobilisation potential is huge: in Zimbabwe's last elections, people used their mobiles to monitor vote-rigging and, in the process, greatly helped the opposition, international observers and the independent media.

Right now in South Africa, the ruling African National Congress (ANC) is heading off any potential threats to its rule by flexing its muscles against the traditional media. The party has shown alarming signs of wanting to mimic some of the draconian measures applied during the apartheid era. Its draft Protection of Information Bill would give the government broad powers to classify almost any information involving an agency of the state as 'top secret' – not to be reported on or divulged – in the interest of 'national security'. It prescribes penalties of up to 25 years in jail for those disclosing such information. The public's right to access government documents would also be restricted.

The ANC has, at the same time, called on

antitrust authorities to investigate those in the media industry they say are abusing their dominant market position to stifle competition and those that lack black shareholders. This is despite the fact that many of the big newspaper houses, such as Avusa, which owns the mass-circulation *Sunday Times* and *The Sowetan*, have a majority black shareholding (mostly in the hands of leading members of the ANC itself). "Some fractions of the media continue to adopt an anti-transformation, anti-development and anti-ANC stance," said a recent ANC discussion paper on the media.

With the ANC Youth League president Julius Malema even threatening to shut down Twitter, the new push for secrecy and anti-media laws has split the ANC between those who are determined to stamp out all criticism and its genuine democrats. The Congress of South African Trade Unions, the ANC's ally in government, has come out strongly against such measures. Individual ANC leaders, such as the party elder Pallo Jordan, a former cabinet minister (once punted as possible ANC presidential candidate), have also voiced their concerns. Such willingness to speak out suggests that South Africa's infant democracy is finally gaining some maturity.

Perhaps the new mood can encourage individuals to give or withhold their support based on the party's current record rather than on the credentials it gained during the struggle for freedom. For now, although young South Africans do occasionally protest against the government, they still see the ANC as their party and simply want it to govern better, but it may not be long before younger generations of voters will have no recollection of the fight against apartheid or colonialism and little interest in the ruling party's historical record. At that point, the kind of youth-led rebellions recently seen in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya could easily start to happen further south.

William Gumede is co-editor of the recently released *The Poverty of Ideas: South African Democracy and the Retreat of the Intellectuals*. He is vice-chair of the Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI) in South Africa

Changing the future one woman at a time



All over the world there are women working tirelessly to bring change, both for other women and for the wider community. They are making their voices heard on the international stage, in government, in businesses large and small, on matters of health and education and at the grassroots.

Here, *Global* presents the stories of a selection of women from around the world with a special passion for the causes they are committed to. They include a leading campaigner against female genital mutilation, the founder of the world's first women's cooperative bank, a broadcaster with a mission to raise and confront destructive social problems and a campaigner who works to improve government policies towards women.

We salute their crystal clear determination to succeed as well as their remarkable achievements to date.

Working for cultural change

Julia Lalla-Maharajh

Founder and Executive Director of the Orchid Project, UK

I had spent 20 years in the private sector and then went off and did voluntary service in Cambodia and Ethiopia, and it really opened up a whole new life for me. In Ethiopia I came across the scale and impact of female genital cutting (FGC).

I had a moment where I felt I couldn't look away, so my response was to come back to London and do what I could to try to raise awareness about FGC. The Orchid Project is there to try and break some of the silence around the taboo, and also to work with the many, many organisations on the ground that are doing something about it.

Female genital cutting affects 140 million women in different countries, and about 3 million girls every year are cut. Put very simply, FGC is the forcible removal of a girl's external genitals. I say this very dispassionately but you can imagine with no anaesthetic, done in very rural areas, what this will mean to a girl sometimes as young as the age of five. The damage to girls and women is huge. It can be anything from haemorrhaging at the time of the cut, leading to death, through to infections. It affects them at the onset of menstruation, in childbirth and during intercourse and pregnancy. At every point in a woman's life that we would celebrate, something awful can happen through FGC.

I've just got back from Senegal and there is now incredible change happening in the communities. I discovered that almost 5,000 communities have chosen to end FGC in the last five years, not just in Senegal but in eight countries in West Africa. I worked with an incredible

NGO on the ground called Tostan, which works with communities to ensure that they can access their rights but at the same understand their responsibilities. Once a community understands that it has a responsibility to end violence against women – and that it means something to them and their lives – then they take action to change it. At the end of the day it is communities and the respect for the communities that will allow this practice to change.

I think the most important thing I've found on my journey is that knowledge is an incredible power. I started from a point of being outraged, shocked and upset, but the more I've come to understand FGC, I now realise that no parent would knowingly put their child through pain. We thought FGC was to ensure chastity and fidelity but actually, one of the main issues behind it is to ensure marriageability. A girl who is uncut cannot be married and, for a community in which FGC happens, it's a worse thing that a girl is unmarried than that a girl is cut. So you can see how strong an issue it is that keeps FGC in place.

I think what can change things on the ground is talking to communities with respect. If we walk

into a community and say "Why have you mutilated your daughters?" the community says "Here's the door". But when we approach in terms of a common, real respect, wanting the best for their daughters, it's incredible what happens. If we ask questions, if we understand their positive practices, but also question why they're doing this, then change can happen.



Lalla-Maharajh presenting the case against FGC at Davos

How drama can alter attitudes

Noeyln Wagapu

Chair of the Commonwealth Youth Caucus and Young Female Solomon Islander of the Year 2009

I am a radio broadcaster and I use what I do as means of getting information back to the rural areas at the grassroots. In the Solomon Islands we have a lot of issues that are affecting young people today. I've put together a group who are interested in radio drama and we do a 15 minute programme on one Sunday every month. In each month we have a different issue, for example, domestic violence or HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections. We gather information from NGOs then we put that in a play and we disseminate it to the different provinces.

There are 30 young people in the drama group. Their ages range from 8 to 29. Some of the group members come from broken families that are directly affected by the issues we tackle. Having experienced the problem, they can put all their effort into doing this drama and they have the passion for it. You can see it in their eyes that it has changed them – it's a driving force that takes them through. Some of them have found better work now

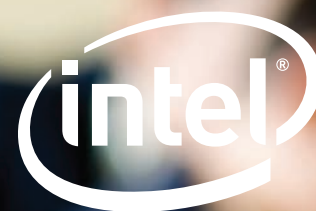


Wagapu (far right) with the Youth Caucus

and they attend education, or else they go into other training.

In the Solomon Islands there is always a clash between traditional beliefs and the law. In traditional beliefs, women are supposed to stay home, they are to cook and they are not to go into education. So we use radio as a voice to get through to the rural areas so even though the women are not normally heard there, the way we use their voices means they can be recognised.

I would say as a female it is very difficult to put information across in our society because women are supposed to be mindful of what they say. In the drama group we are a mixture of young women and men. We tend to put across the messages that we women can't mention by using the voices of the men in the group. It's not a taboo to talk about these issues but it is a taboo for women to be up there – they will just look at you and say: "What are you doing?"



Transforming the Lives of Women and Girls

They say it takes a village to raise a child.

However, it was a group of young girls who raised the living conditions of their entire village through the Intel® Learn Program¹, which helps young people in underserved communities prepare to succeed in the knowledge economy.

Five girls, ages 10 to 14, went door-to-door in their remote Indian village of Singodi, surveying the community about sanitation and hygiene. Because of their work, the Village Council president authorized the building of a water tank and placed the young girls on a committee to prevent outbreaks of infectious diseases, like malaria and typhoid. Traditionally, only men served on such committees.

From the United Nations to the World Bank, leading organizations have trumpeted the need to raise the economic status of women and girls worldwide. Intel is helping through diverse efforts to promote the math, science, business, and technology skills needed to engage in the 21st-century economy. Based on our experiences, we've identified four ways to improve the lives of girls and women, which in turn benefits their children, families, and communities:

Educate the Teachers First. A study from the University of Chicago is the latest research to indicate that female elementary school teachers who are anxious about math may undermine girls' confidence in their math abilities. Intel® Math¹ helps remedy this worldwide problem by providing teachers with 80 hours of instruction to improve their own math knowledge as well as to give them new, creative ways to teach the subject.

After going through Intel Math, Christine Wilson, an elementary school teacher in Fremont, CA, moved up from second grade to fourth grade (prior to training, she had been nervous about teaching higher-level math). "I'm so enthusiastic about math, it's the first thing my class does in the morning," she says. "What's even better is the kids have caught my enthusiasm." When her class had to take a national, multi-subject test, the kids voted to do the math part first.

In addition, more than 7 million teachers around the globe—including an estimated 4 million female teachers⁵—have participated in the Intel® Teach Program⁶, which helps educators integrate technology into the classroom to improve student learning.

Why it matters

1. Broad social benefits of educating girls include increased family income, greater opportunities and life choices for more women, greater participation by women in development as well as political and economic decision making.

2. In a typical developing country, giving girls one additional year of schooling would save as many as 60,000 children's lives.²

3. It is widely recognized that devoting resources to quality education for girls is among the best investments that any society can make.³

4. Impact: It is estimated that a one percent increase in female education would increase the average level of GDP by 0.37 percent.⁴

Make the Projects Matter. Through Intel Learn, Intel Teach, and the Intel science competitions, we've seen that girls embrace science, math, and technology when it moves beyond abstract concepts, and they do projects that make an impact in their communities and the world.

For the past two years, the world's largest pre-college science competition—Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (Intel ISEF), a program of Society of Science & the Public—has been dominated by young women putting forth impressive work that could dramatically improve people's lives. For example, one of the top winners in 2009 was Olivia Schwob, a 16-year-old from Boston who isolated a gene that could be used to improve the intelligence in worms. This finding could help us understand how people learn and could even prevent, treat and cure mental disabilities in the future.



In one Intel Teach project, a group of 6th- and 7th-grade students in Southern India tackled the serious issue of young children dropping out of school to work. The project group used mathematical models to show the parents that, over the long run, their children would earn more if they stayed in school. As a result, seven parents allowed their children to return to school. In other Intel Learn projects, student groups developed a plan to successfully seek funding for a reforestation project in Mexico; created an advertising campaign to conserve water in Israel; and cut food waste in China by investigating the best breakfast choices and portion sizes for elementary-school students. Learning that makes a real-world impact seems to resonate well with girls.

Provide Technology Tools. Technology literacy and tools give women and girls, even in remote parts of the world, access to information, markets, and skills that allow them to become fully engaged in the innovation economy.

In Bangladesh, a group of women called “The Info Ladies” carry Intel-powered clamshell classmate PCs with mobile phones and digital cameras to remote villages, giving these communities telephone and Internet access. The “Info Ladies” are able to earn a decent living while giving one farmer a way to call an expert who told him how to save his diseased fruit tree; letting a mother find out what medicine her sick daughters needed; and allowing a man to chat with his cancer-stricken father on the other side of the world.

Simply having access to technology changes outlooks and transforms lives. The Intel Computer Clubhouse Network¹, an after-school community-based technology learning program, inspired a 12-year-old girl named Nancy in inner-city Boston to eventually study human-computer interactions at the University of Michigan. “The clubhouse was an escape from the turmoil of all my foster homes,” she says. “I never guessed those fun things would turn into skills that would help me become a creative thinker.”

Teach Entrepreneurial Skills. Just as technology removes walls around the classroom, entrepreneurial skills removes the walls around women's lives.

A hundred Intel-powered PCs are being deployed throughout Asia in clubhouses operated by the Social and Financial Empowerment of Adolescents (SOFEA) project. For 95 percent of the girls in this program, this is their first exposure to a PC; the technology, business, and financial skills they're developing will help them overcome inequalities due to early marriage, war, domestic violence, and other widespread problems.

Entrepreneurial skills remove borders around the countries, as well. In one Intel-sponsored program, women developed a business where they collect and boil insects, extracting lacquer that is sold all over the world. With more countries seeing the vital role women play in economic development, expect to see a growing number of these success stories in the decade ahead.

Intel and the Intel Foundation continue to explore and expand the ways in which their philanthropy and education programs serve the needs of women and girls around the globe.

1. Funded by the Intel Foundation.

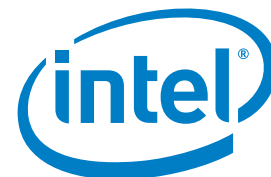
2. Knowles, S., P.K. Lorelly, and P.D. Owen. Are Educational Gender Gaps a Brake on Economic Development? Some Cross-Country Empirical Evidence, Oxford Economic Papers, Vol.54, No.1. (2002)

3. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/1/2672316.xls>

4. http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/wef_2000/strategy_sessions/session_j-2.shtml

5. http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/appeal/gender/GirlsCantWait.pdf

6. Jointly funded by Intel Corporation and the Intel Foundation.



Transforming policy and social attitudes

Doris Bingley

General Secretary of the
National Council of Women in Malta

After I married, I lived overseas in many countries, and in each country I always chose to do some charitable work. For example, in Bangladesh, where I was president of the UN women's organisation, we raised money to buy treadle pumps, because Bangladesh is often flooded and there are areas where they



need drinking water. In Nigeria, where I lived for a very long time, I was again in the international women's organisation and our work was always trying to help, raising money for Christmas or bringing children for parties.

In Malta, with the National Council of Women, we do a lot of policy work. Every year when the local budget comes we make sure that it's helping women. We have five committees, on education, health, wellbeing, consumer affairs and the environment.

We believe in sustainable development and that we must have clean air and a clean country. It's widespread, the work that we do. We invite women from the small states of Europe, for example, for conferences where we share good practices. We invite women from other places. So our work is vast, actually, and never stops.

In Malta, we would like to see more women in decision-making, especially in political decision-making. We have less than 9 percent in parliament and we haven't even one woman in the European Parliament. So we have to break that glass ceiling. We need women in the boardrooms as well. With the financial crisis, we all feel that there should be women there. After all, we are more than 52 percent, not just in Malta but all over the world, so I think women should be out there.

The Council has been in place since 1964. In my younger days in Malta if you married you couldn't go on working. You had to give up your job. The Council worked against that and now women can work. The Council also brought up the issue of domestic violence, as it was a hush-hush situation before. We raised awareness about it and now there are shelters and a lot of help is available. When it comes to domestic violence, we can't keep talking about the women alone. We need the men to be educated. Some of them might do it through culture or upbringing but if we make them aware of what they are doing I think that would help.

Education is paramount. Not just in the three Rs but in all aspects. We must prepare girls and even boys. It is not just about getting an academic education but about promoting their skills so that when they come out they can be economically independent, find jobs, feel secure and feel motivated and empowered. That's very important. The Council also works on tertiary education, and we try to eliminate illiteracy and absenteeism.

Economic power

Artemis Toumazi

President and CEO of Cyprus Women's Cooperative Bank

Global: Can you tell us about the work that you have been doing to help women entrepreneurs in Cyprus?

Artemis Toumazi: I have always been working on gender equality issues and when I saw that women, especially in Cyprus and then at the European level, are not fully occupied in the economy, I decided that we needed a practical way to help, and to make the rest of the community realise that they are very important for the sustainable development of their countries.

The research we did showed that women were lacking the capital to start their own businesses, so we created the first women's cooperative bank in the world. We give loans that are tailor-made for the needs of these women – they have a very low monthly payment, with special interest rates, and they are given advice on their plans, on strategic ways of starting up their own business, with a follow-up procedure by our team.

When did you set up the Women's Cooperative Bank and what challenges did you face?

We started back in 1999 and the challenges were from both men and women, because men had to realise that they needed women in the economy, and women had to be encouraged to understand that they can also be entrepreneurs, and not just mothers, wives and carers. So the basic challenge was not discrimination as such but the problems every society faces with stereotypical attitudes. When we started, it was very difficult to persuade them but now, 11 years after, I can say there is a very big change of attitudes and they really understand that they can help their economy to progress.

What impact has the bank had on the lives of individual women in Cyprus?

When we started there was only 12 percent of women involved in very small businesses. After 11 years, with special schemes and grants we've managed to get from the government to assist these start-ups, we've reached 29 percent women entrepreneurs in our economy. The examples are many. They have come to us, even if they are educated, with the fear that they don't know what to expect, how the rest of the people will receive their ideas, and now we have very successful businesswomen in all areas of the economy.

Do you think the model you've developed in Cyprus could be used in other countries?

This is my hope and I have been trying very hard to promote the idea with the European Union and the Commonwealth. I truly believe that this is a model that can be very successful and can be adjusted to [local] needs. There are countries with very small budgets or very small capital that can do miracles.

Why is it important that women are fully engaged in the economy?

I believe the economy needs them for sustainable development. If we want the gender gap to become smaller we have to understand that if women have economic power then they will slowly get the social status they need and also political power. If you don't have money, today, you go nowhere, but if you're successful, and you are recognised and visible in your economy, then you can take steps forward, and this is the most important thing.

India's visible and invisible women

More than one million women hold elective office in India and increasingly they are breaking into professions that were previously the preserve of men. But rises in the instances of domestic violence and sex-selective abortions, as well as the prevalence of under-age marriages, are indications that women and girls are still viewed as second-class citizens.

Women's status in India is indeed a mixed bag. As is the case with the Indian economy, where higher growth rates have not ensured the end of poverty or inequity, women's increasing prominence in many fields, including politics, has not negated the entrenched attitudes that still consider women the lesser half.

Whether these attitudes have changed and how much will be known when the results of the 2011 census are out. A massive exercise to count India's 1.2 billion people, Census 2011, has just ended. It has been touted as the most extensive exercise of its kind attempted anywhere in the world, as 1.27 million enumerators, gathering data in 18 languages, fanned out across India over three weeks during February. For Indian women, the results of this nationwide survey will be of particular significance, as they will establish whether in the last decade women's value has increased or decreased.

Why should we need census data to establish this? It was the 2001 census that revealed the shocking fact that the male-female sex ratio in the 0-6 years age group, which was already skewed in favour of boys, had declined further. Between 1991 and 2001, the male female sex ratio in children under the age of six declined from 945 girls per 1,000 boys to 927. These figures confirmed what until then had only been sporadically documented – the misuse of medical technology to eliminate girls, even before they were born, through sex-selective abortions. The last census also revealed that economic prosperity did not guarantee a higher status for women – the skewed sex ratios were most prevalent in the richest states and districts in India.

This is only one of the many components of the story of contrasts and contradictions of Indian women. Women are visible today in areas closed to them in the past. Yet, they are also invisible. Their work is not valued, they are generally deemed a burden, and they are murdered, tortured or neglected until death is a certainty. This is not melodrama. It is the reality for millions of women who are

Sonia Ghandi

Women from different sections of society in India are acting as catalysts of change and are contributing to social transformation. Women have emerged as agents of change in five areas – self-help groups, local politics, social activism, enterprise and technology.

The Indian women's self-help group model is now being replicated in Afghanistan. I am also particularly pleased that the very first all-woman peacekeeping force deployed by the United Nations has been a contingent of over 100 policewomen from India, in Liberia. Women comprise almost a third of India's IT workforce and technology is greatly empowering them. The role of women in environmental activism, both in India and in countries like Kenya and Brazil, is very inspiring.



not part of the conspicuous sliver at the top – those in the upper and middle classes living in India's cities whose faces feature in the country's burgeoning media.

Step outside urban India and you are confronted with another reality: undernourished girls being forced into marriage and motherhood before their bodies are ready for child-bearing. According to the latest UNICEF report, 56 percent of adolescent girls in India are anaemic and 30 percent of them are already married. Also, three out of five women in the age group 20-49 were married as adolescents. Despite the ban on child marriage, 29 percent of adolescent girls in urban areas, and 56 percent in rural areas are married before they turn 18. Worse still, one in five women aged between 20 and 49 had borne a child before their 18th birthday. If India's maternal mortality rate refuses to decline faster, this is the single most important reason.

Children under 14 are not supposed to work according to Indian ▶



LEVI STRAUSS & CO.

BUILDING A BETTER WORKPLACE — AND A BETTER WORLD — FOR WOMEN

Levi Strauss & Co. doesn't just shape what women wear. We partner with women around the world to shape what's to come: a more equitable workplace, healthier families and communities, and a more sustainable planet.

Our company enjoys a distinguished history of standing up for equality, civil rights and social justice on behalf of our employees and our partners. Our efforts extend well beyond the factory floor. Through our pioneering spirit, our bold public policy leadership, and our innovative grant-making and community engagement, we aspire to change how the world works.

Women make up three-quarters of the global garment workforce and more than two-thirds of the factory workers in our supply chain. We don't view these women as merely employees. We see in them critical agents of change — change within our company and in their communities stretched around the globe.

A Workplace Where Women Can Thrive

Since our earliest days, Levi Strauss & Co. has been a leader in ensuring equal rights for women and minorities, safe working conditions, and fair employment terms. We aspire to improve the lives of women who work in our facilities and any who do business with us.

We were the first multinational apparel company to establish a comprehensive workplace code of conduct for our manufacturing suppliers. Our Terms of Engagement, established two decades ago, specify the ethical,

PIONEERING EQUITY

For more than 155 years, Levi Strauss & Co. has sought to bring our four values—empathy, originality, integrity and courage—to life. We have engaged in the fight for equality on many fronts: gender, racial, sexual and economic. Here are some milestones:

- **1934:** Patented "Lady Levi's®," the first blue jeans for women.
- **1940s:** Racially integrated sewing facilities (long before passage of civil rights legislation).
- **1970s:** Formalized long-standing commitment to fostering workplace diversity.
- **1980s:** First large company to respond to HIV/AIDS in the workplace.
- **1991:** First multinational company to establish a code of conduct.
- **1992:** First Fortune 500 company to offer full medical benefits to unmarried partners of employees.
- **1993:** Dismantled stereotypes of women with Levi's® "Women Breaking the Mold" advertisement, which Advertising Age named as one of the most important commercials of the past 50 years.
- **2006:** Made Clinton Global Initiative commitment to provide a comprehensive HIV/AIDS treatment and care program for employees and their dependents worldwide.
- **2010:** One of the first signatories of the CEO Statement of Support for the Women's Empowerment Principles—part of our commitment to advance women globally.

legal and environmental requirements by which all of our contract factories and licensees must abide. They set out employment standards and address issues of child labor, forced labor, disciplinary practices, working hours, wages and benefits, freedom of association, discrimination, and health and safety.

We are proud to be among the first signatories of the Women's Empowerment Principles set forth by the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the United Nations Global Compact, and we urge other corporate leaders to make gender equity a top priority.

Ensuring a More Sustainable Planet

More and more women around the world are recognizing that the future of our planet rests in all of our hands. A healthy environment in which to raise healthy children. Safe food. Clean drinking water. None of these essentials can be taken for granted. That is why we strive to build sustainability into everything we do.

Over the past two decades we have set the standard for apparel companies, with industry-leading global effluent guidelines, product lifecycle assessments, and recycling and reuse programs.

We are working towards that goal by seeking better ways to grow cotton, using fewer pesticides and less water. We have dramatically reduced the use of chemicals, water, and energy in our fabric finishing processes and materials in our retail operations. We have actively engaged our customers to care for their clothes in ways that have less impact on the planet.

Helping Women Change the World

Our support for women's empowerment spans beyond the boundaries of our supply chain. Since its inception in 1952, the Levi Strauss Foundation has made more than \$268 million in grants supporting initiatives that improve the lives of women and their families in more than 40 countries around the world. This includes grants that have benefited more than one million apparel workers in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas. Projects include:

- **The HERproject**, which provides education and access to health services for women workers in Egypt, Pakistan, India, and China.
- **Mercado Global**, which helps organize rural artisan women in Guatemala into thriving cooperatives to market their Fair Trade products.
- **Give to Colombia**, which increases financial literacy and promotes savings and entrepreneurship among apparel factory workers, primarily female heads of households and single mothers

We invite you to join us in these efforts. For more information on our commitment to advancing women in the workplace and the world, please visit <http://levistrauss.com/sustainability> and <http://levistrauss.com/blogs>.

Below Left/ Levi's® innovative Curve ID line of custom-fit jeans is based on the insight that shape, not size, is what matters: about 90 percent of women's shapes universally fit into four distinct body types.

Below Right/ The Levi's® Brand recently launched "Shape What's To Come," a global online community that enables millennial women to connect, collaborate, and inspire others to pursue their passions and potential for transforming the world.



► law. Yet millions of children, including girls, labour in the house, in the fields, in factories. They have no choice. Poverty ensures that every member of a family must work. As a result, the data of school enrolment has little meaning as girls – more so than boys – are regularly pulled out. While poor families treasure girls and boys as additional hands to work and earn money, amongst families with property, daughters mean dowry, a price the family must pay at the time of marriage. Despite a legal ban, the custom continues in direct and indirect ways. And the harassment of women, sometimes even leading to death, for not bringing an adequate dowry, is a constant feature in crime statistics: it is estimated that one woman is killed every 66 minutes for dowry.

The rise in incidents of domestic violence, which led to a specific law being enacted in 2005, is another indication of the violence women face. Between 1997-2002, there was a 34.5 percent rise in domestic violence. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, there was a 10 percent increase in the incidence of torture, which includes cruelty by husband and family members, between 2008-09.

Despite all this, over a million women hold elective office in India, starting from the village Panchayat going all the way up to the national parliament. The Speaker of the lower house of parliament, the Lok Sabha, is a woman; the leader of the opposition is a woman; a woman heads the largest and oldest political party, the Indian National Congress; the President of India is a woman; and the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state in the country, is a woman too. There are many more one could add to the list.

Girls and women are also joining the army, becoming pilots, driving taxis, excelling in business, heading major banks, breaking academic records and dominating the visual media. None of this can or should

be discounted. It matters, not just for the women who have made it, but also because they are role models for millions of other women.

One stubborn statistic that has refused to change is the gap between male and female literacy. As of 2001, India's overall literacy rate was 64 percent while for women it was just 54 percent. But even here, we are beginning to see a shift, notably in the most backward area in India, the northern state of Bihar. Once considered a basket case on all developmental indicators and with a female literacy rate of just 33.57 percent – the lowest in the country according to the 2001 census – the education dropout rate of girls, which was 2.5 million per annum five years ago, has now come down to one million. And the enrolment of girls in school in Bihar has increased three times. Girls leave education early because of poor connectivity between their villages and high schools or because their families require them to stay at home to help with domestic chores. The Bihar state government came up with a novel solution to the first problem – it began giving bicycles to girls who completed eight years of schooling. The bike literally became their vehicle to higher education.

So the picture is mixed. Since the last census, there have been notable changes and there are some innovative policies in place, although their implementation is sometimes half-hearted. But the questions remains: are Indian women more empowered, more equal, now than they were a decade ago? Many Indian women have come a long way, but there are many, many more that remain where they were, caught in the web of poverty and tradition. The glass is still less than half full. ⑨

Kalpana Sharma, a journalist working in Mumbai



UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE
International Examinations

Excellence in education

Excellence in education

We are the world's largest provider of international education programmes and qualifications for 5–19 year olds.

More than 9,000 schools in over 160 countries are part of the Cambridge learning community.

A Cambridge international education is progressive and flexible, helping schools develop successful students.

Learn more!

Getting in touch with Cambridge is easy.
Email us at international.cie.org.uk
or call us on +44 1223 553554

www.cie.org.uk



Let's give meaning to equality in Africa

High rates of maternal mortality, poor education, increasing levels of sexual violence and the prejudices of patriarchal societies are limiting the potential of women in Africa. But if governments implement the commitments and laws they have subscribed to, then progress can be made, writes **Bience Gawanas**, African Union Commissioner for Social Affairs

The years 2010 to 2020 are the African Women's Decade. The importance of the decade is that it provides us with a horizon. Many times when countries adopt a policy instrument the time scale for its implementation is indefinite, but the decade is focusing us, telling us that in ten years time we have to report on progress.

This year the theme is maternal health and mortality. It is a shame for Africa, that in this century women are still dying while they are giving life. The African Union has developed many policy instruments in this area, including the Maputo Plan of Action for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (since its adoption in 2006, many countries have developed roadmaps on maternal health) and the Campaign for Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA). Launched in 2007 at the Minister of Health Conference, CARMMA is an advocacy tool to help member states translate their continental commitments into local action – so far, 24 countries have signed up to the campaign.

Is Africa going to meet the Millennium Development Goal on maternal health? This is not an easy question to answer. There are many, many factors at play. Most importantly, for us as Africans, we need to start taking ownership of our problems and also begin to come up with solutions to these problems. If we mobilise our communities, if we mobilise our stakeholders within our countries, there are some actions that do not require money – they need people's involvement and the understanding that women do not need to die in childbirth. Simple interventions can make a difference and if we commit ourselves and if we have the will and the dedication to save just one or two more lives then I think we can meet the MDG.

It is absolutely critical that women and girls have access to education because if you are educated you will make choices – better choices – over your own life. I am imparting to my daughters and my nieces, that whatever you do, education always holds the key to your future. It is a negotiating tool for you, whether it is with your boyfriend, your husband or the system – it provides you with the necessary skills to be able to engage in society.

Today we have a woman president in Africa – Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia – and so no one can ever tell us that this is not possible. This is really just the beginning. But we should not measure women's progress solely by the political positions that they hold in parliament or cabinet. We need to get more women into local government. We need more ombudswomen, more female Attorney Generals, and more women in leadership roles across the board and at the different levels. Now if you have women in these kinds of position they can make a lot of changes that even members of parliament cannot make. This is how we will create the critical mass we need. But it is still important that women are represented in cabinet and parliament because, whether we like it or not, that makes women visible, that turns women into the role models that we are looking for.



Ellen Johnson Sirleaf: Africa's first female president is leading the reconstruction of Liberia, torn apart by more than a decade of civil conflict

I think the big challenge is that we are still fighting very traditional societies that have historically discriminated against women. We are still facing a situation of patriarchy, of discrimination against women, the fact that women have a low status in our society. If we take the problem of the use of sexual violence in conflict, for me it is another aspect of this male/female issue. It is being used as a weapon of war. It is a method of dehumanising women, of men trying to use the power of sex to gain control over women. And still we have sexual violence being used against women in countries that are not in a conflict situation.

So, we have to ask: How do you prevent? How do you protect? How do you punish? First, we need to get governments to start recognising these things are happening. We need to focus on human rights training for the military, the police and peacekeepers. We also have to make sure that in the peace negotiations we look beyond who should be in government and consider post-conflict reconstruction – not just building or rebuilding structures, but also rebuilding the hearts and the minds of people. And women absolutely have to be involved in these processes.

There is always going to be a gap between what I call substantive equality and formal equality. Across the continent many of our governments have adopted constitutions that speak about women's rights and have acceded to international treaties and conventions that embody gender equality. We have laws in our countries that combat discrimination against women. The problem lies in the translation of these instruments and commitments into meaningful changes for women. If we have the political will to make the change then we can make the change. 9

Boardroom jungle

Business practices must be updated to make senior management a more welcoming environment for women. And general attitudes towards working mothers will have to undergo a major change, writes **Elissa Jobson**

A growing body of evidence suggests that appointing women to corporate boards isn't just good common sense, it also makes good business sense. According to a study from Leeds University Business School, the presence of at least one female director appears to lessen the chance of bankruptcy by 20 percent and that having two or three women in the boardroom reduces the possibility even further. Goldman Sachs has estimated that the gross domestic product of the eurozone could be increased by up to 13 percent if the gender gap was closed. And McKinsey has found, in its 'Women Matter' report for 2010, that the operational profit of companies with the greatest number of women on the board was 56 percent more than those with only men at the highest level.

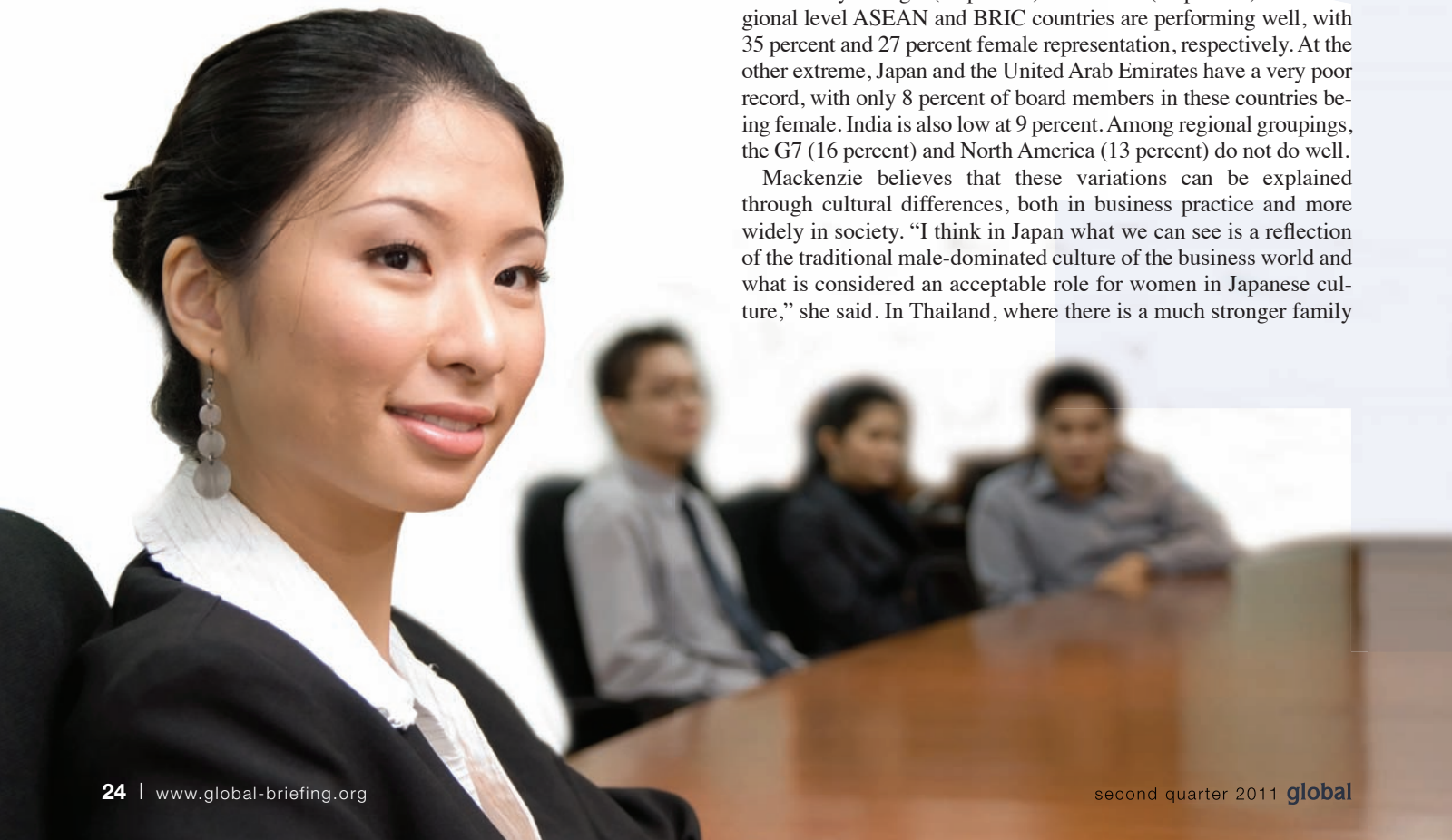
Yet, despite the fact that increasingly there are more female than male university graduates and that men and women enter the workplace in roughly equal numbers, the proportion of women in senior management positions has fallen over the past two years. Recent research produced by Grant Thornton, an international accountancy and consultancy firm, reveals that women now hold only 20 percent of senior roles worldwide, down from 24 percent in 2009. "It is disappointing to see that the global proportion of women in senior management has shown no sign of growth," said April Mackenzie, Grant Thornton's global head of public affairs and external

relations. "Female executives appear to be bearing the brunt of the global economic downturn."

Why do so few women make it to the top in the corporate world? Dr Shima Barakat, a fellow with the Judge Business School at Cambridge University, identifies two main barriers to women. First is the difficulty of balancing work and domestic responsibilities. "Women take time out to have children and slow down, or don't come back at all, or choose a different career," she said. Secondly, the fact that there are so few women in senior positions means that they are subject to more scrutiny and are even judged to a higher standard than their male counterparts. "As a woman moves up the corporate ladder there seems to be a certain vulnerability attached to her. You're moving up, you're being championed, you make a mistake and 'poof!', you've fallen off the ladder," Barakat explained. This prevents women from even considering putting themselves forward for promotion. The McKinsey report, too, has recognised that many women are reticent about advocating for themselves.

The number of women in the boardroom is not, however, consistently low across the world – some countries and some regions have surged ahead. Grant Thornton's 'International Business Report 2011' states that Thailand has the highest level of gender-diversity with 45 percent of women occupying senior managerial positions, followed by Georgia (40 percent) and Russia (36 percent). At the regional level ASEAN and BRIC countries are performing well, with 35 percent and 27 percent female representation, respectively. At the other extreme, Japan and the United Arab Emirates have a very poor record, with only 8 percent of board members in these countries being female. India is also low at 9 percent. Among regional groupings, the G7 (16 percent) and North America (13 percent) do not do well.

Mackenzie believes that these variations can be explained through cultural differences, both in business practice and more widely in society. "I think in Japan what we can see is a reflection of the traditional male-dominated culture of the business world and what is considered an acceptable role for women in Japanese culture," she said. In Thailand, where there is a much stronger family



infrastructure and where grandparents provide childcare and other household support, women are freer to climb the corporate ladder.

She also pointed to the need for companies to make it easier for women to slip in and out of the workforce when they have children. "In Russia, they have very good parental leave benefits and this results in a fairly high number of women in senior management positions," Mackenzie said. In the G7 countries and North America, by contrast, there simply isn't the structure, support or flexibility in the work environment to allow women to return to the workforce. Establishing programmes that enable women on maternity leave to continue training and networking would be one way of keeping them connected to the workplace, as would more flexible working hours and fast-track schemes allowing returnees to quickly make up the time and experience they have missed.

One sure-fire, if controversial, way of ensuring more female representation on company boards would be statutory quotas. When Norway introduced a 40 percent quota in 2003, the number of women occupying board seats rose dramatically from 6.8 percent to 44.2 percent. In 2008, France followed suit – in January this year the government passed legislation requiring a minimum of 40 percent female members on executive boards – and Germany and Austria are also considering this action. Mackenzie supports quotas. "We've observed in other walks of life that often society needs some added incentive to create change," she said. "I think they are a positive move because otherwise things will not change rapidly enough and the world be all the poorer for it."

But not everyone agrees. Shima Barakat is opposed to quotas: "I think it most certainly would work but whether it's a good thing is an entirely different matter," she said. It could lay female board members open to criticism and risk giving the impression that the women don't deserve to be there, that they are only there to make up the numbers. This, she believes, would be detrimental to the entire women's agenda and would possibly undo some of the improvements and progress achieved over the last few decades.

There is another course, a middle ground between those who advocate quotas and those who reject them outright. In the UK, former Trade Minister Lord Davies issued a review of women on boards at the end of February. He fell short of calling for mandatory quotas, recommending instead that companies listed in the FTSE 100, which currently have only 12.5 percent of their boardroom seats occupied by women, should be aiming, at a minimum, to double female representation by 2015. His report says that companies should set targets and fully disclose the number of women working in their organisations at all levels which, in turn, will help drive up the numbers of women with top jobs in business.

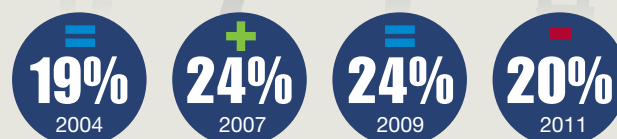
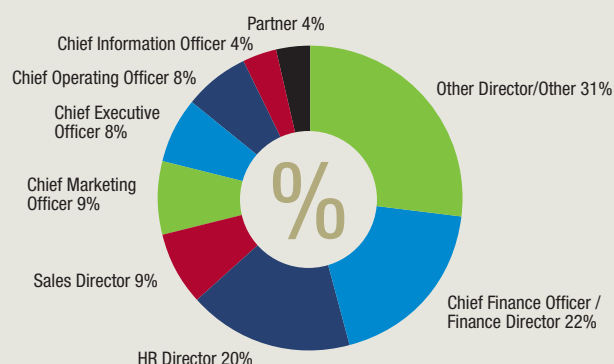
"Currently 18 FTSE 100 companies have no female directors at all and nearly half of all FTSE 250 companies do not have a woman in the boardroom. Radical change is need in the mindset of the business community if we are to implement the scale of change that is needed," said Lord Davies. "This is not about aiming for a specific figure and is not just about promoting equal opportunities but it is about improving business performance."

It's also about ensuring that company boardrooms reflect the gender balance of the workforce and customers. Mackenzie agrees with this. "Businesses would be all the richer for bringing a different perspective to the board, to reflect the population as a whole and more of the demographic of their client base. It allows a different insight and a different way of problem solving," she said. But market forces alone are unlikely to lead to greater diversity at the top. Unless business practices change and corporate and societal attitudes towards working mothers shift, the boardroom will continue to be a hostile environment for women. 9

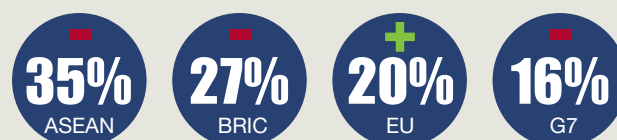
Women in senior management positions, 2011

Country	Percentage of women in senior management 2011	Percentage point change compared to 2009	
Thailand	45%	7%	▲
Georgia	40%	n/a	
Russia	36%	-7%	▼
Hong Kong	35%	7%	▲
Philippines	35%	-13%	▼
China (mainland)	34%	2%	▲
Botswana	32%	8%	▲
USA	15%	-5%	▼
Switzerland	12%	n/a	
Denmark	12%	-1%	▼
Germany	11%	-6%	▼
India	9%	-6%	▼
UAE	8%	n/a	
Japan	8%	1%	▲

Senior management roles held by women, 2011



Women in senior management positions 2011 – regionally



Source: Grant Thornton, 'International Business Report 2011'

“Women’s leadership is needed in this century more than ever”

INTERVIEW

Mary Robinson

Former President of Ireland and former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Outspoken and often defiant, Mary Robinson has never been afraid to ruffle feathers. At home, in Ireland she was known as a champion of women’s rights, campaigning for the liberalisation of divorce and abortion laws in a strongly Catholic country. Her tenure as UN human rights commissioner, from 1997 to 2002, was at times controversial. She angered governments around the world – China, Russia and America included – with her unflinching criticism of their human rights records. But she is also credited with widening the brief of the commission to include ‘softer’ issues like food security, health care and the right to safe drinking water. After resigning from the UN, partly as a result of pressure from the Bush administration, Robinson continued her human rights work with Realizing Rights, the advocacy organisation she founded.

Now she has turned her attention to climate change and, through the Mary Robinson Foundation for Climate Justice, is emphasising the need for a rights-based approach to the problem – one which seeks redress for those who, having contributed least to the pollution of the planet, are bearing the brunt of its impacts; and one which recognises that women will suffer more than men. She spoke to *Global* shortly after visiting communities in Bangladesh that are already experiencing the devastating effects of global warming, and explained why she believes that women need to be involved at all levels in the climate change negotiation process.

Global: Your Foundation is working to secure justice for victims of climate change. Please could you explain what is meant by a ‘climate justice’ approach to global warming?

Mary Robinson: Climate justice offers a strong effective human centred approach for action on climate change because it acknowledges that some of the countries and populations that are suffering the most are the least responsible for greenhouse gas emissions.

I’ve just returned from Bangladesh and I travelled to Koyra in the Delta region and saw the devastation caused by cyclone Aila in 2009 – houses were destroyed and the embankments have not been properly mended so that the saltwater has come onto the land. The rice that used to grow there won’t grow anymore and there is no more freshwater fishing. Already, these are the kind of dramatic impacts of climate change on people who had have made no contribution to the problem but who are suffering greatly, and therefore we need a strong justice approach that builds on what is already in the UNFCCC [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change] framework – common but differentiated responsibilities.

Given that you are promoting a justice approach to climate change why do we need to have a gender specific response?

The impact of climate change has different effects on women and

men, and indeed children. The impacts are greater on women because they aggravate situations of poverty – [it is] women who have to go further for water, who have to cope with the house being flooded or intense drought so that there is no food security. I saw this visibly in Bangladesh. For the women the impacts were very severe because their homes had been destroyed, the income that they had from growing vegetables and other crops was destroyed, so they were learning a different method of fishing. But as well as coping with learning new farming and fishing methods, the women had to cope with the devastating impact on the household and community. This was very evident.

And so we believe that a strong gender perspective recognises the reality that the impacts are worse for women, in many, many cases. And that women leaders will tend to have a more practical approach to trying to address the way in which we can support communities affected by climate change, with more emphasis on support for adaptation.

Your Foundation is working with groups like Climate Wise Women who are effecting change in their local communities. Can you tell me about the work they are doing in this area?

Climate Wise Women is a group of knowledgeable grassroots women who came together as climate witnesses before Copenhagen [COP 15]. Some of these women stayed together and, in a sustainable way, continue to voice their situations. If you take for example one of the Climate Wise Women, Constance Okollet from Eastern Uganda, a mother of seven, she describes how when she was growing up there were normal seasons. They were poor, but they had food security and they were reasonably happy in their village. Then, over the past four or five years, there have been no seasons as such – there are heavy rains followed by six or eight months of drought followed by flash floods again so that the rain runs off [the land] and destroys houses and schools. Constance formed a group of women, Osukura United Women, to try to help the community cope. At first she thought it was God that was responsible for this very bad turn of events and then she learned through the Oxfam-organised Climate Tribunal, that in fact it wasn’t God, it was the lifestyles of the rich part of the world that were causing the problem.

What is your Foundation doing to encourage women’s leadership in the climate change negotiation process?

Women’s leadership is needed in this century more than ever and the issue of climate change and the need to support the values of climate justice is one in which women can play a very significant role. With the help of the Rockefeller Foundation, my Foundation brought together a network of women leaders from the grassroots

and NGOs and we prepared for a side event in Cancun on 4 December [2010]. There were about 150 women from different parts of the world, speaking vividly about the need to have a strong gender dimension in the climate change discussions, at all levels, including financing and technology as well as mitigation and adaptation.

Two days later my Foundation co-hosted, with the government of Mexico, a meeting of women ministers and part of the leadership at Cancun – they included the [COP 16] Chair, Patricia Espinoza, the Foreign Affairs Minister of Mexico; the Secretary General of the UNFCCC, Christiana Figueres; the Commissioner for Climate Action, Connie Hedegaard; and the Ministers of Denmark and Ecuador. It showed that women are actually in the top level of decision-making and if they can be active in ensuring a strong gender dimension then this can change some of policies, in particular by having more of a balance between support for mitigation and support for adaptation, which in fact was reflected in the discussion in Cancun.

Over the course of your career do you think that there has been progress in giving women more of a say in key political decision-making? What more needs to be done to ensure that women operate on an equal footing with men in national and international politics?

I think there have been improvements but it's never a secure or steady line of progress – from time to time there is regression in the number of women in an individual country that are elected to parliament or that serve in the cabinet. But many countries find that quota systems help, whether at local and national elections or, as is increasingly the case in European countries, quotas of women participating on the boards of companies in the private sector. That can help to show that there is a significant pool of capable women. I so often hear the view expressed, "We'd love to appoint a woman but there isn't a qualified one." This usually means that they haven't really looked for qualified women.

There seem to be a number of women engaged at the very highest level in the UN climate change process. How do you think their involvement might impact on the outcome of discussions?

I don't think it will automatically [have an impact], as perhaps it should. I was struck when these women ministers and senior officials of the UNFCCC and EU came to our meeting, they said, one after the other, that this was the first opportunity they'd had in Cancun to focus on gender issues. Which is why we feel it's important to organise a sort of bottom-up and top-down approach – groups of women leaders who are informed of the need to have a stronger gender dimension, stronger emphasis on adaption and more recognition of the different impacts on women and men.

Given that the international community is struggling to find any consensus on how to tackle climate change, how confident are you that they will work for a justice or gender-based approach to the problem?

The approach that we are adopting in the Foundation is to act as a kind of catalyst and convenor to encourage a much stronger

gender perspective. There are networks that have been involved in trying to engender the process for quite some time without much success. So we feel the need to strengthen the focus on practical approaches and to ensure that there is a better balance between mitigation and adaptation. There needs to be more focus on the impacts [of climate change] on communities, which create burdens, in particular, for women, and on ensuring that right across the board – in the transfer of technology and when looking at financing – women are involved. There's a lot of work to be done, but we believe that women can make a difference in Durban [COP 17] and beyond. 9



Making innovation work for the poor

Greater public value should be released from science and technology specifically for the benefit of the poor in developing countries, argues **David Grimshaw**. But putting this technology to good use will require more engagement with local communities, so that they can retain ownership of the solutions

Technology has long been recognised as playing an important role in human development. Over the past four decades, there have been unprecedented innovations in technology. And yet, despite the best efforts of many people, poverty is still widespread and many poor people do not have access to the technology that could help them.

It is now 38 years since the publication of Ernst Fritz Schumacher's seminal work, *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*. The organisation he founded, now called Practical Action, still promotes the use and adoption of intermediate technologies (described by Schumacher as "vastly superior to the primitive technology of bygone ages but at the same time much simpler, cheaper

and freer than the super-technology of the rich") to reduce poverty in the world. The essential idea is that technology should be "compatible with the laws of ecology, gentle in its use of scarce resources, and designed to serve the human person".

New science-led technologies present some specific challenges, including the perceptions of high cost, high risk, high complexity and the lack of knowledge about what is available. Yet new technologies also present an enormous number of opportunities. By moving away from the entrenched systems of patents, production, and markets that older technologies are locked into, they can do things differently and more appropriately.

Vital issues like sustainable development, climate change and



democracy are all influenced by the role of science and technology in society. A major challenge is to release their public value and channel it to help reduce poverty in developing countries. The benefits that are generated by the use of science and technology should not be reaped solely by the market. Releasing this public value, in a global context, is one of the most significant and challenging issues facing societies throughout the world today. According to a 2007 report by UNCTAD, over the last 25 years, only 3.9 percent of total World Bank lending has, on average, gone to scientific and technological projects. More funding needs to be directed to these areas if the poorest countries are to profit.

Technology is far from neutral in relation to both development and power. This has been apparent since long before the introduction of the current range of new technologies such as ICTs, biotechnology and nanotechnology. As the historian David Edgerton notes, while the West gets used to the increasing pace of innovation “most change is taking place by the transfer of techniques from place to place”. Technological systems – the way things are used, abused and controlled – may often be subject to political influence, but there are ways in which we can talk about better or worse new technologies. We can judge them according to the extent to which they lock people into certain systems (as, for example, GM crops and centralised nuclear power do) or provide an open platform for new sorts of use (for example, Linux or micro-renewable energy).

Taking, as a fundamental axiom of appropriate technologies, the idea that they should serve the human person is a useful starting point for asking how they can contribute to solving some of the intractable problems of poverty. Efforts to solve the widespread contamination of drinking water by arsenic in the Bay of Bengal region – which affects the countries of Bangladesh, India and Ne-

pal, where an estimated 64 million people are at risk – provide a good example of this principle.

In Nepal, as in the other countries, the challenge is to try to reduce the current cost of testing while also improving its accuracy. A workshop in Kathmandu in 2009 brought together multiple stakeholders, including scientists and representatives of communities, along with the government’s water authorities. It examined the local context in which arsenic testing takes place and the current technologies – including their deficiencies – with a view to building an agreement about how (or if) new science-led technologies could be deployed. It was hoped that a new design brief would emerge, leading to the development of a prototype for an improved arsenic sensor, which would be tested by the workshop’s participants before being adopted in the field.

There is an established practice of participative development where ownership and power are fostered in local communities. In other discussions concerning water needs and new technologies (for example multi-stakeholder dialogues on nanotechnology in Zimbabwe held in 2006 and workshops in Peru during 2007 on mercury pollution from small-scale mining in the Andes), Practical Action has employed a three-stage model of participation. It begins by talking through ideas with the key stakeholders, followed by engagement with scientists before delivering a solution. This method can increase expectations of actions to follow so there has to be an explicit recognition of both the complexity of the problems at hand and the fact any solution may take time – perhaps even years – before it can be put into use.

The aim of this process is to deliver a new technology that meets local needs. Dialogue is merely the first step. The emphasis has to be on understanding and solving a real problem, rather than on ►

Recording local knowledge in Zimbabwe

Voice is acknowledged to be the main media of the poor, and radio has long been seen to be effective in reaching grassroots groups. Until recently, however, radio stations have been relatively expensive to start up and there have been various regulatory barriers – even now, obtaining broadcasting licences in many developing countries can be problematic.

In such circumstances, podcasting can offer a low-cost way of delivering audio programming to defined groups of people, with the added advantage of allowing the recording of local knowledge by local communities themselves.

Experience has shown that often the most effective way of getting appropriate information to poor people is via a mix of old and new technologies. But if a community does not have Internet access, FM radio or mobile phone reception – or indeed an electricity supply – it is necessary to re-think the channels that can be effective.

Practical Action’s podcasting project in Zimbabwe set out to assist the community in Mbire District, an area of frequent droughts and occasional floods in a low altitude zone in the semi-arid Zambezi valley, where 20,000 people live as farmers and herders. A survey carried out by a local non-governmental organisation, the Lower Guruve Development Association (LGDA), revealed that on average in this district, 20 percent of livestock – particularly cattle – are lost each year to trypanosomiasis (known as sleeping sickness in humans) which is transmitted by the tsetse fly. This is a serious problem when, as the study also showed, nearly all farmers depend on draught animal power for cultivating their lands.

There was, however, scope for enhancing performance through better livestock management with an emphasis on improved feeding practices. A wealth of indigenous farming knowledge exists among these communities and has done for generations – this is unpublished and is usually passed on from one generation to the next by word of mouth. Knowledge sharing is recognised to be a two-way process but few genuine attempts have been reported of ways of capturing local information.

In Mbire, local people wanted to capture indigenous knowledge so that when, for example, a recommended vaccination was not affordable they could revert to traditional approaches.

The challenge was how to harness and digitise the wisdom of individuals so that it could be shared among other community members for the benefit of all. The answer: simple MP3 players are used to record and

enable listening – either by individuals or by community groups using a loudspeaker. And, whenever necessary, the rechargeable batteries are taken to a centre powered by generator.

The main objective of the project was to test out the effectiveness of using podcasting to deliver development knowledge products in local voices and languages. In all it is estimated that around 11,000 people improved their livelihoods as a result of the project. The availability of animal management lessons have led a decrease in animal mortality, increased milk yields and the diversification and improved management of stock feeds.



► developing a new widget. And it pays to be ‘technologically agnostic’ about solutions. In the case of nanotechnology and water, the development of a new device which meets the requirements identified may come from a number of scientific disciplines, including synthetic biotechnology, and so we should remain open-minded.

Sometimes an appropriate technology for solving a real human need may already be available in the market and only needs some adaptation before it can be used. Often, it has been found that a blend of old and new technologies can bring enormous benefits to people living in remote rural communities, and this is especially true of the use of available communications media (see the box on podcasting in Zimbabwe).

The concept of appropriate technology may have been around for several decades but it is still relevant when considering how to introduce technologies into poor communities. The prospects and promise of many new technological developments – the mobile phone, the internet, nanotechnology, and genetic modification to name a few – have often been exciting, but their ability to provide

sustainable change in the lives of poor people has been limited. Choices that fulfil the needs of people must be made. This requires moving away from the old ways, which are supply-driven and focused on delivering products to a market at a price, maximising profits for the owners of the intellectual capital.

Implementing a more engaged approach will not be easy, just as changing the culture of an organisation is not easy. Solutions need to be driven by the poor communities themselves, so that they retain ownership. These kinds of actions need to be embedded in all international development efforts that aim to challenge poverty through the use of new technology. ⑨

Dr David J. Grimshaw is Head of International Programme (New Technologies) with Practical Action and is a Visiting Professor of Information and Communications Technologies for Development at Royal Holloway, University of London

Africa’s big mChallenge: experience, resources and clout

Exploiting the new space opened up by mobile telephony in Africa has not been easy but determined pioneers keep coming up with important breakthroughs, writes **Bright B. Simons**

In the second week of February, in the year of our Lord 2011, the head of the world’s one billion Roman Catholics put paid to all prospects of a mighty explosion of ‘mReligion’ applications in the near future, when the Vatican ruled that for one of the faithful to confess her/his sins over the phone was not the same thing as to do so in the physical presence of a qualified member of the clergy. The ban on the so-called ‘Confession app’ probably put the damper on a few other ideas of digitally replicating church liturgies and sacraments, but it is unlikely to have killed off all efforts to bring mobile technology to bear on people’s chosen forms of worship.

The larger point here is that the mobile phone may have liberated us from most of the constraints that prevailed in the days when basic communications relied on long stretches of heavy metal cable, but it hasn’t really altered the structures of power that often influence the course of innovation and the pace of change. For many grassroots innovators eager to plunge into the brave new world of mobile emancipation, the shock can be disillusioning. They come totally unprepared for the bureaucracy of the marketing departments in the major telecom companies – the form-filling, endless conference calling, and the Latin-sounding jargon, all intermixing to depress.

When the bright-eyed innovator eventually gets ‘cleared’ to engage with decision-makers, who will make the final determination on whether they would be able to reach potential users of this ‘next big thing’ invention or application, they are very likely to find that the commercial terms feel like nails in the flesh. The truth, quite simply, is that such experiences are no different from what prevails in the ‘old economy’ worlds of merchandising, logistics, transport and utilities. But it is hard to accept old world norms in a supposedly new economy.

A good number of grassroots innovators have taken to the mobile telephony space in the hope of spurning the norms and values of traditional enterprise. This, after all, is what the early web missionaries

preached. And when their efforts failed to produce open-source and unrestricted innovation, their remaining enthusiasm – if it didn’t dissolve into cynicism – tended to drift towards the mobile ecosystem.

Successful practitioners in the world of mobile innovation in Africa are those who can hold their own in the domain of traditional enterprise but, seeing its limitations, have mastered the skill of stretching the fabric of that universe until new shapes emerge. In all the burgeoning fields of mobile innovation – in mHealth, mLearning, mLogistics and the rest, as in the sublime terrain of mReligion – it pays to understand the persistence of traditional systems of power, influence and control, and to be adept at manipulating them.

Many of the most successful mobile applications in Africa are focused on banal entertainment: ‘Soccer Academy’ game-shows where enthusiasts interact fervently to keep their favourite soccer players in action; glamorous ‘Big Brother’ copycats where TV addicts vote rampantly to send home ‘housemates’ they detest; or ‘Who Wants to be a Millionaire’ spin-offs in West and South Africa, where the idea is to gamble your way into the opportunity to win a big pot of money based on your knowledge of trivia. These thrive merely by serving the interests of the media and telecom companies, and slavishly respond to the whims of fickle consumers of flashy content.

Thus some of the smartest programmers in African mobile are busily hunched behind consoles, ensuring the smooth delivery of inane phrases onto the television screens of the middle class. But a good proportion of the remaining talent is engaged in the critical task of keeping the infrastructure stable so that basic voice communications can continue unabated. In Nigeria, for instance, concern for maintaining the diesel generators that power the base stations – off the unreliable national grid – occupies as much attention as ensuring internet connectivity for the various 2.5G and 3G platforms that are now de rigueur in many of Africa’s mobile networks.

The mobile craze in Africa is by no means fully established. Increasingly, a certain breed of innovator is gaining ground, gifted in all the tricks of traditional enterprise but passionate about the new capabilities offered by the technology and how this technology can better harness traditional capital and take new, resultant, models of wealth-creation and social welfare to scale.

The newly-built Paga service in Nigeria, designed by Ethiopian software gurus with the help of Nigerian former financial services practitioners, fits seamlessly between smartphone-based payments facilitation and the debit/credit card infrastructure. If ultimately successful, Paga is intended to liberate Nigeria's smartphone-brandishing middle classes from having to juggle different bank cards, to fret about complicated card charges, or indeed, to worry about enduring hours sitting in traffic to pay utility bills to the disparate providers of middle-class conveniences, whether cable TV or pipe-borne water. But it had to wait for a boring, very old-world, licence from the Central Bank of Nigeria before it could be launched. And, the hardnosed, hard-knuckle, business savvy of Paga's promoters has been called upon at every stage of the two-year market entry process.

In East Africa too, old-style licensing and regulatory regimes beset the entirety of the mobile ecosystem, including centralised numbering systems (just like the days of dial-up), different grades of licences and a complicated permit regime. Hence, an 'innovative' new product simply takes much too long to deploy and costs much more than anticipated. The most successful innovators, like Virtual City's John Waibochi, who won \$1 million from Nokia in Kenya to further develop a comprehensive community-mimicking e-commerce platform, or Seven Seas' Michael Macharia, whose 100-man company provides everything from technology consulting to real estate automation services, are also examples of solid entrepreneurship.

In Africa, those who are succeeding in taking ideas to reality in the new mobile-driven economy tend to be Western-style educated, former professionals from frontline industries, such as financial services and consulting, with a track-record of performance in a process-intense role. With a combination of old-world and new hope strategies, they are steadily driving Africa forward in the mobile innovation race, creating services that can actually become critical components in the growth engine of Africa.

The most famous African mobile application is mPesa. More than 10 percent of Kenya's GDP is believed to transit this community payments platform annually. It is heavy-duty platforms like mPesa that justify the estimates (by the telecom trade association GSMA) that every 10 percent growth in mobile penetration in African countries brings a boost of 1.2 percent to their GDP. However, mPesa was not built by a grassroots innovator. It is a product supported and promoted by senior executives of Safaricom – by far Kenya's biggest telecom operator – and its origins lie in collaboration with the most seasoned research and marketing executives of the even bigger Vodafone group.

Some experienced innovators, like those behind Feedelix, shot to fame when they designed a system to beat the Ethiopian government's mobile communications-suppressing activities. After the government shut down the SMS channel to prevent its use by pro-freedom campaigners, they deployed a tool to simulate SMS traffic. Now they work trying to facilitate the full participation of communities that use other scripts besides the Roman alphabet into the digital economy. There are parallels between this development and recent collaboration between digital giants Google and Twitter in North Africa. It takes experience, resources and clout to develop a critical service to promote vital civil rights in an African country, and rarely can the activists themselves handle all the complex bits and pieces.

The Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX) has launched a mo-



Mobile applications are being developed to create wealth and improve social welfare, though most apps are more focused on entertainment

bile-based commodity trading platform for the benefit of Ethiopian farmers, who heretofore had little chance of cutting out middlemen who took undue advantage of the mismatch between urban food needs and the capability of rural producers to service them. Nobody would dominate an old-economy business boardroom better than the Founder of the ECX – Dr Eleni Gabre-Mahdin. A Stanford-trained, former UN and World Bank senior staffer, she couldn't be farther away from anybody's expectation of a dreamer.

Then there is Michael Amankwah of Accra-based CoreNett, who wants to turn African ATM machines into full-service, convenient

With a combination of old world and new hope strategies, entrepreneurs are steadily driving Africa forward in the mobile innovation race, creating services that can actually become critical components in Africa's growth

dispensers that do more than dole out cash. The idea is to allow parents to pay school fees directly on the terminal rather than having to withdraw the cash first, before figuring out how to get it to the school, which for many secondary schools in places like Ghana could be miles away. Amankwah has spent most of the last couple of years tending to the cogs of old-world banks as they became accustomed to the tenuous notion of 'branchless banking'.

The deeper point is of course not difficult to tease out. Africa is a difficult place to do business for obvious reasons of infrastructure, capital and capacity – whether physical, human, social or institutional. For these same reasons, it is the continent ripest with opportunities. A sceptic may see a bottomless chasm between actuality and potential. But this can be overcome, although it will take both sturdy bridges and even sturdier bridge-builders. ⑨

Bright B. Simons invented and now promotes the mPedigree platform (www.mPedigree.Net), a mobile phone-based drug quality assurance system

Old ideas are sometimes best

A comparison between the long-term costs of using imported asphalt versus locally available rocks for paving roads and pavements in Ethiopia shows one clear winner, writes **Elissa Jobson**

In Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the pavements can be treacherous to walk along. Many are simply dirt tracks strewn with stones and boulders, and even on the tarmac sidewalks that run alongside the main arterial roads, potholes and crumbling asphalt mean that pedestrians have to carefully watch their step. In the dry season the wind whips up dust, stinging the eyes and burning the throat, and when the rains come the paths turn to mud. The same is true in towns and cities across the country.

Adama, situated about 100 kilometres south-east of the capital, has, however, applied an age-old solution to this problem: its roads, pavements, marketplaces and public piazzas – including Millennium Square, the focal point of urban life – are being paved with locally-sourced, locally-produced granite setts. The resulting cobblestone paving has made transit around this central Ethiopian city easier, leading to an increase in commercial activity and a reduction in crime, it has also provided work for thousands of unemployed men and women who quarry, transport, cut and lay the stones.

The idea for the Cobblestone Project, as it is known, developed out of a government decision to use setts to pave the walkways, roads and courtyards on new university campuses being built at 15 separate sites across the country. With help and expertise supplied by the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ, formerly GTZ), the aim was to encourage the formation of small local companies which would be awarded contracts on the campus, and whose employees would be taught how to make the cobbles and construct the paving.

By August 2007, long before the project had started on the university construction sites, the municipal authorities in Adama had begun their own paving programme, initially providing work for 80 stonecutters and pavers. Soon a regional training centre was established and people from all over Oromia Province and beyond travelled to the city to learn the skills they would need to pave their own towns and villages.

Granite setts have numerous benefits over tarmac, the more common alternative. “Cobblestone roads are easy to maintain and no asphalt need be imported. Only the local currency is needed and the raw materials (basalt, granite and trachyte) are available nearly everywhere,” explained Roland Moezer, leader of the Cobblestone Project at GIZ.

By using local resources and eliminating the need for expensive imports of oil-based materials, Ethiopia is pioneering a greener and more sustainable method of road construction. Plus, cobblestone roads are more durable – according to Moezer, the areas in Adama where he supervised construction are still in perfect condition four years on. As well as being easier and cheaper to maintain – if a pothole does eventually appear the affected cobbles need only be lifted and replaced – the technique can also be effectively used to repair damage to existing tarmac roads. On top of this, granite paving is much cheaper to lay than its asphalt equivalent. While the cost of preparing the ground and sub-base is the same for both materials, the price of laying 1 metre square of cobblestone is less than half that of asphalt, costing 280 and 680 Ethiopian birr (\$17 versus \$41) respectively.




Cobbled together: a local sustainable solution for poor roads and pavements

The whole process is extremely labour-intensive – but this is hardly a bad thing in a country where unemployment is high, especially among the urban youth. On average one paver can lay around 15 square meters a day for which they need 1,500 setts. So to keep one paver fully occupied, 25 stonecutters producing 60 cobbles a day are required. The labour may be physically demanding but the wages, paid on a piece-rate, are good by Ethiopian standards; those laying the paving earn, on average, 150 birr (around \$9) per day, while the lesser-skilled chisellers are paid a daily rate of approximately 78 birr (\$4.5). And the employees seem happy. “This is a wonderful thing for our lives. The wages are very nice – we receive good money,” said Kelamu Getachew, a paver from Adama.

At the end of 2009, when the Ethiopian government took over the project, more than 2,000 small and micro-enterprises had been created, providing employment for around 84,000 stonecutters and 4,700 pavers who had laid 1,230,000 square metres of cobbles across the country. “I’ve been in the development cooperation business for 30 years and I have never seen a project take off so quickly,” said Stefan Helming, former Director of GIZ in Ethiopia, who oversaw Cobblestone from the beginning. “It started with the training of a few chisellers and stone-layers and it mushroomed in no time at all.”

Today, only three and half years since the first cobbles were laid, the project is still growing. The programme has been rolled out to 120 towns and cities across the country; around 2,200,000 square metres have been finished; and an estimated 130,000 people (45 percent of them women) are employed in the trade. Awassa, Bahir Dar, Mekelle, Dire Dawa, Harar and Addis Ababa have now established their own training schools. And, with the private sector showing an increasing interest (in Addis Ababa foreign embassies, hotels and businesses are using granite paving in their own compounds), the programme’s future looks bright.

The Cobblestone Project has proved that by using the best technology for the job – not necessarily the newest or most widely used – sustainable, local solutions can be found for pressing infrastructural problems. 

“Involve the users in developing and disseminating technologies”

INTERVIEW

Jacques Diouf

Director-General, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Faced with mounting pressure on the world's available land, any new agricultural revolution has to be about producing more from the same resource base, stresses Jacques Diouf. The main priorities for developing countries will be access to modern technologies, water, rural roads, storage, credit and extension services, and agro-industry. He tells *Global* it is essential that the farmers who will be using new technologies are involved in the decision-making.

Global: With the world population growing rapidly, there is a clear need to boost food production from the existing available land resources, especially given the importance of avoiding further deforestation. Do you see any prospect of a new Green Revolution, like India's in the 1960s and 1970s, to make it possible to avoid famine in the coming decades? If so, which regions are showing the most promise?

Jacques Diouf: The world population is expected to increase from 6.9 billion currently to 9.1 billion in 2050. In addition, developing

countries are projected to achieve rapid economic growth during this period. This will result in a considerable increase in the demand for food. In fact, agricultural production will need to increase by 70 percent in the world and 100 percent in the developing countries in order to meet those future needs.

Our work at FAO shows that the world has the resources and technology to feed itself. But any technology that will help to overcome these challenges is welcome. In this regard, any new agricultural revolution has to be about producing more from the same natural resource base. It must also be sustainable, which means that we can produce enough food today and in the future.

The backbone of this new revolution will be plant varieties that are high-yielding, as in the last one, and also climate-change resilient. Farming practices must focus on resource-use efficiency and the protection of ecosystem services. In parallel, the technical empowerment of the people, of the farmers, of the rural, should be a policy priority.

Africa is one place that is rich in natural resources that could be put into productive use, like land in the Guinea Savannah. Africa has huge water resources as yet untapped, with only about 7 percent of African agriculture under irrigation. There is also some room for area expansion in Latin America, especially in the south. But our analysis at FAO shows that most of the food produced by 2050 will come from yield improvement rather than the expansion of cultivated land.

There have recently been calls for the global food system to be redesigned with a greater focus on sustainability so that resources are not consumed faster than they can be replenished. What is FAO's position on this?

For several decades now, FAO has been arguing for sustainability, which means producing more with the same resources now and in the future, and it has been warning of the consequences – land degradation, floods, drought and hunger – if this principle is not applied. We currently have almost €800 million of projects ongoing in the world designed to protect the natural resource base and the environment, improve rural livelihoods and increase agricultural production in the poorest countries through the adoption of practices that are not only economically sound but also environmentally friendly.

In support of the international effort to deal with climate change, FAO created, in 2002, the National Forest Programme Facility, which is presently supporting 70 countries and regional organisations. In another major initiative, FAO helped establish, in 2008, the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries, known as UN-REDD. It is being implemented in nine pilot countries. A global forest monitoring system has just been launched in support of carbon accounting and payments under REDD.

In addition, FAO is publishing a book for policy-makers and ►



- senior technology leaders on proven technologies and policies for producing more food in a sustainable manner. Some of these technologies include, high-yielding climate change resilient varieties, improved soil health, conservation agriculture, integrated pest management, and more efficient water use for more crop-per-drop.

What is needed for a concerted effort to increase overall investment in research and development in new agricultural techniques and practices?

There has been a major decline in research and development in agriculture in developing countries and we really need to re-target funds again on education and research. It is particularly important

Innovation essential for food supply

Investment in research and development is critical to producing more food efficiently and sustainably, keeping pace with the rise of new pests and diseases, developing new crop varieties and meeting the needs of the world's poorest people. So says the newly-published Foresight report on 'Global Food and Farming Futures', by the UK's Government Office for Science, which draws on the work of about 400 scientists from 35 countries around the world.

"There is a strong case for reversal of the low priority accorded to research on agriculture, fisheries and the food system in most countries," stresses the report. Countries such as China have already demonstrated the effectiveness of agricultural research in raising productivity.

Investment needs to focus on raising yields in conjunction with improving sustainability and maintaining ecosystem services, says the report. "This shift must recognise that special measures will often be needed to incentivise research that produces public goods. A pluralistic research portfolio is essential: the magnitude of the challenges is so large that no single research avenue will address all the new knowledge required."

Where incentives do not currently exist for investment in research that provides public goods, new models of delivery are needed to mobilise the strengths of the private sector and encourage scientific entrepreneurship.

The report notes that investment in research and development is not enough in itself. "Communication is critical – not just to spread new knowledge to policy-makers and potential users, but also to the public, specifically to engender trust in new science and its application."



that developing countries themselves invest more in this, and don't just wait for donor aid. Around 400 to 500 million smallholder farmers produce 80 percent or more of the food consumed in developing countries. So we need to ensure that the investments we make are in technologies that will help these farmers to increase production. The public sector and civil society have a major role to play in this, while every effort should be made to foster partnerships with the private sector in this field.

Appropriate new technology could be valuable for the poorest people in developing countries. Is it possible and practical to involve the beneficiaries more in the decision-making?

For most, if not all of the technologies we are talking about, it is absolutely essential that the farmers who will be using them are involved in the decision-making. Take plant-breeding. Plant breeders in laboratories can mix and match, select and reject as much as they like, but at some point these plants will have to be grown on a farm. In many parts of Africa for example, the soil and climate can vary to an extent that growing conditions can change between neighbouring farms, so the varieties that are required are different. The sooner we involve the users in the development and dissemination of technologies, the better. FAO recently published a policy document that showed that the creation of smallholder seed enterprises is the best way to ensure very poor farmers have access to improved, climate-adapted, non-hybrid seed varieties.

How much progress is being made towards achieving increased agricultural yields in poorer countries?

Improved seed and plant varieties were the foundation of India's Green Revolution, and the irrigation and fertiliser package that went with them. Food production doubled in India between 1970 and 1995 with just a 4 percent increase in the land cultivated. Wheat yields went from 800 kg per hectare in the 1960s to 4.5 tonnes now. There are similar examples from several crops all over the world. The use of integrated pest management techniques can also improve yields. At the moment crop yields are increasing at around 1.5 percent a year globally, at least half of that increase is coming from improved seed varieties.

Do you see signs of progress in introducing new seed varieties that can boost production as well as rural incomes in poor countries?

Yes, in many FAO projects we are doing this, with improved varieties. In one African country, for example, FAO introduced the new ER-376 rice variety, helped farmers to organise together to make successful seed companies, reproduce and then distribute the improved seeds. Coupled with improvements in fertiliser and irrigation techniques, yields grew from 2 tonnes to 7 tonnes per hectare. The 500 or so certified seed farmers now report an annual income from these activities of more than \$2,000 a year. But the real problem is not limited to developing new seed varieties. The priorities for developing countries, like those in Africa, are access to modern inputs, water, rural roads, storage, credit and extension services, and agro-industry.

Do you expect genetically modified varieties to play a greater part in meeting the world's food requirements in future?

Presently, not many GM technologies are available that would help smallholder agriculture, as they do not exist for the major food crops eaten by most of the world's poor such as wheat, rice, sorghum and cassava. Furthermore, GM crop seeds currently on the market do not contain traits that address the needs of smallholders, such as drought or flood tolerance, enhanced fertiliser-use efficiency and resistance to pests found in developing coun-

tries. Also, while such technologies have a role to play, they are not essential to feed the world today.

More helpful for fighting hunger at the current time is to boost yields and increase production using conventional plant-breeding techniques. Farmers in low-income food-deficit countries can use the already available seeds from the green revolution. Those seeds are very efficient and can be adapted to local conditions by the national research institutions. Developing countries should, however, master the scientific basis of biotechnology by training their experts in molecular biology techniques, mapping and gene transfer, but also in less controversial methods like tissue culture and varietal improvement through the use of markers.

Can more be done to reduce losses through the improvement of existing storage and transportation networks?

Post-harvest losses are a major problem for developing countries. It is estimated that as much as half of crops in these countries are lost because of poor storage or in transport through pests, damp, too much sun exposure or spillage. Another issue is that the farmer may have produced the crops but, in the absence of a vehicle or roads, has no way to take them to market. India in the 1970s had about 388 km of roads per 1,000 sq km. In 2010, Ethiopia had only about 39 km and Senegal 71 km of roads per 1,000 sq km.

Following the 2008 food crisis FAO has been rolling out a programme of metallic silos, mainly made by local craftsmen, that are hermetically sealed, thus protecting the food stored within from pests, rodents, birds and fungi. These silos have already had a huge success in 16 countries, including Afghanistan and Sierra Leone, with more than 45,000 silos installed and more than 1,500 professionals, technicians and craftsmen employed in constructing and handling them.


Is there a serious international commitment to focusing policy on the ongoing depletion of water resources? Are there any promising new technological solutions to this problem?

Whilst the depletion of non-renewable groundwater resources is an issue in some locations, the bigger international commitment is to roll back environmental degradation such as deforestation, which is why water recently came up in the Biodiversity Convention. Forests not only house species but, as water shortages spread, they are the most economic means of recapturing water. Protected forests also serve as filtration devices for the water they collect, and deposit it back in underground aquifers rather than into rivers which flow to the ocean.

Net water depletion is an issue in some large river basins such as the Aral Sea [in Central Asia] and Lake Chad, but the overall concern is the variability of the hydrological cycle in relation to rising human demand – which leads to scarcity.

We also need to conserve the water we have whilst at the same time producing more food. Agriculture is the biggest user of water in the world, accounting for 70 percent of all freshwater withdrawals. It takes one litre of water to produce one calorie of food energy. But meanwhile we should remember that no food means no life.

Yet, as a result of climate change, agriculture will increasingly have to cope with less arable land and changing rainfall patterns while at the same time sharing more water with other sectors such as health and industry, all the while increasing production significantly.

We need better management of water supplies at all levels, and we need more investment in irrigation and water harvesting, including a huge scaling-up of water efficient technologies such as drip irrigation. Water should be the key priority for any successful strategy for agricultural development. 

Water-efficient maize for Africa (Wema)

More than 300 million people in Africa depend on maize as their main food source, but it is a crop severely affected by occasional drought in the areas where it is grown.

With funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Howard G. Buffett Foundation, the African Agriculture Technology Fund is leading a public/private partnership to develop drought-tolerant maize using conventional breeding, market-assisted breeding and biotechnology.

The countries participating are Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda.

Monsanto is providing proprietary germplasm and advanced breeding tools and expertise, as well as so-called 'drought-tolerance transgenes' developed in collaboration with the large agrochemical company BASF.

The new varieties developed by the project will be distributed to seed companies and made available to smallholder farmers. The companies and farmers participating in the scheme will contribute in field testing, seed multiplication and distribution.



Waste not, want not

As much as 30 percent of all food grown worldwide may be lost or wasted before, and after, it reaches the consumer, notes the Foresight report on 'Global Food and Farming Futures'. Some estimates have put the wastage rate as high as 50 percent.

Addressing waste across the entire food chain will be critical in any strategy to feed around 8 billion people sustainably and equitably by 2030, a total that will rise to 9 billion by 2050. Simply halving the total amount of wasted food could reduce, by about 25 percent, the requirement for extra food production by 2050. The report says that waste reduction requires high-level international political support.

The existing knowledge and technology in storage and transport infrastructure could be deployed much more effectively and there is a need for financial and market reforms to reduce waste. The use of mobile phones could help improve market information and allow producers to make better decisions about timely supply to markets, avoiding – or at least reducing – the dips and peaks caused by seasonal gluts and shortages.



“The Greek Cypriot community is ready for reunification”

INTERVIEW

Demetris Christofias, President of Cyprus

The importance of negotiating a route towards the reunification of Cyprus is clearly critical for President Demetris Christofias, the man carrying political responsibility for the Greek Cypriot community on the divided island. In this interview with *Global*, he spells out the progress and setbacks during recent rounds of talks and his hopes for the economic future of an eventually reunified country

Global: How do you assess the prospects for the reunification of Cyprus, especially in the light of the recent talks with the northern Turkish leadership? Could the country be reunited any time soon, and is the Greek Cypriot community ready for this?

President Demetris Christofias: First, I need to say that the main reason for my decision to run for the Presidency of the Republic of Cyprus in 2008 was the solution of the Cyprus problem. The reunification of the country was, and remains, my adamant goal and is at the heart of our vision for the Cyprus of the 21st century. Immediately upon my assumption of the Presidency, we proved with our consistent and constructive stance at the talks, that we are ready for a mutual and honest compromise that will lead to the reunification of our homeland.

I therefore respond firmly to your question: Yes, the Greek Cypriot community is ready for reunification and is striving hard to achieve this as soon as possible. During the course of the almost two-and-a-half years of direct talks we have consistently demonstrated our political will for a solution by undertaking initiatives and submitting reasonable and constructive proposals.

I need to clarify that the talks are not taking place in the dark. On the contrary, they are conducted on an agreed basis. This basis provides for a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with political equality as defined in the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, and for one state with indivisible sovereignty, a single international personality and a single citizenship. The talks are also conducted within the framework of an agreed procedure of Cypriot ownership, under the good offices mission of the UN Secretary-General, and there is no question of the imposition of arbitration and artificial timetables. The agreed and mutually acceptable so-

lution will be put to the people of Cyprus for approval in separate simultaneous referenda.

Until today, some important convergences on three of the seven negotiating chapters (namely governance and power-sharing, European matters and the economy) have been achieved. At the same time though, serious divergences within these said chapters remain, while some chapters have barely been touched. I must admit that we had expected more progress. We had also expected that our proposal, for the linkage of the property and territory chapters, on the table since the summer of 2010, would have been accepted.

The talks are a mirror for us all. Unfortunately, especially lately, proposals outside the agreed basis are being submitted, regardless of reassurances to the contrary. In parallel, already agreed issues are being challenged. This causes us concern.

We are determined to continue our efforts with goodwill to achieve more positive results and we hope that the same goodwill will also be demonstrated by the Turkish Cypriot side and, of course, by Turkey, which maintains occupation troops on the island and whose role is decisive. Mere declarations in public are no longer convincing. If this is a matter of urgency for Turkey, if Turkey is indeed dissatisfied with the status quo, if what Turkey is aiming at is in line with the basis and the principles of the solution, then there is a way for her to show this in deeds and not just in words.

If both sides hold fast to their existing positions, would that be the end of the matter or could there still be some continued momentum towards a solution?

We understand the negotiations as a process, as an effort to achieve a mutually acceptable solution through dialogue. It is the only way

to find common ground and bridge the differences. The Greek Cypriot side has demonstrated that it is ready for the compromise that is needed and committed to the goal of reunification. We believe we can do it, on the condition that the discussion takes place within the framework, on the basis and on the principles I have already described and, of course, if we continue by building, step by step, on the foundations of the agreed convergences; it will not happen by dismantling those we have already reached. In that case, yes, we can create and preserve the momentum.

The relationship with the public is two-way. We, the leaders, cannot neglect the message and the pulse of the society. A few days ago, our Turkish Cypriot compatriots went on the streets, sending messages to Turkey that the current situation cannot continue because it puts their future and their survival at stake. We fully understand these calls. The bi-zonal, bi-communal federal solution with political equality, in which neither community can impose its will on the other, is our response to the expectations and concerns of both communities.

Is Cyprus's membership of the European Union a significant factor in facilitating reunification?

The comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem must be in line with the principles on which the European Union is founded. It is a condition of the EU, it is a provision of Cyprus' Accession Treaty obligations to the EU. Turkish Cypriots are also citizens of the EU. However, in order for the Turkish Cypriot community as a whole to reap the benefits of Cyprus' 2004 accession, the current suspension of the *acquis communautaire* [the entire body of EU law] ►

There's **more** to Cyprus than meets the eye

MARKETMAX / PUBLIS



More than just a holiday destination with pristine white beaches and 300 days of sunshine, Cyprus can also cater to your business needs ranging from registering and setting up your company's operations to managing your EU, North African and Middle Eastern clients at a considerably lower cost.

As well as being an EU country and a member of the European Monetary Union since 2008, Cyprus enjoys the lowest corporate tax rate in the EU of 10%. Cyprus belongs to those jurisdictions on the OECD White List which have substantially implemented the internationally agreed tax standard.

In addition to this, Cyprus provides efficient business services, has a transparent legal and regulatory system and is committed to sustainable growth.

Cyprus welcomes both visitors and investors to work here, so, if you are searching for a new business base, consider Cyprus. It's more than just beaches and sun.

"Columbia's growth and expansion over the years is attributed to the uniqueness of Cyprus; being the island's strategic position at the crossroads of three continents, its comprehensive legal framework, double tax treaties regime, communication system, banking system, infrastructure in general and last but not least its highly educated labor force."

**Captain Dirk Fry, Managing Director
Columbia Ship Management Ltd**

"The favorable business climate, the excellent telecommunications infrastructure, the well educated and skilled human resources, the favorable tax rates and the proximity to the Middle East and Africa markets, were some of the key factors that enabled NCR to decide to move its regional offices to Cyprus in the 80's. Gradually, NCR managed to expand the office in Cyprus to cover also all the African Countries."

**Managing Director of NCR Cyprus,
Mr. George Flouros**

CYPRUS

INVEST WITH CONFIDENCE



**Cyprus Investment
Promotion Agency**
Tel + 357 22 441133
Fax + 357 22 441134
www.cipa.org.cy
info@cipa.org.cy

**The Ministry of Commerce,
Industry and Tourism**
Tel + 357 22 867100
Fax + 357 22 375120
www.mcit.gov.cy/ts
perm.sec@mcit.gov.cy



Cyprus: A highly reputable and reliable international business centre

His Excellency the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism Mr Antonis Paschalides

As one of the European Union's most advantageous international business centres, Cyprus offers low taxation, high performance and unrivalled access to key investment markets, including Russia, Ukraine, India, China, the USA and the EU.

Cyprus' location at the crossroads of three continents has been a major factor in shaping its history throughout the centuries, as well as its development into a reputable international business centre in recent years. European Union and eurozone membership has further enhanced Cyprus' attractiveness and is transforming our island into a key outpost in the eastern Mediterranean, serving as a business bridge between Europe, North Africa and Asia.

Cyprus combines a global perspective with a diverse portfolio of high-demand services, actively participating in today's increasingly globalised and integrated international market for goods, services and investments. During the last decade, Cyprus has managed to emerge as an outstanding business hub and has expanded its reputation as an international centre of business excellence.

Under the present financial crisis, investors seek 'confidence', 'safety' and 'security' – credentials that Cyprus certainly has. Despite the crisis, Cyprus has maintained a higher than the EU average growth rate in recent years. Its economy is strong and vibrant and the island is a place where business can be conducted without red tape, high taxes and unproductive attitudes.

There is a unique bundle of advantages that business people and entrepreneurs can benefit from if they choose to invest in Cyprus.

Cyprus has a favourable environment for business, a modern and transparent legal framework, an advanced



H.E. the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, Mr Antonis Paschalides

transport and telecommunications infrastructure, a highly educated and skilled multilingual workforce, a liberal investment policy that allows 100% participation in most sectors of the economy, a network of Double Taxation Treaties with more than 40 countries and a low corporate tax of 10%, the lowest in the European Union.

The service sector plays an important role and contributes more

“During the last decade, Cyprus has managed to emerge as an outstanding business hub and has expanded its reputation as an international centre of business excellence.”

than 80% to the GDP of our economy. Related to this, is the fact that our island maintains an enviable position at the top of the EU league tables for university graduates, attracting highly qualified professionals in a number of

disciplines that include legal, financial and investment services, banking, accountancy, corporate formation, business consultancy, IT, shipping, marketing, education and health services.

All the above demonstrate that the economy is welcoming and strong, offering a variety of opportunities for foreign businesses to invest in Cyprus or use Cyprus as their hub to access European Union markets. The benefits and opportunities Cyprus presents to the global business and investment community are tangible and substantial and safeguard overseas confidence in our economy as a financial and business centre.

Although welcoming investments in all economic sectors, Cyprus is increasingly focusing on High Technology knowledge intensive industries, which provide opportunities and enable participation by investors who can transfer know-how and introduce high technology to our island. Other priority investment sectors include financial intermediary institutions, Research and Development, Information and Communication Technologies, energy and medical, educational, professional and maritime services.

Our objective is to continue to be ideally positioned for increasing our reputation as an international centre of business excellence well into the next two decades. To achieve this, our Government is committed and fully supports and encourages any serious co-operation between Cypriot and foreign entrepreneurs. Our policy is to create a stimulating environment and the necessary conditions for such co-operation to develop into successful business ventures.

We invite international companies and investors who are seeking a European bridgehead and a worthwhile business location, to become part of the robust economy of Cyprus.



► in the occupied area will have to be lifted. This will take place with reunification. EU member state status is the best safeguard of a peaceful future for Cyprus.

There is another aspect to this question, namely, Turkey's candidate status. Cyprus supports the full accession of Turkey to the EU, provided that Ankara implements all its obligations to the EU, and its 27 member states, and contributes actively and effectively to the solution of the Cyprus problem. We believe that the accession of a modern Turkey, which respects the values and principles of the EU and fulfils all its obligations, will be to the benefit of Cyprus, the EU and Turkey itself.

What have been the principal political, social and economic benefits to Cyprus from the country's EU membership to date?

The accession to the EU was a natural choice for the Republic of Cyprus, as dictated by its culture, civilisation and history. The principles of democracy, the rule of law, human rights, consensus-building and cooperation constitute the common basis of principles on which the EU establishes its unity. Accession granted the right for equal participation in Europe, while, at the same time, making it our duty to try to construct a Europe which will rise to the expectations of its citizens. The dimension of progress and a human-centric approach will form the basis of the Cyprus EU presidency in the second semester of 2012.

EU accession also strengthened the feeling of security and was supported universally by all in Cyprus, since it would greatly contribute to our principal aim of the solution to the Cyprus problem and reunification. As regards the economic aspect of accession, I must add that the adoption of the euro on 1 January 2008 has significantly facilitated commercial transactions.

How would you describe the country's current economic outlook? Can the economy

quickly recover from the effects of the global financial crisis?

Cyprus has weathered the storm reasonably well and was relatively less affected compared with other European economies, partly because of the strong and healthy banking system, which had very limited exposure to toxic products. In fact, the economic forecast for 2011 indicates that the Cyprus economy will grow markedly compared to the past two years.

The crisis has also affected the labour market in Cyprus and unemployment has increased, despite the fact that it remains below the EU average. Through various measures we are trying to counter this adverse situation. Public finances were also negatively affected, but we have set the target of lowering the fiscal deficit in line with our obligations to the [EU] Stability and Growth Pact. This is an attainable goal. Therefore, we have good reasons to believe that the outlook is positive and that we will be able to recover quickly and effectively from the effects of the global financial crisis.

What are the main longer-term challenges the economy faces and what are its principal strengths?

A number of challenges must be addressed in the coming years, such as placing the public finances on a sound footing, especially in view of the budgetary impact of an increasingly ageing population. We are actively working on further reforms in the areas of pension and health care systems to ensure the long-term viability of public finances. The enhancement of the competitiveness of the economy is a priority. We are aiming at increasing the volume of investments in infrastructure, particularly in the areas of transport, energy and telecommunications. A big emphasis is also placed on boosting research and development, maximising renewable energy resources and increasing energy efficiency, with sig-

nificant incentives being provided for the private sector to invest in green activities.

Our geostrategic position at the crossroads of three continents and the very attractive taxation system, with a uniform corporation tax of 10 percent – the lowest in Europe – is one of our principal fortes, which is further strengthened by bilateral agreements for the avoidance of double taxation. Another of our assets is the high educational level of the workforce. One of the cornerstones of the Cyprus economy is social cohesion, based on a long tradition of close cooperation between employers, unions and the government. These are some of the reasons that Cyprus is a very attractive business destination.

Since the discoveries of natural gas in nearby waters, what kind of broad development benefits do you anticipate? Can one expect closer energy cooperation with neighbouring countries?

The process of oil and gas exploration is in a developing phase with positive indications so far. Taking also into consideration the recent developments as regards the explorations undertaken by Israel, we are very optimistic. Our next step, after the discovery of hydrocarbons, is to formulate the regulatory framework to utilise such benefits, weighing all the options and examining cooperation with other countries of the region. A critical issue is to convert the potential hydrocarbon wealth into sustainable, fair and human-centred development where all the citizens of the island, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, can jointly enjoy, in a reunified state, the benefits offered by the natural wealth of our homeland.

How can Cyprus secure its self-reliance in water with energy-intensive desalination plants at the same time as it strives to decrease its CO₂ emissions?

The severe water scarcity and drought conditions in Cyprus have forced the government to turn to seawater desalination. Experience has shown that desalination remains the only means of achieving water security. The available water was not enough to satisfy domestic and irrigation water needs, where recycled water is already extensively used. Efforts are also being made to exploit renewable energy sources in the operation of both the existing and future desalination plants, while a project for the creation of a solar-thermal powered desalination unit is planned. Concrete steps are being taken to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, to reduce the net demand for electricity and to reduce CO₂ emissions in line with the government's policy. ●

On the brink of a breakthrough?



Long-running attempts to reunite the divided parts of Cyprus and reconcile the interests of Greek and Turkish Cypriots are tied up with wider strategic concerns, especially those of Turkey

Stefanos Evripidou in Nicosia

The longevity of the Cyprus conflict has earned it a worthy description as a 'diplomat's graveyard'. While no diplomat has actually died trying to solve the Cyprus problem, the issue has outlived a number of United Nations Secretaries-General and special envoys assigned to this unpromising task.

After independence from Britain in 1960, relative peace between the two main communities, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, lasted all of three years, after which inter-ethnic clashes broke out over power-sharing clauses in the new republic's constitution. The internal rift never healed and in July 1974, Turkey invaded the island in response to a Greek military-backed coup against Cyprus' first President, Archbishop Makarios. The coup was foiled after eight days but Turkey invaded a second time in August 1974, citing its role as guarantor power and, in the process, securing occupation of the northern part of the island.

At the time, the two communities were interspersed across the island, with dozens of ethnically-mixed villages spread around the country, but contact between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots all but ended in 1974, with access across the buffer zone restricted to a handful of politicians and bi-communal groups.

Cyprus has remained divided ever since, with Turkish Cypriots living in a breakaway state in the north, recognised only by Turkey, economically backed by Turkey and closely guarded by up to 40,000 Turkish troops. South of the buffer zone, Greek Cypriots run what is left of the Republic of Cyprus, a member of the United Nations (UN) and, since 2004, the European Union (EU).

On 23 April 2003, the Turkish Cypriot leadership finally allowed restricted movement across the dividing line, opening a number of checkpoints on the buffer zone, for the first time in 29 years. Despite decades of separation, violence did not erupt as Cypriots from both sides peacefully crossed the border to see old houses, villages and friends. But the euphoria was brief. A year later, a UN-sponsored blueprint for a solution was put to separate referenda, a week before EU accession.



Holding the line: UN peacekeepers first went to Cyprus in 1964, and they are still there

The Greek Cypriots overwhelmingly rejected the plan, heeding the call of then President Tassos Papadopoulos. The plan's opponents cited unpopular provisions and the fact that it was not mutually agreed upon by the two community leaders. EU accession, even with a divided state, seemed a safer bet for weary Greek Cypriots. The

Turkish Cypriots, on the other hand, voted largely in favour, hoping the plan would replace their pariah state with a loosely federal one under the EU umbrella. The peace talks ended. The whole of Cyprus became a member of the EU, despite the continued division and occupation, but EU law was – and remains – suspended in the north. ►

VIEWPOINT

Panos Hadjichristofi, 31, Greek Cypriot

Do you think the leaders are making progress, and if not, what is holding them back?

Most possibly they haven't made as much progress as the two communities would have expected. The primary reason is the need for both of the leaders to satisfy the micro-politics in the respective communities, thus masking a lot of the progress made or even denying it.

Could there be a solution this year? If not, when?

Given the elections in Cyprus and in Turkey, I think there is slim chance of this happening this year as nobody will want to show they are compromising for fear of losing hard-line supporters. The leaders can go that far on their own. It is necessary to go to an international level to discuss the thorny issues of settlers, security and guarantees. If they manage to get to the level where they are both comfortable to organise such a conference, then it will be solved.

How do you think the public thinks about the solution?

GCs probably think about making territorial gains and TCs about gaining political power, i.e. everyone is thinking about what is best for their own community instead of the general benefit. They fail to create and embrace a bigger picture.

What would a solution mean for you?

Jobs, prosperity, commerce, stability.



Cyprus Airways

our national carrier

Operations

Cyprus Airways Public Limited ("Cyprus Airways"), was established in 1947 and is the flag carrier of Cyprus.

Cyprus Airways forms the backbone of the island's air transport network through the operation of scheduled services to 20 destinations in Europe and the Middle East by performing around 7.000 flights and carrying around 1.7 million passengers annually.

Our destinations are: Amsterdam, Athens, Brussels, Frankfurt, Heraklion, London, Manchester, Milan, Moscow, Munich, Paris, Rhodes, Rome, Sofia, Thessaloniki, Vienna, Zurich, Tel-Aviv, Beirut and Damascus.

In addition to transporting passengers and cargo, Cyprus Airways also provides other airline related services such as catering and engineering services and on-board sales.

Central to the success of Cyprus Airways' strategy is the quality of its product. Apollo Business Class and Aphrodite Economy Class incorporate upgraded in-flight services competing with the best international airlines.



Cyprus Airways' current fleet consists of six A320, two A330 and three 319 Airbuses. The Company employs around 1.300 employees both in Cyprus and abroad in countries where it maintains offices.

Cyprus Airways uses as its livery the mouflon, a type of wild goat indigenous to Cyprus.

Ownership and Management

Cyprus Airways was established in 1947 as a public limited liability company and is listed on the Cyprus Stock Exchange. Its major shareholder is the government of Cyprus with a stake of 69.62%.



The Directors and Senior Management of Cyprus Airways are:

Directors

George Mavrocostas - Executive Chairman
Charalambos Alexandrou
Michalis Antoniou
Kypros Ellinas
George Georgiou
George Kallis
Akis Lefkaritis
Andreas Philippou
Pavlos Photiades
Marios Hadjigavriel
Antreas Chrysafis

Senior Management

Eleni Kaloyirou - Deputy Chief Executive Officer
George Spyrou - Corp Secretary/Head of Legal Services
Panayiotis Panayides - Head of Human Resources and Administration
Christos Agapiou - Commercial Manager

VIEWPOINT

Natalie Hami, 26, Turkish Cypriot, living in Nicosia

How do you perceive the Cyprus problem?

I've grown up with it and for me it is an ongoing issue and there seems to be no light at the end of the tunnel. I read up on it every now and again but I am not that bothered any more.

Do you think the leaders are making progress?

The opening up of the border, and the free movement of people between the two sides, was a real breakthrough. This showed that people can move freely without feeling threatened – for example, if people ask me where I'm from and I say I'm a Turkish Cypriot, it's not that shocking. Ten years ago it might have been more of a novelty, but it is difficult to hope for progress beyond that.

Could there be a solution this year?

Unlikely – I would never say never – but the fine details like property have not been ironed out. It could happen in two years if the relevant people – the UN and the EU – push through.

Are the people behind a solution?

Definitely. Lots of people are talking about it, and many people want their land back, although everyone's wishes are different and it's difficult to know what the people want. The government keeps getting stuck on certain things because they are trying to please everyone.

What would a solution mean for you?

For me it would mean a TC [Turkish Cypriot] and GC [Greek Cypriot] could truly feel Cypriot without the Greek or Turkish label getting in the way. On a practical level, it could mean teaching both languages in schools and children growing up bilingual.

▶ In 2008, Greek Cypriots elected a pro-reunification candidate, Demetris Christofias, as President of the Republic, giving him a clear mandate to have another go at finding a solution. A month after his election, Christofias, nominally a Communist, called for the resumption of UN-sponsored peace talks with the man he referred to as “comrade”, then Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat, who also sits to the left on the political spectrum. This time, the peace process was to be Cypriot-led without strict timetables imposed. It was a clear effort to avoid the setback seen in 2004.

Direct talks began in September 2008. Talat and Christofias found convergences on the economy, EU affairs, governance and power-sharing, but did not touch upon territorial adjustments, property, security and guarantees.

In April 2010, Turkish Cypriots voted Talat out, replacing him with Dervis Eroglu, a veteran hardliner who would appear to prefer a two-state solution in Cyprus. But Turkey, keen to show its pro-solution credentials, ensured that Eroglu turned up to the negotiating table talking about a bizonal, bi-communal federal solution.

Christofias, perhaps wishing to test Eroglu's true intentions, asked that negotiations resume on the thorny issue of property. And there the talks remain. A key question hangs over how much land Turkey is willing to give back, which would then come under the control of the Greek Cypriot authorities in a federal state. Eroglu refuses to link territory and property, despite calls

by the UN to discuss all chapters in an interrelated fashion. Government spokesman Stefanos Stefanou says: “Despite the assurances given that the talks were to continue on the same basis and from the point they were left off with Talat, many of the positions put forward by the Turkish Cypriot side now constitute either retrogression or overturn the basis of the negotiations.”

Eroglu accuses the Greek Cypriot leadership of filibustering and has repeatedly called for an international conference to overcome the deadlock. This could be interpreted in a number of ways. Either he wants to share any responsibility for reunification with Turkey sitting at the same table or he believes the Greek Cypriots will end up rejecting the outcome of an international conference, leaving the breakaway state intact, perhaps even upgraded to something resembling a Taiwan-type status.

With both sides pointing the finger at the other, the UN has been puzzling how to overcome the impasse. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has met with the two leaders on a number of occasions, first in Cyprus, and more recently in New York and Geneva. In early March this year, he warned of the “very real risk” the talks would run out of steam. He called for the two leaders to make significant progress before the next election cycle begins – Cyprus's parliamentary elections take place in May and Turkey's in June.

The UN chief has also referred to the prospect of an international conference, if suf-

ficient progress on the core issues can be achieved, and has issued a thinly-veiled warning regarding the presence of UNFICYP (the UN peacekeeping force that has been stationed on the island since 1964) saying he would review its future in a report in June.

According to local analyst Makarios Drousotis, the UN is trying to find a way for the talks to come to some sort of conclusion, one way or the other. Ban may be preparing to call an international conference with the two sides, the three guarantor powers and possibly the EU, to bring the talks to an end.

In the meantime, thousands of Turkish Cypriots held mass protests in January and March this year against austerity measures imposed on the north by its paymaster, Turkey. Friction between Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots has been growing, with the latter feeling that their very identity is under threat by Turkey's own strategic interests in the island and the influx of Turkish settlers, mainly from Anatolia, changing the northern enclave's demographics. Their exact number remains unknown, though many Turkish Cypriot newspapers claim Turkish settlers now outnumber Turkish Cypriots. The protests were not viewed kindly by Erdogan, who effectively branded Turkish Cypriots as ungrateful “daughters” going against their “motherland”.

The question of how many settlers will remain post-solution is another issue for which Eroglu and Christofias have found no common ground.

The barbed wire, minefields, soldiers and divided people are all reminders of the past conflict, with implications far beyond the island's coastline. Cyprus, as a member of the EU, has stated clearly that it supports Turkey's EU accession bid but on the condition that Turkey normalises relations with Cyprus, and actively supports a solution on the island. Turkey, so far, has not responded well to the threats to its attempts to join the EU, refusing to meet calls by the European Parliament to remove its troops from the island. As a result, its accession negotiations threaten to grind to a halt.

The recent talk of exploiting massive hydrocarbon reserves believed to be lying in Cyprus' exclusive economic zone has added further pressure and, in an undesirable turn of events, could lead to more overt threats from Turkey against Cyprus.

Whatever the geopolitical significance of the island's position in the region, from a purely humanitarian perspective, this tiny island needs to be reunited. And yet, as so many times before, the omens hardly seem favourable right now. ●

Stefanos Evripidou is Cyprus News Editor of *Cyprus Mail*

Financial centre holds out against the storm

Although Cyprus has become a thriving financial centre in the eastern Mediterranean, the economy has not been immune to the problems affecting its EU neighbour, Greece, and there have been recent concerns about the outlook for the island's key tourism industry

Stelios Orphanides

After the downturn that hit all European Union (EU) economies in 2009, Cyprus was among those countries that managed to return to economic growth in 2010. After shrinkage of 1.7 percent in 2009, growth of 0.9 percent was recorded in 2010, and the forecast for the current year is for a still modest 1.5 percent. Helping the economy to weather the storm triggered by the global financial crisis has been the country's growing financial sector. This now comprises seven domestic banks, more than 30 foreign banks and nearly 100 licensed investment firms. Even in the difficult year of 2009, the financial sector managed to buck the downward trend and register growth of 4.7 percent.

A combination of factors lie behind this phenomenon. Cyprus boasts an advanced business service sector, with professional law and accounting offices, and a robust banking system, plus the country has been a member of the euro area since 1 January 2008. Cyprus also has double taxation agreements with 45 countries, enabling overseas companies with operations on the island to benefit from the low-tax environment.

The renewal of the double taxation agreement with Russia, a key partner, was an important boost to the financial service sector. Nearly one-third of the €70 billion overall deposits in the island's banking system currently belongs to non-residents, mainly Russian and other eastern European citizens or entities, who use Cyprus as a base for financial transactions with Russia. In 2008, investment in Russia through Cyprus peaked at \$34 billion.

"Cyprus is an open economy based on services and in particular on the extroversion of the banks," says Michalis Sarris, a former Minister of Finance who helped the island state adopt the euro. "This allowed us to enjoy relatively high growth rates over a long period of time. And in order to do that, you must expose yourself to certain risks, but at the same time you need to have sound public finances to inspire confidence



Tourism is a major source of revenue for both the Greek and the Turkish sectors of the island

in investors that the government will be in position, if needed, to support the banks."

Cyprus's overexposure to the problems of the Greek economy has, however, raised inevitable concerns. Loans to Greek clients of the three major Cypriot banks amounted to 41 percent of their total portfolio last June and non-performing loans were expected to rise substantially.

Cyprus's own public finances have also been affected by the recent economic slowdown. Even though the government managed to slash the fiscal deficit to 5.5 percent of GDP in 2010, down from 6.1 percent the year before, rating agencies have remained sceptical. The further narrowing of the budget deficit to around 4 percent in 2011 may be unattainable as the government appears hesitant to cut the public payroll and social spending, which make up two-thirds of total government expenditure. But a scenario in which Cypriot banks need fiscal support remains remote, according to the International Monetary Fund. "If problems emerge, they are more likely to be related to liquidity rather than solvency," Wes McGrew, deputy division chief at the IMF said in February. Such problems, he added,

could be dealt with through extra liquidity from the European Central Bank.

A more direct impact of the global financial crisis on the Cypriot economy came via the economic slump in the UK, Cyprus's main source of holiday home-buyers and tourists. In 2009, the number of property transactions involving foreigners fell to almost half of the 2008 levels, before recovering tentatively in 2010, thanks to an increase in Russian buyers. The number of British travellers, who make up roughly half of total arrivals, fell by 14 percent in 2009 resulting in a decrease in overall tourist numbers and revenue from spending of 11 percent and 17 percent respectively. In 2010, a further decline in the number of visiting Britons was offset by a 51 percent increase in arrivals from Russia – Cyprus recorded a 1.5 percent rebound with almost 2.2 million visitors.

Directly or indirectly, tourism comprises around a quarter of the Cypriot economy but the industry's prospects may not depend on economic factors alone. Politics, especially following the recent uprising in several Arab countries and the uncertainty this has caused in the region, could play an important role in the island's economic performance. "Let us hope that these events will not affect the

eastern Mediterranean's image in the eyes of tourists," said Alecos Orountiotis, chairman of the Cyprus Tourism Organisation, the state-sponsored tourism board.

Uncertainty also characterises Cyprus's energy policy as the country urgently looks to reduce its reliance on heavy fuel oil for power generation. The share of renewable energy sources is very small, with the first wind farm only just joining the grid. In December, the Natural Gas Public Company (DEFA) set out plans for a natural gas supplier to cover future power generation needs. Meanwhile, the state-owned Electricity Authority of Cyprus (EAC), owner of 50 percent of DEFA, has been looking for a strategic partner for a planned degasification terminal, the building of which could cost around €500 million. But such moves have been stalled since the Israeli Delek Group proposed the construction of a pipeline linking Israel's offshore gas findings to a liquefaction plant to be constructed on Cyprus's southern coast. The planned installation of a drilling well in Cyprus's exclusive economic zone by the US-based Noble Energy Inc – scheduled for completion by the end of the first quarter of 2012 – may also further delay the decision-making process, as probable natural gas findings here could change the picture once more.

"There is lack of planning in the energy policy," former finance minister Michalis Sarris said, expressing doubts about whether power producer EAC will have the funds to embark on such ambitious projects. "Even following the recent increases in basic electricity tariffs, the EAC will still have to borrow money to finance its investments."

Cyprus is blessed with natural resources and an ingenious business community, which helped transform its agrarian economy into a modern, service-oriented one. Yet, the island will have to carry out more economic reforms if it is to start, once again, to produce quality jobs and combat unemployment, which has now risen above the 7 percent mark for the first time in three decades.

Its politicians will also have to find a way to reunify the island, something that will offer the economy a substantial peace dividend. Cyprus's maritime industry, which constitutes around 5.5 percent of the economy, currently suffers under the Turkish ban on Cypriot shipping. This could be one of the sectors that would benefit the most from reunification, especially since the European Commission has approved the island's fully revised shipping taxation system. But, for the moment at least, it is only a hope for the future. ●

Stelios Orphanides is a journalist based in Nicosia

Water policy for a semi-arid island

Regular rainfall is no longer as reliable as it once was in Cyprus, but new measures to desalinate seawater and recycle wastewater for agricultural use have had good results, writes **Costas Apostolides**

With its low annual rainfall and occasionally severe droughts, Cyprus faces a constant battle to provide sufficient water for its growing population. However, the introduction of policies for more efficient utilisation of water, recycling wastewater and the desalination of seawater seems to be paying off.

The preservation of natural supplies of surface and ground water is a major environmental and health goal for the authorities but, at the same time, the island's semi-arid environment is inevitably threatened by the requirement to meet the legitimate needs of the population, industry and tourism. In these circumstances, water policy in Cyprus requires a fine balance of measures that can improve supply, reduce consumption and encourage efficient water use and recycling.

Over the last 40 years the climate of the island has changed. There was a step change in precipitation after 1970, when rainfall decreased by 20 percent. Years of good rainfall became less frequent, drought years increased, and natural water availability declined.

Amid a prolonged five-year drought that occurred after Cyprus joined the European Union (EU) in 2004, the government developed a strategy of adjusting water and environment policies to EU law, while expanding water supply to households, businesses, tourists and farmers, and applying safeguards for the preservation of natural supplies, wetlands and the natural environment.

In summary, the key elements of policy have been designed to promote the efficient use of water; introduce water pricing to encourage more productive use in both urban and rural areas; provide protection for wetlands; develop desalination

and recycling capabilities; and increase the use of boreholes and rainwater storage. As a result of the successful application of these measures, savings of about 8 percent in water use have been obtained, supply has increased and water shortages have been overcome.

The annual water balance at the start of the new millennium was estimated as being: total rainfall 2,670 million cubic metres (MCM); evaporation 86 percent (2,300 MCM); usable water 370 MCM (surface water 235 MCM, groundwater 135 MCM); storage capacity of 332 MCM in 108 dams; annual water supplied 127 MCM; aquifer recharge 45 MCM; and losses to sea 48 MCM (20 percent of surface water). Improvements in this balance have occurred thanks to the production of an additional 49 MCM from desalination, with a planned doubling of this output by August 2011. There is also a supply of treated sewerage effluent of 12 MCM for irrigation and almost 3 MCM for replenishment of aquifers.

Environmental problems in urban and rural areas have improved as a result of the establishment of new sewerage systems, for each of which environmental impact assessments were undertaken at the planning stage. There has, however, been inevitable public resistance to the building of new sewerage treatment plants and to the disposal of treated effluent in the sea.

On the whole, households have benefitted from adequate water supplies and farmers have been able to access additional water for irrigation and, so far, no major environmental problems have become apparent.

Costas Apostolides is an economic consultant



“China has proven that there is another way of economic development”

INTERVIEW

Dambisa Moyo, economist and author

In this exclusive interview with *Global*, Dr Moyo forcefully expounds her views on the world economy and on the example being set by China, as well as her vision of the radical action that Africa needs to take if its leaders are serious about wanting their countries to develop as rapidly as their new Eastern partner

Enjoying prominence and influence since the success of her controversial 2009 book, *Dead Aid* – which argued that aid is failing to achieve its aim of bringing development to Africa – Dambisa Moyo has moved her sights to addressing a far bigger subject: the parlous state of the Western world’s economies. Her new book, *How the West was Lost* (Allen Lane, 2011), spells out what she describes as the “stark choices ahead” if the West is to recover its former lead in the world economy. Moyo warns of the West’s structural weaknesses in the face of the rising economies of China, India and Brazil. She is also sharply critical of US economic policy over recent decades, especially in the deliberate promotion of domestic consumption and home ownership – an argument underlined by the way the 2008 financial crisis has played out. Born in Zambia, Dambisa Moyo has a doctorate from the University of Oxford and has worked for the World Bank and Goldman Sachs as an economist. She currently serves on the boards of Barclays Bank, SABMiller and Lundin Petroleum.

Global: Once the dust has settled and Western governments have sorted out their preferred ways out of the crisis – whether via stimulus packages, austerity programmes or, in extreme cases, perhaps debt defaults – do you think there will really be any change in either economic policy or the regulatory or incentive environment that could prevent the same destructive results from recurring?

Dambisa Moyo: The thesis of my book is that the financial crisis is one little bump in the road but, speaking specifically about the financial architecture, a lot of work on the incentive environment is already underway – with the bank levies in Britain, the Basel III rules coming down the pipeline and changes in compensation packages – and so clearly, in terms of capital requirements and so on, changes are happening. But do I think there’s a fundamental change

in culture? Let me explain how I see the world. I know that the financial sector in particular gets a lot of flak and a lot of that was clearly deserved. There were definitely inherent problems with the derivatives market growing so rapidly and policy-makers, whose job it was to provide oversight of those markets, simply not being knowledgeable. But I think if we focus only on the financial sector we really haven’t learned anything. This is really more about the manner in which Western society borrows money and uses it to fuel consumption and unproductive investment. That’s it in a nutshell.

Even if you limit and place regulatory caps on lending, there is an infrastructure around the financial sector, which is a means to an end and is not an end in and of itself. The problem, and the culprit, is the culture of borrowing and using it for consumption, and that is where I don’t think we have seen much change and that is where I still have a lot of worries. There is a trade-off between tactical short-term and structural reforms. Debt caps and so on are great but if you’re not encouraging people to cut back on consumption and to invest I don’t think you’ve solved the root cause of the problem. We’ve got so obsessed with the banking sector that we almost think of it as an end in itself.

You say that private equity players and hedge funds have created a kind of “shadow banking system”. Given the role that their trading in derivatives played in magnifying the crisis, do you have a view on how their activities might be effectively regulated by governments, central banks or the IMF in future?

The broader point is that you need to know what you’re regulating. I fear that there is a massive disconnect between the growth, the complexity and the depth of the derivatives market and the understanding of how they actually work, and more importantly of the knock-on implications of the derivatives market. The implications



Dr Moyo on China: "I don't think the Chinese are in Africa for good will. But why have Europeans been in Africa? Why have Americans been in Africa?"

are so dramatic for systemic risk and for the way economies function, the first port of call is to make sure we understand exactly what these things do and what the implications are. Letting Lehman Brothers fail was a shock to many policy-makers, with the knock-on effect of not just bringing down the banking infrastructure and impacting Western economies but the whole global economic infrastructure. It appears to me that we need to be very clear about what the implications of derivatives are. Policy-makers need to understand things inside out. With the private sector, the rubber meets the road every day, you're either in the black or in the red, and my gut feeling is that the traders understand this much more than the public sector regulators.

You place great emphasis on the need for countries to better manage their available capital, labour and technology. In a globalised world, the vast majority of countries are rather vulnerable in all these areas and so only a few can probably succeed in getting the formula right. Do think there is a way that the majority can eventually become winners? Is globalisation more likely to help them or hinder their development?

Yes. Let's look at what has happened in the last two decades. We have narrowed the gap in global income inequality in China, India, Brazil and so on and there is clearly an upside for all to be had. The discussion is more mature and warranted in China, India and Brazil – countries that have made significant strides in their economies. But let me single out the African countries, the most desperately poor countries on the planet: they haven't done the basic things they are supposed to do in relation to the global economy. You cannot start criticising a global economy when you're not even part of it. Africa has roughly one billion people, or nearly 20 percent of the global population, but represents only 2 percent of global trade, less than

the trade of Spain. So there are basic things they need to do in terms of their economies before you can even start to ask questions about winners and losers. These countries, to quote Paul Collier, are shearing off from the rest of the world. It is worth underscoring that until such a time as they're working off the same sheet, the vast majority are largely disconnected from the rest of the world.

Are African governments in any position to start weaning themselves off aid?

In my book *Dead Aid*, I gave a conditional example: What if we turned off the taps? There is no way that could be done. Government dependency on aid, in terms of revenue, is about 70 percent on average. It would be a completely absurd notion that we turn the taps off. That is not the purpose of *Dead Aid*. If people have read it like that they either just don't understand what I wrote or have deliberately misunderstood, because the fact of the matter is that it is not constructive. What is constructive is that we need to think now, where we are today, we need to figure out a way of ensuring that in 50 years, 20 years or whatever time – five years I wish it were – what we can do to make sure that we've got the right governance in place, doing the right things to deliver public goods to their people.

I met the head of one of the big development agencies, one of the largest on the planet, and he said that out of the 53-odd countries in Africa, only in two of them do they feel comfortable writing any kind of report on sectors like education and healthcare. As an African, I find this unacceptable. It's nearly 60 years since independence. What have we been doing for 60 years? There have been generations of Africans who have gone out, gone abroad, got educated and gone back home. We cannot delink the fact that an aid system that is creating a crutch has also allowed governments to abdicate their responsibilities.



Dr Moyo is a regular speaker at meetings of international organisations and a frequent participant in media debates on economic issues

► My point in *Dead Aid* is to say: “Guys you’ve got to start today.” It’s an urgency today because our traditional donors, the US and Europe, have serious economic and financial problems. It’s ridiculous to think that Britain and the US should be borrowing to fund aid programmes in Zambia. We live in such a crazy world that we need to have a discussion on logic. Nobody wants to be dependent on aid for any longer than necessary. The whole purpose of an aid programme is that it should come to an end. I am very passionate about economic development. Let the naysayers do their thing but the rest of us should focus on execution and sorting out some of the most intractable problems on the planet.

China may at present offer the most attractive model for other countries to follow, but do you think that China itself is actually helping those countries to follow its lead or simply exploiting their natural resources for its own benefit?

We need capital investment and they are willing to put in capital investment. I remember someone from Kenya saying that criticism of China in Africa was a propaganda campaign by Western societies who want to take all of China’s money! I don’t go that far, but the question should be about what China is doing around the world. Africa is not the greatest recipient of Chinese foreign investment. Australia is first and the USA is second. But to answer the specific point, there is a big benefit on two levels. First, China has proven that there is another way of economic development. I am grateful to be living at this time because here we have, with the USA and China, two models of politics and economics and arguably both incredibly successful. If you are a laggard and a poor country and see what China has done, you can learn from it. If you focus on five-year plans and their execution, it’s commendable.

I don’t think the Chinese are in Africa for good will only. They

have a billion people, many of them in dire poverty. But why have Europeans been in Africa? Why have Americans been in Africa? I think there is an over-emphasis on this issue. We should be happy that Africans have a new place to sell their goods. There are issues around labour and the environment but it is not up to the West to wag their finger. African and other countries around the world, like Chile and Brazil, are trading with China because they recognise there is something that China has done that is worth commendation.

You write about the need for countries to develop not only their capital and labour but also their economic efficiency and use of technology, which you say makes a vital contribution to their so-called ‘total factor productivity’. How can developing countries, such as perhaps your own, Zambia, get to enhance these elements in their economic structure?

There are lots of natural resources with a high capital value and we need to unlock that capital. As for labour, 60 percent of Africans are under the age of 24 – strong, young and vibrant. Total factor productivity is one of the simplest things we should be gaining from this, with importation, transportation and the speed and efficiency with which we do things. But we have to remember that technologies and innovations will only go to places where they will be beneficial. Unfortunately in an environment where there is a lack of incentives, where there is too much corruption, where there is a lack of transparency, where doing business is a challenge, you’re not going to see an easy transfer of productivity. Total factor productivity accounts for about 60 percent of why some economies grow and why others don’t and so getting it right is crucial, but that is the one Achilles’ heel in African countries. But they could change it tomorrow if they wanted to. ⑨

Impact Investing: A 21st century answer to global social challenges

Margot Brandenburg

Mitigating the effects of climate change, bringing basic water and sanitation services to billions of people across the globe and creating jobs for the long-term unemployed are just some of the challenges that confront the world in the 21st century. Meeting them will require both money – lots of it – and ideas. Although the global capital markets hold tens of trillions of dollars, most of those funds are locked up in investment vehicles and structures that have nothing to do with positive social and environmental impacts. The question is, how can we release the capital that is essential for solving the world's most pressing problems?

During the 20th century, philanthropic institutions funded many breakthroughs that greatly improved human wellbeing. These included the development and dissemination of life-saving vaccines and improved seeds for food crops, as well as the rise of social movements for civil rights around the world. Foundations commonly partnered with governments, civil society and each other to accomplish such goals but, in the 21st century, the combined resources of government and philanthropy seem to be proving insufficient for the increasing number of tasks ahead.

Fortunately, a growing subset of investors is putting investment dollars to work with the goal of creating social and environmental benefits as well as generating financial returns. Known as 'impact investors', they are pioneering a new industry that operates at the largely uncharted intersection of philanthropy and profit-maximising investment.

Impact investing is related to, and sometimes confused with, socially responsible investment, which screens out negative or harmful effects. However, impact investing goes further than this in that it involves the initial intent to proactively create positive social and/or environmental changes beyond financial return. The past few years have seen rapid growth in the supply of impact investing capital, and this has been mirrored by a growing demand for appropriate finance from innovative and increasingly sophisticated social entrepreneurs.

In between the investors and enterprises sit a small, but important and growing, number of intermediaries – ranging from dedicated fund managers to boutique investment bankers – who can facilitate the efficient and effective flows of capital. Servicing these market participants is a rapidly developing industry infrastructure – including social and environmental reporting standards, benchmarks, impact rating agencies and social stock exchanges. And policy and regulation are evolving to accelerate this type of investment, while holding it accountable for producing social and environmental effects.

Impact investments can vary dramatically by geography, sector, objective and level of financial return. Many people are familiar with micro-, clean tech or community development finance, which are among the most mature sectors of impact investing. However, it is proliferating much more widely, as the following examples show.

In Sub-Saharan Africa and Central America, Root Capital provides loans to agricultural cooperatives and other farmer organisations that sell their harvest to fair-trade buyers like Starbucks. The loans are backed by advance purchase agreements, which reduce the price risk for farmers as well as investors. Root increases farmers' incomes, promotes environmentally sustainable farming, and

provides a reliable financial return to its investors.

In north-western America, Clean Energy Works Oregon provides up-front financing for home improvements that substantially increase energy efficiency. They are repaid over time through a deduction from residents' utility bills. In addition to providing a financial return to its investors, the organisation reduces household energy costs for vulnerable consumers, produces environmental benefits and creates high-quality jobs for local contractors.

Impact investments are being used creatively to address an increasing variety of social and environmental problems. But it is important to note that private capital is not appropriate in all cases and that it should complement, rather than replace, philanthropy.

The impact investors themselves are nearly as diverse as the uses for their capital. American institutions like the Rockefeller Foundation have long made programme-related investments. Now, counterparts in the UK and elsewhere have begun to make impact investments from their endowments. Significant momentum is coming from a new generation of private wealth managers and family offices like New Island Capital in San Francisco and the Sainsbury family in the UK. They reject the premise that capital must be invested solely for financial return or given away as donations, and instead are seeking opportunities to invest money in pursuit of their values.

Development finance institutions (DFIs) like the International Finance Corporation also have an important role to play and can sustain themselves through earned income rather than government allocations. Large mainstream banks such as J. P. Morgan, Deutsche Bank and Citigroup have expanded their impact investing businesses beyond niche portfolios and minimum regulatory requirements. And finally, pension fund managers like TIAA-CREF are also responding to the demand for impact investments. Pension funds and other institutional investors generally face stricter regulatory requirements than foundations, DFIs or private wealth managers, but they have collectively committed billions of dollars to these forms of investments.

The advent of impact investing does not mean governments and traditional philanthropy can step back – they are more important than ever. Grants will always be needed to support activities that do not generate revenue, like advocacy and work in communities too poor to benefit from market-based interventions. Foundations are also critical to the continued support of infrastructure for the new social capital markets. For their part, governments must ensure that impact investing is neither too hard nor too easy. Public policy should aim to reduce barriers that are prohibitively onerous, while actively catalysing new areas of impact investment. Policy-makers can set and enforce a high bar for impacts and they can mitigate the risk of 'green-washing' by companies and investors.

Our 21st century challenges require 21st century approaches. Impact investing promises to be one approach for tackling problems that were previously considered insurmountable. ⑨

Margot Brandenburg is Associate Director at the Rockefeller Foundation

The dynamics of revolutionary change in North Africa

George Joffé

Until the start of this year, North Africa was generally regarded to be a region of stability and predictability. On the other side of the Mediterranean, its economic environment was certainly seen as worrying, not least because of the pressure of unemployed youth seeking to migrate into the European space. But in terms of politics, there seemed to be an atmosphere of unchanging calm. The region's autocracies appeared to be firmly in charge and political Islam was being kept comfortably at bay in the deepest recesses of the Sahara.

That image has been overthrown in a few short weeks, as first Tunisia and then Egypt experienced veritable massed and popular revolutions that forced their leaders from office in a matter of days. And, since February, Muammar Qadhafi's regime in Libya has suffered a sustained challenge to its survival. Although Morocco's King Mohammed VI and Algeria's President Abdelaziz Bouteflika seem to have weathered the storms of popular protest, they too now know that change can no longer be avoided.

In Europe, it quickly became clear that both the Union and its member states had been wrong-footed and they were forced to contemplate the implications of decades of misguided policy towards their southern neighbours, where the kaleidoscope of political transformation was still being shaken.

Some observers consider that these extraordinary events were interlinked in a kind of domino effect, such that, when one regime fell, the others inevitably followed, tumbling into a democratic fu-

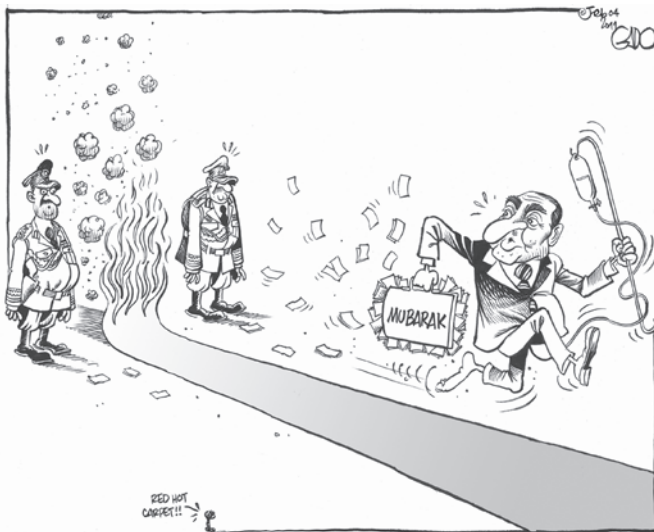
ture. However, although there was certainly an inter-linkage – the success of the Tunisian uprising spurred on the Egyptian protesters which in turn encouraged the widespread Libyan rejection of the Qadhafi regime – the patterns of revolution and the likely outcomes have been, and will be, distinctly different in each country. And, furthermore, the key drivers of change were far from identical. Although economic hardship – a problem across the region – was the initial cause of protest, only in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya was this translated into political transformation as well.

The answer to this conundrum seems to have to do with collective memory and the popular legitimacy of the state. The event that catalysed the transformation occurred on 17 December in Sidi Bouzid, an unremarkable town in central Tunisia. There the insults heaped upon Mohamed Bouazizi, a fruit and vegetable seller, by the municipal administration and the governorate led him to immolate himself. His act of desperation was seen as a statement about the arrogance and corruption of the Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali regime and so gave life to the protests that eventually brought it down. In Egypt, it was the ability of youthful demonstrators – rallying against the arrogant indifference of the Mubarak regime – to resist police charges on 25 January that fired the mass protests after Friday prayers three days later. While, in Libya, widespread resentment against the corruption, repression and neglect visited upon Cyrenaica for decades, sparked off the so-called 'day of rage' on 15 February.

A significant common factor between the three revolutions has



The tide has turned: thousands of people took to the streets on Libya's 'day of rage'



been the role played by the armed forces, although its effect was rather different in each case. The small Tunisian army, traditionally non-political, refused to fire on demonstrators which precipitated Ben Ali's fall from grace – as Tunisia's single political party, the Rassemblement Constitutionnelle Démocratique, dumped him in what was ultimately to prove to be an unsuccessful attempt to save itself and its own hold on power. In Egypt, once the Egyptian army, the emblem and backbone of the Nassirist state, realised that President Mubarak had become a liability, it decisively moved to force him from office and took over power itself. Now the army has become the principal arbiter of transition and it will, no doubt, define the profile of a future democratic regime.

The Libyan army, long distrusted and despised by the Qadhafi regime as a potential threat and for its failures in Chad in 1987, split in Cyrenaica, with the rebel units giving the demonstrators the muscle they needed to force pro-Qadhafi elements out. The regime, however, has massive military resources available through its mercenaries, elite brigades and tribal support, so the battles in Libya may well be long drawn out as the regime struggles to reassert itself.

Contrary to all the systemic and existential fears of Western politicians about political Islam, Islamist movements played no part at all in any of these massive changes of regime. Nor will Islamic extremists slide into power on the coat-tails of moderate Islamist parties in the new administrations that emerge, simply because the distaste between moderate and extremist has always been intense. In any case, although Islamic moderates will undoubtedly play some role in the new political systems that emerge, it will be within a political plurality in which they are unlikely to become the majority.

And why have Algeria and Morocco escaped the wave of revolution unscathed? In Morocco's case, the political reforms of the 1990s gave its citizens a meaningful say in political affairs and a sense that the repressive regime of the past was over. It is true that the king has stalled on further political reform and that this has been one of the demonstrators' demands, but the Moroccan monarchy still retains sufficient popular respect to be able to manage its future reform programme in its own way, despite worsening economic hardship. In Algeria, the regime adroitly subsidised food prices at the start of the year, thus defusing public anger, while promising to remove the state of emergency in place since 1993. At the same time, it firmly blocked all attempts to stage rolling demonstrations in the capital, profoundly aided by divisions amongst the demonstrators themselves and by popular memory of the horrors of the civil war a decade ago.

That leaves a final question; what will the revolutions in North

Africa produce, now that the first stage of overthrowing autocracies nears completion? In Tunisia, the vigilance of the civil society that survived the Ben Ali regime and engineered its downfall seems likely to produce a truly democratic outcome.

Egypt will remain dominated by the army, now partnering a democratic civilian regime – provided it does not threaten the army's privileges and the peace treaty with Israel remains intact, even if the border with Gaza opens. Morocco and Algeria will probably manage their own challenges without political catastrophe or regime change. Libya remains the biggest conundrum so far. The Qadhafi regime may have proved that it has an ability to recover lost ground with the deployment of its elite brigades equipped with heavy weaponry but, having lost moral authority, its path to a probably inevitable final defeat could prove very bloody indeed. 9

George Joffe is a Research Fellow at the Centre of International Studies, University of Cambridge

Pushed out or holding on

Ben Ali

In power since 1987, when he staged a coup against Tunisia's ailing first President, Habib Bourguiba, Zine el Abidine Ben Ali ran a government that was intolerant of any form of dissent. When protests erupted last December, he was caught by surprise and fled into exile on 14 January.



Mubarak



Vice-President to Anwar el Sadat from 1975, Hosni Mubarak took Egypt's presidency in 1981, following Sadat's assassination. Despite being over 80, Mubarak seemed unprepared for any handover of power. Amid massive street protests, starting in late January, he resigned on 11 February.

Qadhafi

After violently overthrowing Libya's King Idris in September 1969, Colonel Muammar Qadhafi set about trying to lead revolutions across the Arab world and the African continent, feeding instability in many countries in both regions. Inside Libya itself, he has ruled with an iron fist.



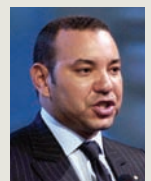
Bouteflika



Abdelaziz Bouteflika was a foreign minister under Algeria's socialist President Houari Boumédiène, who died in 1978. He did not regain influence until 1999, when he was elected to the presidency with the support of the military. Against a background of civil war, few freedoms have yet been permitted.

Mohammed VI

Succeeding to Morocco's throne in 1999, when his father Hassan II died, Mohammed VI set about gradually liberalising the political climate and human rights situation in the country. Under his reign, the monarchy has so far remained more popular than the political class.

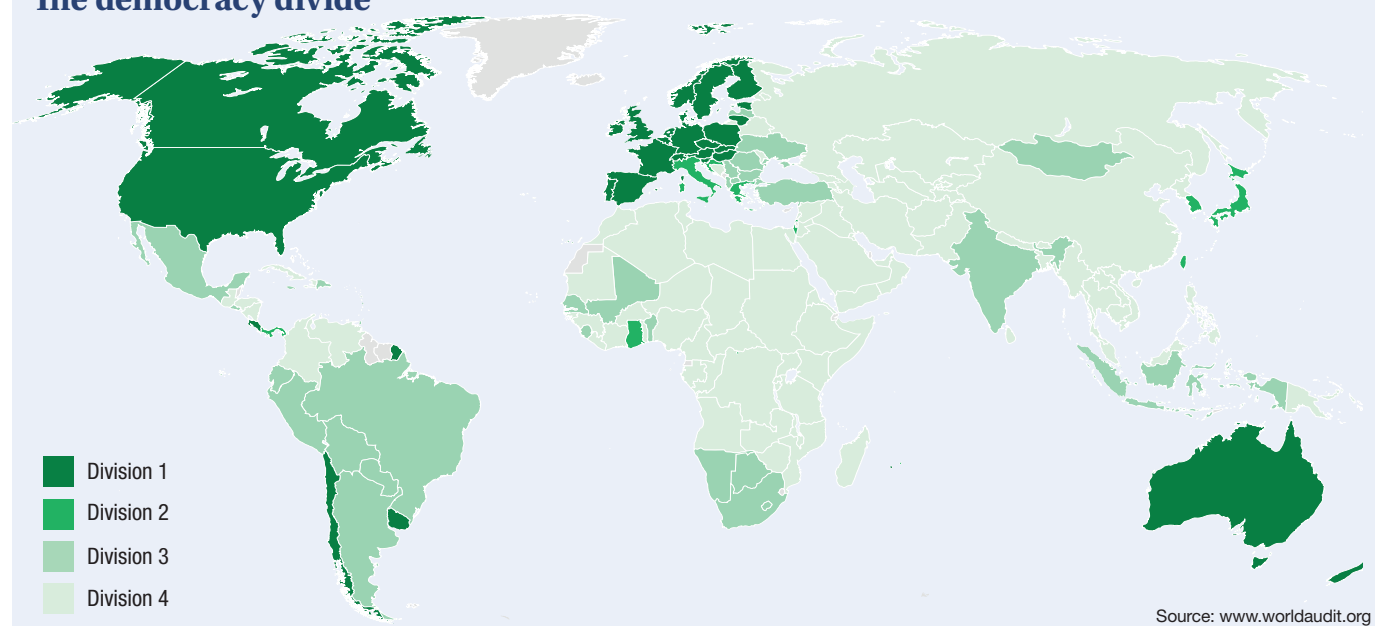


Tracking global democratic progress

Recent events across the Middle East and in some African countries – such as Côte d'Ivoire and Zimbabwe – have been a sharp reminder of the difficulty of establishing democratic systems where the basic components of democracy are either inadequate or open to gross abuse by an incumbent elite. Where autocratic rulers feel no pressure to change, they usually tend to resist democratic reform of any kind, at least until events spin out of their control and they are finally forced to capitulate to domestic pressure or (in some extreme cases) foreign intervention.

Democracy is not an automatic process and it is far from easy to measure. But it is possible to distinguish some of its vital elements – justice, freedom of speech, human rights and transparency – and on that basis to assess where countries stand in relation to each other. According to the data from World Audit (see map), over half the world's nations are serious malefactors in terms of the above indicators. Another group of 30 countries are a mix: adopting some democratic norms and rejecting others. Only 38 countries can be described as fully democratic, an elite 28 in the 'first division' and ten more in the 'second division'.

The democracy divide



G20

Country	Democracy rank	Press freedom rank	Corruption rank
Canada	8	16	6
Australia	9	22	8
Germany	11	12	12
UK	14	16	15
USA	15	14	17
France	17	23	20
Japan	29	19	14
South Korea	33	39	30
Italy	35	42	52
South Africa	43	41	40
India	48	42	70
Brazil	51	54	54
Turkey	59	70	42
Argentina	61	66	83
Indonesia	63	71	88
Mexico	65	91	79
Saudi Arabia	104	134	36
China	120	137	61
Russia	136	130	127

Source: www.worldaudit.org

Arab League

Country	Democracy rank	Press freedom rank	Corruption rank
United Arab Emirates	73	113	23
Kuwait	75	77	40
Jordan	77	101	36
Oman	79	113	32
Egypt	91	91	79
Lebanon	93	77	101
Morocco	95	107	68
Mauritania	97	80	117
Algeria	101	102	83
Saudi Arabia	104	134	36
Tunisia	113	141	45
Iraq	123	105	146
Syria	134	134	101
Yemen	134	129	119
Sudan	136	122	143
Libya	146	146	119
Somalia	147	137	149

A perilous lack of balance?

India's Foreign Relations, 1947 to 2007

Jayanta Kumar Ray, Routledge, 2011,
813pp, ISBN 978-0-415-59742-5

This is a history of what the author claims to have been flawed leadership by India. In a thoroughly polemical work on the country's foreign relations, Jayanta Kumar Ray claims that Indians did not get the leadership they deserved; and many of the country's prime ministers are accused of mental and physical illness.

Ray's highest praise is reserved for the exercise of pragmatism and realism, but his basic conclusion is that "India has failed to strike that balance between ethics and pragmatism, between ideology and realpolitik". Indian foreign policy and its practitioners are considered incompetent and spineless.

Of the 12 chapters, four are on the Se-

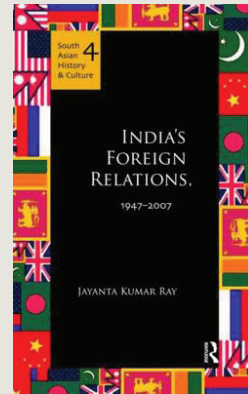
curity Council's Permanent Five (though France is omitted), four are on India's neighbours, with additional ones on non-alignment and nuclear matters, all book-ended by an introduction and epilogue. There are large gaps in the narrative, with Africa, West Asia, South East Asia, Latin America and Europe missing, making the title of the book something of a misnomer.

Ray may be parsimonious with his praise, but the Indian army and Indian scientists emerge with compliments. And some national leaders do receive positive comments: "Narasimha Rao [serving from 1991-1996] proved himself to be the first great prime minister of independent India, Manmohan Singh being the second." And Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who held office briefly in 1996 and

again from 1998 to 2004, is described as "a near great" prime minister.

The book is an easy read and is fully referenced. There is admirable attention given to some specific incidents, for instance, the history of Tibet's status and aspirations to independence, and the problems associated with Soviet financial credits and the rupee trading system. The book is pugnacious and controversial, but its account of the influence of pre-independence times on what came to be Indian foreign policy is welcome.

Reviewed by Krishnan Srinivasan, former Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General and a former Indian Foreign Secretary



Miracles of human creativity

The Triumph of the City

Edward Glaeser, Macmillan,
Basingstoke and Oxford, 2011
338pp, ISBN 978-0-230-70939-3

With his masterful argument in favour of building our cities upwards, thus concentrating people into more efficient spaces rather than allowing conurbations to sprawl ever outwards, Edward Glaeser is more than a little convincing. One of the key concepts he deploys is that of the 'green city' – with his assertion that living at high densities is a lot more environmentally friendly than living in a low-density suburb and driving everywhere. This will have special relevance for China and India as they urbanise rapidly in the years ahead, as their decisions about land use will have an impact on energy consumption and carbon emissions.

Glaeser also makes a powerful case for the cultural importance of cities, as places where some of the best ideas are born, developed and refined. "Ideas move from per-

son to person within dense urban spaces, and this exchange occasionally creates miracles of human creativity," he writes. In the Internet age, this could seem to be a redundant claim, although the importance of like minds gathering and mingling can certainly still be demonstrated in places as diverse as Bangalore, Berlin and Singapore.

The issues of inner-city decay and crime are not ignored. As a New Yorker, Glaeser has seen how his city was badly damaged by these phenomena and then rose to the challenge of overcoming them. Similarly destructive trends can be seen in probably every city but are not in themselves a reason to give up. Glaeser argues that cities can deploy powerful resources that can protect them against even the most terrifying threats. This however can only be true where the city authorities are trusted and effective. In West Africa, about which this

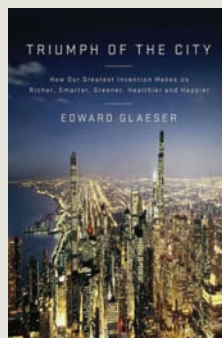
book carries only a passing mention when it refers to Lagos (in broadly favourable terms), there are currently some disturbing signs of urban breakdown resulting from a critical lack of education and employment, factors that have contributed to a rise of

religious fundamentalism and aggressive ghetto cultures.

Cities may be markers for human civilisation but their existence does not in itself always signify an advance in civilisation. There is always a pronounced tendency for one city to dominate a single region or even an entire nation, creating powerful market phenomena in their immediate neighbourhood and applying damaging effects on smaller towns and cities further afield. This can make it hard to come up with a formula for urban planning that does justice to all the citizens and immigrants that may want to crowd in, as well as those in subservient zones.

Cities are certainly important economic, social and cultural phenomena by which human progress can be defined. If elements of experimentation and spontaneity are missing, they may not flourish. Glaeser acknowledges the need for creativity in managing urban spaces but, in his enthusiasm to proselytise for the very idea of the city, he rather overlooks those cases where urban living tends to have a harsher or more brutal edge.

Reviewed by Richard Synge, Editor, *Global*



African beauty on display

The inaugural EU/AU competition inspired hundreds of photographers from across the continent to think creatively about the meaning of beauty in Africa

Elissa Jobson

“Westerners who come to photograph Africa have this stereotype. They believe that if you go to Africa you will see starving babies, disease and poverty,” says Carlos Litulo, winner of the inaugural EU/AU professional photography competition. “As I was born and live in Africa, I started to think that I should show the other side which is not well represented – to show the best parts of Africa.”

The expansion of what Litulo calls the world’s limited “geographical imagination” was one of the chief aims of the organisers of this competition. The theme, ‘African beauty in all its states’, was intended to inspire practising art photographers and photojournalists to break away from the enduring negative stereotypes and present their own personal interpretations of this diverse, bold and beautiful continent.

Over 200 candidates from across the continent submitted entries, which were judged by veteran Malian photographer Malik Sidibé and Christine Barthe, curator of the photographic collection at the Musée de Quai Branly in Paris, France. The jury was impressed by the quality and volume of the submissions. They felt that Litulo’s work stood out because of the originality and coherence of the images and his creative interpretation of the theme. His photos and those of the five other regional winners were ex-

hibited at a special show in Addis Ababa held during the African Union Summit at the end of January.

Each of Litulo’s trio of winning images depicts people in motion – an albino skateboarder hanging in mid-air; a boy, feet off the ground, straining to head a football; a young man with jerrycans in his hand leaping into a river, watched with amusement by a group of women washing clothes. His aim, to “take beautiful photographs of daily life in my country, Mozambique,” has been achieved – colourful and vital, his images are visually arresting. But his photographs also say something more. They tell us about wealth and racial disparities: “Nobody could imagine that an albino boy could do skateboarding. Skating is for rich people, for white people,” explains Litulo. They speak of sporting passions: “We play soccer in the street from childhood – it is a part of our life; it moves us.” And they articulate the daily struggle to secure basic amenities: “What is happening in that river is that people go there, wash their clothes, take a bath and at the same time they collect water to drink.” Above all Litulo’s pictures, and those of the other photographers, show us that, contrary to the perceptions of many outside the continent, Africa can be – and should be seen to be – a land full of beauty.



OVERALL WINNER: CAROLS LITULO



1. Leïla Ghandi: Regional winner, Northern Africa
2. Carlos Litulo: Overall winner
3. Carlos Litulo: Overall winner
4. Badouin Mouanda: Regional winner, Central Africa
5. Daniel Naudé: Regional winner, Southern Africa



A promise of economic transformation

Following the lead of its hugely successful garments industry, the Bangladesh economy is on course for continued growth, although there is an urgent need for investment in modern and efficient infrastructure



**Anbarasan
Ethirajan**
in Dhaka

Once newsworthy for its military coups, frequent natural disasters, food scarcity and corrupt politicians, Bangladesh has recently been making the headlines for far more positive reasons. The South Asian nation has been witnessing steady economic growth and performing remarkably well in areas like the reduction of child mortality levels and the creation of job opportunities for millions of its people.

After a decade of significant economic growth, Bangladesh is now widely considered to be among the 'next eleven' economies – a term used to describe those follow-

ing in the footsteps of the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India and China). Its export earnings are steadily increasing and the average annual GDP growth rate of 6 percent, achieved in recent years, seems set to continue or improve, despite risks that growth could be threatened by excessive population increases, leading to greater instability, or by further rounds of global economic crisis.

Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world and its population of more than 150 million is still growing rapidly. Agriculture is the major source of employment, with 60 percent of people depending on farming for their livelihood. As the world's fourth largest rice producer, output of the crop has tripled in the last 40 years. Last year's bumper harvest of more than 35 million tonnes of rice may have allayed fears of a food shortage, but the government is taking no risks; it plans to buy more than 1 million tonnes of grains this year, both to boost stocks and to cool escalating domestic prices. Bangladesh was among the countries hit hard by the global food crisis in 2008, when thousands of workers took to the streets protesting against rising costs.

Even if global food prices start to come down, Bangladesh will need to produce more to keep up with domestic demands, and there are concerns that the agriculture sector is not geared up to meet the emerging difficulties. "Feeding such a rapidly growing population, especially given dwindling land and water resources and rising climate threats, requires new strategies, technologies and innovation," said a recent report by the Food and Agricultural Organization.

"Ensuring food security is the greatest challenge for Bangladesh," says Dr Fahmida Khatun, a director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) in Dhaka. "The experience of 2008 tells us that if you are not prepared well in advance then you will face problems in importing food. Even if you have money you can't import as all the countries may want to keep their stocks to ensure their food security."

While the traditional agriculture sector may be lagging behind in terms of modernisation, the country's private sector has cleverly used the available labour, the country's most abundant resource, to its advantage. In the last two decades or so, thousands of garment factories have sprung up in the suburbs of Dhaka and in the southern port city of Chittagong, churning out clothes for famous Western high-street retailers like Walmart, H&M and Marks and Spencer.

Clothing exports have more than doubled in value in the last six years to over

VIEWPOINT

Monir Hossen, fruit seller in Dhaka

I have been selling fruit on the streets for the past eight years. There are three members in my family. The condition of our life is becoming difficult as prices of essential commodities are increasing day by day. I earn about TK 200 [about \$3] but my day-to-day expenditure is about TK 300. The government should take enough steps to bring down the prices otherwise we will not see any growth in the country.

The country is developing you can see lots of high-rise buildings are coming up. But I think the development is only for the rich people. The fate of the common people is not changing.

Corruption is the main impediment to the country's development. You have to pay a bribe for everything in Bangladesh. How can poor people like us pay money? The overall situation of the country is not good and I am not hopeful of the future.



\$12 billion per annum, constituting about 80 percent of the country's total exports. Bangladesh has become the third-largest producer of clothes worldwide. Today, the sector employs more than 3.5 million people, most of them women. Although the salaries paid to these workers may be very low by international standards, the clothing industry's growth has helped millions to overcome poverty and improve their standard of living.

Bangladesh's garment sector is now the backbone of the economy, but the industry has come a long way from its inception in the 1980s. There were quite a few hurdles to overcome, not least the country's image. "When we first went with some sample clothes, very few Western buyers believed that Bangladeshi companies can [sic] actually manufacture clothes and export to the West," says Faruque Hassan, vice-president

of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

In the initial years, many factories were situated inside Dhaka and in buildings not designed for industrial purposes. Gradually, they were moved out of the city and many of them are now located in proper industrial zones. Minimum wages came into force and it became mandatory for factory premises to have acceptable safety standards.

Today, the industry uses high-tech machinery from Japan and China to produce clothes aimed at high-end fashion stores in Western countries. A fashion design school has been set up to promote young talent in the sector. Marketing has become sophisticated and many factory owners realise that quality control is the key to their survival given the competition from countries like Sri Lanka, Vietnam and China. Several major Western clothes retailers have set up offices in Bangladesh, showing

VIEWPOINT

Shahadat Hossain, software engineer

Dhaka has changed a lot in the last 15 years. It used to be a pleasant city, with lots of open space, greenery and less traffic and pollution. Now the city has gone through a complete transformation. You can see high-rise buildings everywhere, shopping malls have come up and trendy restaurants in many areas, but traffic has become really bad. We need to find ways to improve our public transport. But there is vibrancy in the city.

We were a very poor nation but things are improving. I am very hopeful of the future. Our economy is growing and the younger generation is more confident and upbeat about their prospects. Our huge population can be turned into an asset. Like China, we can make use of that manpower and become a manufacturing hub in the region.

The information technology sector is growing and if the internet connection improves then many multinational IT companies will come to Bangladesh. We have a huge talent pool and some of the best brains.



Export Promotion Bureau, Bangladesh

A trade promotion organisation that moves beyond promotion

EPB is a national export promotion agency under the Ministry of Commerce working since 1977 to promote export trade and improve plans and policies to assist the export sector. The Bureau is administered by a Board of Management, comprising members from the public and private sectors. The Honourable Minister for Commerce, Muhammad Faruk Khan, MP is the ex officio Chairman.

Functions of EPB

Our main priority is policy formation and programme implementation that ensures the active promotion of exports. A key part of our strategy is evaluating and recognising performance in due consideration of international markets to draw international investment to Bangladesh.

Visit www.epb.gov.bd to see our innovations in practice.

Online Business Query System

The web-based online trade inquiry system is a service proudly offered by the Export Promotion Bureau of Bangladesh, as part of the mandate to bridge the gap between Government and the private sector. Exporters, importers, foreign missions/embassies, trade bodies, chambers of commerce – based locally or internationally – can now submit trade queries online, to gain up-to-date and accurate information about exports in Bangladesh.



Contact

Export Promotion Bureau
TCB Bhaban
1 Kawran Bazar (1st & 4th Floor)
Dhaka 1215, Bangladesh

Tel: +880 914 4821-4
Fax: +880 911 9531
E-mail: info@epb.gov.bd
Skype: epb.bd

VIEWPOINT

Ms Duniya Khandaker, NGO official

The society is developing and the economy is growing but I think we are gradually becoming very self-centred and we worry only about our needs.

Though I am not facing any sexual violence in my office, many women are facing it on the streets and also in their work places. It is becoming prevalent in our society. Many young women end up committing suicide because of sexual harassment. It must be stopped.

Young women are now entering into politics. It is a good sign of women's empowerment. Women are also taking leading roles in other sectors and that's a big achievement for Bangladesh. I am hopeful about the future of the country because of the emergence of the young leadership and also women becoming more conscious of their rights.

I feel that confrontational politics in our country is the biggest stumbling block in our development. Many of these politicians are concerned only about themselves and they are always engaged in blame-game politics. They are not making use of the parliament for the betterment of democracy.



- their intent to engage with the industry over the longer term.

The year ahead promises continuing strong demand for clothing, and the Central Bank of Bangladesh is confident that economic growth will again exceed 6 percent. But several analysts feel that the growth rate may not be sustainable in the long run because of the country's inadequate infrastructure and the economy's vulnerability to global economic trends.

Over the past two years the government has begun to address the country's chronic infrastructure problems, especially the energy shortage that is seen to be impeding foreign investment. To overcome the acute power generation shortfall, new plants are being built with private and foreign financial assistance, and electricity may even be bought from India. The World Bank and other international partners are funding a six-kilometre bridge over the mighty

Padma River at a cost of nearly \$3 billion, with a view to transforming the economy of south-western Bangladesh. There are also plans for a new deep-sea port at Chittagong, for which China is expected to offer financial support.

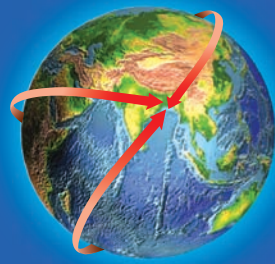
Incomes from its expatriate workers are the second-biggest source of foreign revenue for Bangladesh after clothing, and it is estimated that more than 6 million Bangladeshis work overseas. However, the global financial crisis of 2008 saw thousands of these workers losing their jobs in the Middle East and elsewhere. And the recent political crisis in North African and other parts of the Arab world, has once again exposed the vulnerability of migrant workers, with thousands forced to return home.

"Bangladesh's growth challenges are two-fold," says the CPD's Dr Khatun. "Internally, we need to overcome our infrastructure problems like electricity shortage, poor roads and the impact of climate change. At the same time, our policy-makers should realise that Bangladesh is not immune to global events as the country takes steps to integrate its economy with the global economy. We need to be prepared for those challenges." ●

Anbarasan Ethirajan is a journalist based in Dhaka



The government is prioritising the need to build new infrastructure



**Remit
2
Bangladesh**
INSTANT REMITTANCE OF MONEY



It's fast. It's reliable. It's safe

Bank Asia now has more than **65 outlets**
and **2000 payment points** all over the country.

 **Bank Asia**

For A Better Tomorrow

London Office: 125 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1DT, UK, Phone: +447534283949.

Corporate Office: Rangs Tower (1st-6th Floor) 68, Purana Paltan, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh, Phone: (+88-02) 7115813, 7115881.

A three-way balance of power

Having intervened in politics on numerous occasions over the past 40 years, and more recently having acted as referee between the two main parties, the army continues to play a key role in the balance of power, writes **Zafar Sobhan**

Bangladesh's 40 years of independence, being celebrated this year, can perhaps best be understood if we consider them as falling into five distinct eras or republics. The principal common factors underlying these different phases have been the fierce competition between the two main political parties and the occasionally forceful role of the armed forces.

The first era, under the rule of independence leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his party the Awami League (AL), came to a sudden end on 15 August 1975 in a hail of bullets that killed him and most of his family during a military uprising led by junior and mid-level army officers. After a nerve-wracking drama of coup and counter-coup, the second republic was born in November that year, when independence hero and military strongman, General Ziaur Rahman (known as Zia), was left standing at the end of a bloody and intrigue-ridden three months. Zia, who returned the country to civilian government in 1978 and founded the rival Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), remained in office until May 1981 when he, in turn, was felled by an assassin's bullet. This set in motion a chain of events that culminated in the third republic headed by the army chief, General Hussein Mohammad Ershad, who seized power in March 1982.

Ershad was himself forced from office in December 1990 following a combined movement by the opposition parties – the AL and the BNP – that witnessed the last recorded act of cooperation between these two bitter rivals. Elections in 1991 brought the BNP back to power after an absence of 10 years, and marked the beginning of the fourth republic – Bangladesh's first period of true competitive, multi-party democracy. In 1996, Begum Khaleda Zia, General Zia's widow who, since his death, has led the BNP, was succeeded as prime minister by Sheikh Hasina, AL leader and daughter of Bangladesh's first president, Sheikh Mujib. Power again switched hands between the two parties in 2001 when Zia was returned to office – with a landslide victory – in coalition with the Jamaat-e-Islami party.

This phase of democratic government



Members of the security forces on duty during the 2008 elections

came to an end on 11 January, 2007 when, following months of street battles and bloodshed between the AL and BNP in the run-up to new elections, a military-backed caretaker government of technocrats, led by ex-central bank governor Fakhruddin Ahmed, took the reins of power and postponed the elections. After a two-year interregnum, the fifth republic dawned and democracy was returned with fresh elections on 28 December 2008, which were won emphatically by the AL, making Sheikh Hasina Prime Minister for the second time.

As we have seen, the three primary forces in the Bangladeshi body politic are the AL, the BNP and the army. The first-past-the-post parliamentary system can give either of the parties a lop-sided majority but they remain evenly matched in their core support – elections are increasingly decided by the growing mass of swing voters. Historically, the army had always been considered closer to the BNP in terms of ideology and temperament – the BNP was a party born in the military cantonment – whereas the AL, under Sheikh Hasina, mindful of her father's fate, has always maintained a distrust of the army.

However, the tenure of the caretaker government of 2007-08 has altered the calculus. It was partly as a result of international pres-

sure, but mainly in response to the BNP's five years of shambolic rule and blatant machinations to rig the elections, that the army decided to move in 2007, surprising many who had believed that it supported the BNP.

There is little to suggest that the army chief, General Moeen U. Ahmed, stepped forward in January 2007 with the ambition to take over the country, as other army chiefs had done before him. Instead, he may have hoped that the AL and BNP could be replaced by new – and presumably more democratic – parties that could lead the way to a more functional democracy. However, after Nobel prize-winner Muhammad Yunus ended a brief foray into politics in May 2007, the AL and BNP remained stubbornly intact, and no new political formations emerged. It was clear that politics as usual was set to return with elections at the end of 2008.

This left the army, which had enthusiastically persecuted scores of politicians in its zeal for reform, with the problem of how to ensure its own security when power was returned to civilian hands. In the end, the generals came to an understanding with the AL, largely because the principal army measures during the caretaker government had been aimed at the BNP, most notably against Khaleda's powerful elder son who had been widely seen as the power behind the BNP throne.

In quest of social welfare..... helping people in Bangladesh to lead a better life



an **axiata** company

ignite the power within

robi

Ignite the power within

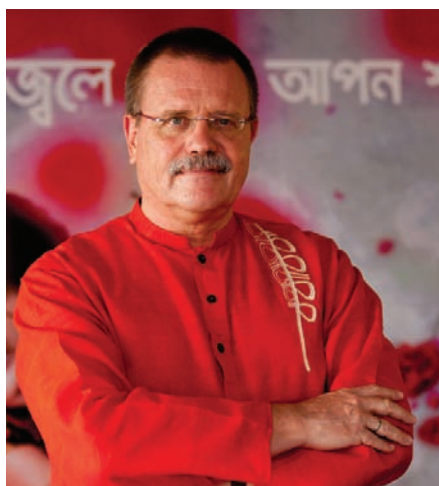
Michael Kuehner, Managing Director/CEO, Robi Axiata Limited

Serving about 12 million people with connectivity, Robi Axiata Limited is a frontline mobile telecommunication services provider in Bangladesh. In this densely populated south Asian country there are many untapped opportunities, and mobile telecommunication is already stimulating significant socio-economic growth.

Robi Axiata Limited is a joint venture between Axiata Group Berhad in Malaysia and NTT DoCoMo of Japan. It was formerly known as Telekom Malaysia International (Bangladesh), which commenced operations in Bangladesh in 1997 with the brand name AKTEL. On 28 March 2010, the service name was rebranded as 'Robi' and the Company became known as Robi Axiata Limited.

Robi is a popular Bengali word for sun. The Company chose the name to respect local culture and tradition. The name and the logo in local language has sensitised an emotional link between the Company and subscribers.

Since the rebranding in March 2010, Robi witnessed a steady growth on



Michael Kuehner, Managing Director/CEO

both capacity and coverage. Coverage in terms of population and geography has been on the ascent while massive efforts have been made to improve technical efficiency by modernising base stations and setting up several new ones across the country.

With only 44 percent penetration in a country of about 160 million people, mobile telecommunication opportunities in Bangladesh are im-

mense. The internet penetration is only about 6 percent. As the Bangladesh government is now working on creating Digital Bangladesh in the next ten years, Robi is aligning its operations to be an active partner in establishing this vision.

Drawing on the international expertise of Axiata and NTT DoCoMo, it supports 2G voice services with high speed internet connectivity. Its GSM service is based on a robust network architecture and cutting edge technology such as Intelligent Network (IN), which provides extensive nationwide network coverage and multiple global partners for international roaming. It has the widest International Roaming coverage in Bangladesh connecting 600 operators in more than 200 countries. Currently, Robi has 18 percent of the market share in Bangladesh.

On its business operations strategy, Managing Director and CEO of the company Michael Kuehner says, "We are a customer centric-company where every byte of our operation is destined to pro-actively research customer needs and provide satisfying solutions". "We are growing because of this approach and more importantly, as we have been able to obtain market satisfaction on our commitment to provide affordable, technically sound and value adding services," he added.

With a wide variety of products and services including simple connectivity, m-commerce, e-ticketing and much more, Robi has become the people's brand in Bangladesh. The prestigious "Frost & Sullivan Emerging Market Service Provider of the Year" award received in 2010, serves as a great yardstick by which to gauge the company's continued success.



Robi's support enriches local culture



Karnaphuli Fertilizer Company Limited

Partners in progress – farmers' friend

KAFCO's vision is to be the most cost effective export producer of quality ammonia and urea in the region and the best example of an international public private partnership (PPP) in Bangladesh. We have realised this vision and we are proud to contribute to the country.



Fertilizer crisis avoided

KAFCO supplies urea to the government for use by the farmers of Bangladesh since 1996 and during 2007-2010, supplied nearly half a million metric tons of urea per year.

Efficient energy use

KAFCO uses much less gas to produce ammonia and urea than any other fertilizer plant in the country.

International recognition

KAFCO products are internationally recognised and globally accepted as among the best in the world.

Financial contributions

KAFCO made cash payments to the Government of Bangladesh of \$US744,482,28 during the financial year 2004/05 and 2009/10.

KAFCO's CSR activities include:

- Donations to the government's Disaster Relief Fund
- Health support: most recently building and equipping a modern 30 bed hospital for disadvantaged people
- Support for the prevention of HIV/AIDS and drug addiction
- Financial and equipment support to universities and schools
- Local infrastructure development through building and repair of roads and culverts
- Afforestation
- Support to local law enforcement agencies



Message from the CEO

The Shareholders, Board, Management and all staff of KAFCO are proud to be partners in progress for the development of the economy of Bangladesh.

KAFCO is committed to continuing and enhancing its contributions to the country and to assisting Bangladesh in achieving sustained self-sufficiency in food.

Salahuddin Ahmad
Chief Executive Officer



► But the new amity between AL and army was short-lived, extinguished by a brutal massacre of commanding officers by mutinying border guards in a tense 36-hour stand-off in February 2009, that left at least 57 officers dead. Although the newly re-elected prime minister was widely hailed for her calm handling of the crisis, her refusal to storm the compound where the mutineers were holding their hostages infuriated those who felt their comrades' lives could have been saved.

In Bangladesh, politics is never just about the votes; it's also about muscle. The BNP has bounced back from its 2008 general election trouncing and done well in local and municipal polls, indicating that the public has both noted the AL government's failure to deliver during its first two years in office, as well as forgiven the BNP for the excesses of its 2001-06 rule. The key lesson that the BNP may well have learned from 2006 is that its best guarantee of a fair election might be to agitate to have the army oversee the process, as happened in 2008 (widely considered the fairest ballot in Bangladesh's history). This, however, would require reconciliation with the army or at least a faction of it – with army discontent with the government rising, there is little doubt that the BNP will find takers within the cantonment willing to forge an understanding. So, with elections scheduled for 2013, it seems that the army once again holds the balance of power.

The showdown in the run-up to the next election is likely to be, as it was in 2006, over the composition of the neutral caretaker government constitutionally mandated to administer elections. If the army is called in by one side or the other to adjudicate the matter, or to provide behind-the-scenes muscle, there is always the risk that elements within the army, believing that they did not go far enough during the last caretaker regime, will be emboldened to try to dispense with civilian partners altogether.

In the final analysis, Bangladeshi politics remains delicately poised between the three primary players and there is still an uneasy equilibrium. Whenever the two main parties fail to uphold the norms and tenets of democracy, either in government or in opposition, the army is likely to maintain the balance of power and so could remain a factor in Bangladeshi politics for as long as a functional democracy remains elusive. ●

Zafar Sobhan is a Dhaka-based columnist and editor

Moral and material issues stir up some hot debates

While political disputes have arisen over issues such as Islamic law and plans to try those accused of war crimes, most Bangladeshis are currently more concerned about the price of food

Anbarasan Ethirajan



These are politically testing times for the world's third most populous Muslim nation

The recent death of a 14-year-old girl, Hena Akhter, in a remote village about 80 kilometres from the capital Dhaka, triggered a wave of protests and outrage in Bangladesh and abroad. She died a week after she had received about 80 lashes in public for allegedly having an affair with a married man. Both were punished following a fatwa, or religious ruling, by a village court consisting of elders and a Muslim cleric. Her parents said she died of her injuries.

The High Court has ordered an investigation into the incident after allegations that there had been attempts to cover up the case. The public lashing took place despite the High Court's 2010 ban on all punishments like the caning or beating of women in the name of fatwa. The whole episode has once again highlighted the ongoing tussle between conservatives and those who support secular values in Bangladesh, which is the world's third most populous Muslim nation.

Bangladesh has, of late, been trying to

portray itself as a moderate Muslim-majority nation rather than an Islamic state. Islam is the state religion but nearly 90 percent of the country's estimated population of more than 150 million adhere to a moderate version of the faith. Both the government, led by the Awami League, and the courts have been taking measures to restore the secular principles upon which Bangladesh was founded in 1971.

However, the re-emergence in rural areas of fatwas and illegal punishments in the name of Islamic sharia law has shocked community leaders and civil society activists. For years women's rights' campaigners have been fighting against discrimination in the name of religion. Last year, in a landmark verdict, the High Court ruled that no one can be forced to wear religious clothing – like the burka or skull caps – against their wishes. The ruling came after reports that some deeply religious officials and head teachers were forcing students and colleagues to adhere to a strict Islamic code.

Although the courts have been issu- ►



Photo: Md. Aminul Hassan

Celebration rally of Bangla New Year in Dhaka, mid-April

Boishakh, the month of New Beginnings and Nationalism

BTCL upholds the spirit of nationalism in the telecoms arena

As the largest PSTN operator, BTCL also provides the following data solutions:

- Leased -line internet
- Broadband internet
- Point-to-point data connectivity
- International Internet Gateway (IIG)
- International Gateway (IGW)
- Inter Connection Exchange (ICX)



www.btcl.gov.bd

Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited

Digital Bangladesh, expectation of the millions and the role of BTCL

Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited (BTCL) evolved as a government-owned public limited company from the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) in 2008. This is the largest PSTN operator with a vast nationwide telecom infrastructure.

Bangladesh is the eighth most populous nation in the world with 160 million people. Despite many limitations, Citigroup categorised Bangladesh as one of the 'Global Growth Generating Countries' in February 2011 and similarly, Goldman Sachs listed Bangladesh as one of the 'Next Eleven Countries' "having high potential of becoming one of the world's largest economies in the 21st Century".

Bangladesh is moving forward with a goal to achieve economic objectives such as increasing GDP, poverty reduction, employment generation and establishing an exploitation-free society.

The present democratic government is committed to establish 'Digital Bangladesh' by building a nation-wide robust, modern and high-capacity information and communication technology infrastructure. Government is determined to provide easy, non-discriminatory and cheap access for all citizens of Bangladesh to ensure fulfilment of its *Vision 2021* goals.

BTCL has a mandate to provide basic telecommunication services throughout the country. At present, BTCL is providing PSTN telephone services to about 1 million customers down to *Upazila* or sub-district and growth centre level. BTCL has the largest telecom infrastructure comprising copper cable, microwave links, satellite links and optical fibre networks in the country. Call rates and internet rates are cheapest compared to other operators. BTCL is now providing internet access services to its valued subscribers. The services include dial-in access, leased access services for enterprises, access for local ISPs, mail, web hosting and .bd name registration as well as DNS services.



Hon. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates the seminar on 'Digital Bangladesh: A plan for connecting people'

One of the *Next Eleven Countries* "having high potential of becoming one of the world's largest economies in the 21st Century".

BTCL launched ADSL broadband services in all the district headquarters at a time when customers were frustrated with the poor quality broadband services provided by some commercial service providers. This ADSL broadband service of BTCL emerged as the best among the mobile and fixed-line broadband services available in the market. Customers find it very user-friendly as they can make voice calls and browse the internet at the same time. BTCL is actively participating in the 'Digital Bangladesh' mission by establishing a nation-wide telecommunications network up to union council or lowest administrative unit for utilisation by e-governance, e-commerce, e-education, e-health, e-agriculture and other e-activities in various spheres of citizen life. In this context, BTCL plans to build a people-centred network using modern technologies spreading around the whole

country. Such a network will trigger a development oriented information society where every citizen will be able to access, utilise and share information and knowledge easily, efficiently and affordably. The network will explore the untapped potential of ICT through broadening of infrastructure and access networks, enhancing human resources, facilitating local content development, and subsequently achieving the targets set in the poverty reduction strategy of the government. The network will enable the country to meet the targets set for the Millennium Development Goals and the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) action plan to bridge the 'Digital Divide'.



Dr Md. Abu Sayed Khan
Managing Director, BTCL

ing bans and rulings against illegal fatwas and decrees by village courts, the question is how far they are effective outside the capital Dhaka, especially in the remote rural areas. “Part of the struggle, I think, for many organisations, activists and also for the government itself, is how to lessen the gap between what are the standards that have been set down and what are the values that are being espoused through the courts,” says Sarah Hossain, a human rights lawyer based in Dhaka.

The other issue that has been dominating the political agenda in recent months is the government’s attempts to try those Bangladeshis accused of committing mass murder and atrocities during the country’s secession from Pakistan 40 years ago. A war crimes tribunal was set up in March 2010 for this purpose. Official figures estimate that 3 million people were killed and thousands of women raped when Pakistani forces tried to stop Bangladesh, formerly East Pakistan, from becoming an independent nation.

Some of the alleged collaborators happened to be members of the country’s larg-

est Islamist party Jamaat-e-Islami, which is a partner in the main opposition alliance, led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). A senior leader of the BNP, Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, arrested in late December, has been accused of war crimes

The re-emergence in rural areas of fatwas and illegal punishments in the name of Islamic sharia law has shocked community leaders and civil society activists

but denies the charges. The BNP and Jamaat have dismissed the tribunal as a political show trial. Despite these criticisms there is a widespread consensus in the country that the prosecution of war crimes is long overdue.

“In the past 20 years, there been a lot

of learning, as an experience, how a war crimes tribunal can help a country get to grips with its past,” says Hossain. “Even tribunals which are under-resourced, as in Sierra Leone for example, have set quite remarkable examples not only in terms of some of the judgements they have come up with but in the way they have reached out to local people and to the public at large on what is happening inside these tribunals.”

For the most part, ordinary Bangladeshis have more pressing concerns. In recent weeks, there have been protests against rising prices (which have gone up by as much as 30 percent in the last year), power shortages and alleged human rights violations by the security forces. Discontent has especially been triggered among poor people – nearly 40 percent of the country’s population live below the poverty line on less than a dollar a day. The government is already distributing rice, the country’s staple food, at a subsidised rate, particularly to those in the lower-income group, but that does not satisfy demand. Experts have warned that if food prices continue to increase this could spark social unrest. ●

Islam’s Bengali avatar

Folklore and religion come together in popular traditional practices that are unique to parts of Bengal, often blurring the divisions between Hindus and Muslims, and creating festivals that have an enduring appeal

Annu Jalais

When walking through Satkhira, a region just north of the Sundarbans, one occasionally comes across a small clearing where a little line of seven earthen mounds is freshly decorated with flowers. This inconspicuous little installation is neither a memorial nor a shrine but a sort of ‘sacred grove’ built to honour Bonbibi – a young woman believed to have been sent, by a compassionate Allah, to protect the woodcutters and fishers of the region from the deadly jaws of its man-eating tigers.

The more popular Hindu counterpart of this ‘force’, in true Indic style, is represented as a goddess. She is usually placed in the middle of a small mud- or bamboo-walled straw hut, dressed in a sari, and shown pulling her little honey-collector, known as Dukhe, towards her. Often, her brother Shah Jongoli – who wears a skull-cap, princely Mughal clothes and shoes, and is represented attacking the half-human, half-tiger Dokkhin Rai



Young boys run through the streets dressed as horses in a colourful Bihari festival



Mixed blessings: a Hindu shrine to the Muslim 'goddess', Bonbibi

— is placed at one side, while at the other, the forest Gazi, with his right palm opened in peace, sits serenely, bringing closure to this little triptych.

The Hindus of the region have no qualms Hinduising Bonbibi in this way but she remains for them, in the local language of the region, a *mollar debi*, or Muslim goddess. She is commemorated or worshipped each January/February, by people who today call themselves either Hindu or Muslim, with a reading of the booklet written in Bonbibi's honour about a century and a half ago by Abdur Rahim.

The booklet tells the story of a Brahmin sage curiously taking the form of a tiger and feeding on those who eke out a living from the mangrove island forests of the Sundarbans. As the number of humans being killed increases, Allah asks young Bonbibi (who incidentally was raised in the forest by a deer) to ensure a sort of truce between the demon and the islanders of the region. Before undertaking this task, Bonbibi goes to Medina to get Fatima's blessings and to Mecca to obtain some holy earth to bring back with her.

This is just one kind of Islamic inheritance in the Bengal Delta; others include the songs and poems of the Bengali mystic Lalon Fakir and the tradition of *Baul* (wandering minstrel) singing.

When I travelled through Bangladesh between 2007 and 2009, I wondered how much of the localised tradition of Islam remained as part of contemporary Bangladesh's socio-cultural life. Dhaka's and Chittagong's middle-class elites see their engagement with the 'local' as singing or listening to *Baul* songs, celebrating the arrival of spring by wearing orange and the Bengali New Year by eating a special

breakfast of fish and rice, and commemorating the dates which led to the creation of Bangladesh in 1971: 21 February and 16 December. These celebrations, extraordinarily artistic as well as suavely commercial, are secular in nature and definitely geared for an urban elite.

In contrast to these national celebrations, the festivals that mark the more popular calendar are very local ones. In the Sitakunda area of Chittagong District, for example, it

Numerous practices like these remain popular for the majority of Bangladeshis because they offer a locally-rooted religion, which both inspires and unifies

is the various *Urs* (a Persian word denoting a commemoration of the death anniversary of a saint, or *pir*; the Bengali word is *Urush*) taking place around gravesite shrines of *pirs*, that mark, for the inhabitants of the place, the highlights of the year. These shrines are not just visited by rural or small-town Bangladeshis. In fact, most Bengalis, whatever their socio-economic background, or rural-urban divide, have visited a gravesite shrine at least once in their life and many do so on a regular basis.

During *Urs*, singers come from all over Bangladesh and sometimes India too. The audience sings along to songs requesting

the *praner bondhu*, or 'lover', to come and become one with the singer (where the lover is Allah) and then breaks into ecstatic dancing. The intensity of these musical performances, allied with a sense of belonging to the greater community of Muslims, albeit in a distinctly Bengali way, are essential features of what it means to be a Muslim in Bangladesh today.

One of the largest minority communities of Bangladesh, the Biharis, are Urdu-speakers who migrated from India both before and after the partition of India in 1947. Comprising mainly the urban underclass, they have their own very particular and colourful way of living Islam. The last three days of the month of *Moharram*, the first month of the Islamic calendar, are commemorated with decorated *tazias* (replicas of the tomb of the Prophet Muhammad's descendant Hussein), taken out in processions along the main roads of the areas in which they live. Young boys, dressed as Hussein's horse (and called *paikis*), run through the streets visiting the shrines of the area. These practices, however, are now less frequent since being condemned as un-Islamic by voices from within and outside the community.

Unfortunately, in the last decade, the un-Islamic tag has also caused sacred groves and holy shrines to become the targets of ever-increasing violent attacks by the followers of a more authoritarian Islam. The 700-year-old gravesite shrine of Shah Jalal in Sylhet has been the object of two separate bomb attacks, leaving many dead and even more injured. Even the animals linked to these shrines — the crocodiles attached to the Shah Jalal pond and the turtles of the gravesite shrine of Baizid Bostami in Chittagong — which are fondly fed by devotees and visitors, have not been spared; they have been frequently subjected to poisoning.

The very visible acts of violence undertaken by the adepts of militant Islam tend to obscure the deeply rooted, alternative manifestations of Bangladeshi Muslim beliefs and practices. The numerous graveside shrines, the commemorative practices of *Moharram* by the Biharis, and the few sacred groves such as those of Bonbibi, still remain popular sites for the majority of Bangladeshis because they offer a locally-rooted religion that both inspires and unifies. ●

Annu Jalais is author of *Forest Of Tigers: People, Politics and Environment in the Sundarbans*, and a post-doctoral fellow at Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Advanced Study in Delhi

History's sunlight and shadows

The emphasis of President Paul Kagame's government has been on rebuilding the economy and setting new standards of social and economic development across a country that was devastated by genocide 17 years ago

Joseph Kibuto in Kigali

Rwanda has often been hailed as an African success story because it has managed to rebuild itself into a peaceful, stable nation, after the turmoil of the 1994 genocide. Most of the credit for the metamorphosis has gone to President Paul Kagame, particularly for the way he has managed to drive forward efforts to overcome the widespread devastation that followed in the genocide's wake.

In 1994, more than 800,000 ethnic Tutsis were targeted and killed, in villages and towns across the country, by the army and militias that were made up mostly of their Hutu neighbours. Some Hutu moderates were also attacked. But while Rwanda is dotted with genocide memorials, and a

week each April is devoted to remembering what happened, people, in general, speak very little of it.

It was the rebel army of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), headed by Kagame, which succeeded in ending the bloody 100 days of violence that took place between April and July 1994. Since then, Kagame has been heralded as a hero, as much outside as inside the country. His election to the presidency in 2003 and subsequent re-election in August 2010 – with a landslide endorsement of 93 percent of the votes – came as little surprise to anyone. But while different groups of international observers described the August presidential election

as largely peaceful, they did not fail to notice the absence of opposition voices.

Since the genocide, this tiny country in the heart of Africa has certainly made great strides in various areas of development – healthcare, women's rights and education – but, at the same time, it has scored poorly in political indicators such as democratic rule, human rights and freedom of expression and the press. Like almost everything in Rwanda, politics fall under the shadow of the genocide. Fears that debate could stir up old resentments, even hatreds, mean people stay quiet and many things go unsaid.

Such is the continuing sensitivity, that the history of Rwanda is not taught in the country's schools today. Efforts to develop a salient curriculum are underway, but in the meantime the national narrative is more implicit than explicit. The government encourages people on the opposite sides of the genocide to reconcile and talk about the events of 1994, but to do this "in the right way" – a way that avoids bringing back up the same differences that fuelled the killings in the first place. This approach is most strongly characterised by the current government's constant stress on the phrase "we are all Rwandans". Because ethnic identities are perceived to cause ethnic unrest, they have largely been abolished, and so-called 'divisionism' has become one of Rwanda's most serious crimes.

In spite of the continuing restrictions on political and media freedoms, Rwanda con-

tinues to receive accolades and new investors because of the rapid economic growth it has experienced over the past decade. Kagame's aim has been to make Kigali, the capital city, a regional centre of commerce and information technology. A new internet broadband project will see Rwanda become one of the best-connected countries in Africa and it is expected to develop into a base for web businesses, call centres and regional banking institutions. Kigali has also been the focus of much new enterprise. A construction boom generated business worth \$1.1 billion in 2009 alone, and has created at least 10,000 new jobs.

Rwanda has not only been welcomed into the East African Community, joining its neighbours Tanzania, Burundi, Kenya and Uganda, but has also joined the Commonwealth, as it strives to open itself up to wider investment and political networking opportunities. In a clear sign that it wants to move away from the former influence of France, the government replaced French with English as an official language in 2008.

A major innovation has been the provision of national health insurance, subscribed to by more than 90 percent of Rwandans, which includes benefits like maternal and infant health and free birth control. Enrolled patients pay only \$2 a year to get treatment and prescribed drugs at a discount of up to 85 percent of the real cost. The scheme has greatly helped the country to reduce the incidence of malaria, which is Rwanda's top



killer, especially among its children.

Another landmark has been the advancement of women, who now hold the majority of seats in parliament and are guaranteed 30 percent of most government jobs (see the article on page 79). Very unusually in Africa, Rwandan women also enjoy equality with men in property ownership and inheritance rights.

In education too, Rwanda is held up as a model. In 2010, the United Nations noted that the country has one of the highest rates of primary enrolment in Africa, with over 95 percent of primary age pupils now attending school. And yet there are continuing challenges in rebuilding the education system. With a shortage of competent teachers and facilities, the country still has a long way to go before ►

Keeping a watch on the media

In most democracies, the common arena in which to thrash out the dangers and differences is the press – newspapers, radio and television. But these are as yet weak in Rwanda, perhaps mainly because, during the genocide, the media was brazenly used to spread hatred, inciting the violence and killing. Since then, the press has continued to suffer. The general public and the government do not give it much credence and, as a result, journalists are careful, often self-censoring, and sometimes being openly censored, in regard to any controversial content.

Determined efforts are made to prevent the media from publishing or broadcasting the kind of hateful ethnic messages used in 1994. All talk of ethnicity is forbidden and journalists who violate these terms are subject to criminal charges of divisionism, defamation and promoting genocide ideology.

Critics say these laws, particularly those referring to genocide ideology, are too vague, can be too widely interpreted and are used to silence some valid news sources and political opponents. Two local newspapers, *Umuseso* and *Umuwugizi*, have been banned altogether after carrying controversial stories. And, earlier this year, a newspaper publisher, Agnes Uwimana, and her editor, Saidath Mukakibibi, were sentenced to 17 and 7 years in prison, respectively, on counts of defamation, sabotaging the security of the state and divisionism.

On 30 March, the Rwandan government announced it will move to allow the media to become self-regulating.

RWANDATEL - Your ideal telecom investment in Rwanda



*Word from the **CEO***

When LAP Green took over the reins of Rwandatel Ltd in 2007, they wanted to ensure that all Rwandatel's existing and future customers would enjoy an unequalled telecommunications experience be it at work, at home or abroad. At the time, access to the internet was limited to corporate and government offices while access to mobile telephony was limited to only a small percentage of people who could afford it.

So, in addition to our existing CDMA network, we invested in a new 3G GSM and EDGE network, in more bandwidth and positioned ourselves to be the investors' all-inclusive telecommunications solutions provider and partner as they took on the journey into the future in Rwanda.

Three years down the road, more professionals and regular folk in Rwanda are now able to work and talk uninterrupted throughout most of the country on our fixed and wireless networks. We offer value for money, honesty, award winning customer service as well as excellence and leadership. These values are at the core of who we are as a company, as a people each and every day.

We remain committed to offering you the latest and most innovative tailor-made products in telecommunications solutions and to ensuring that your whole communications experience augments your investments in the country.

And as we say at Rwandatel, Turi Kumwe! We are with you!

Issiaka Maiga Hamidou

CEO

Rwandatel Limited



Built for business growth

Rwandatel has continuously invested in the latest technology and currently has the most robust infrastructure in Rwanda built to support the widest portfolio of services in the market tailored to cater for diverse telecommunications needs for businesses. Rwandatel has the widest network coverage in the country and is now linked to the fibre cable system that runs through the country. Rwandatel's infrastructure is designed with clients' needs in mind with emphasis placed on high quality services of unmatched reliability in the market.

Voice solutions

Fixed Landline telephone, Toll Free Numbers, ISDN Basic (ISDN-B), Hotline-for Conferences, Fixed copper line, Fixed wireless terminal-CDMA, Fixed wireless terminal-GSM, net, CDMA Telefax, Mobile phone postpaid & prepaid.

Data solutions

ADSL, Wireless Broadband, Cable ISDN Basic, Fibre Leased Lines, Copper/data leased lines, Internet Leased Lines, Frame Relay, Web-hosting, Mobile Inter-

communications partner for your



RWANDA'S LEADING TELECOMMUNICATION NETWORK

Rwandatel is the largest telecommunications provider in Rwanda for voice, data and internet with a diverse portfolio of solutions to suit your business needs.

Rwandatel:

- Is Rwanda's internet backbone and provides the most reliable internet services in Rwanda.
- Provides the fastest, most reliable and widest variety of internet service solutions tailored to suit unique needs.
- Has the best network for high data and large information volume processing for businesses.
- Provides the most secure internet connection for efficient and secure exchange of data and information for businesses. Rwandatel boasts the largest data centre in Rwanda.
- Is the only provider of fixed landline telephone services in the country ensuring high quality and affordable connectivity.
- Has the most competitive rates in Rwanda.
- Rwandatel has the most comprehensive telecommunication solutions in the market with the flexibility to tailor personalised solutions to suit your unique business communication needs.

No matter your business communication needs in Rwanda, Rwandatel is your ideal partner.

For more information visit www.rwandatel.rw

rwandatel
TURI KUMWE

www.rwandatel.rw



Call 075 100 for more information

PwC Rwanda opens its doors to a thriving, expanding economy



The opening of PwC Rwanda last year was a major milestone for PwC and it signals strong confidence in Rwanda's future.

The addition of PwC Rwanda brings to 31 the number of countries in Africa where PwC has a presence. Worldwide, more than 161,000 people in 154 countries share their thinking, experience and solutions to develop fresh perspectives and practical advice.

Over the last several years, Rwanda has demonstrated effective business and government leadership that is fuelling tremendous growth. 'Rwanda faces many challenges common to other developing nations, but the country's approach to addressing these challenges is informed, vibrant and effective,' said Bernice Kimacia, Country Senior Partner of PwC Rwanda.

Rwanda is fast becoming a prime investment destination in Africa. Currently, the infrastructure, energy and telecom sectors are attracting the highest levels of investment in Rwanda. Other top sectors include tourism, information technology, construction and real estate, mining and financial services as well as agriculture.

PwC has the experience to help shape the future for organisations with an established presence in Rwanda or those that are entering the market for the first time. PwC firms provide industry-focused assurance, tax and advisory services to enhance value for clients.

Rwanda CEOs' confidence & strategy

In 2010, PwC surveyed over 200 CEOs in Sub-Saharan Africa—including 15 CEOs in Rwanda—to learn where they foresee growth occurring and how they plan to achieve it. 'When we asked CEOs in Rwanda about revenue prospects for the next 12 months, they registered higher confidence compared to the global average,' said Mrs Kimacia. 'Their confidence is roughly consistent with that of other CEOs in Africa.'

However, when asked to comment on revenue prospects over a three-year time frame, CEOs in Rwanda expressed significantly more confidence than their peers anywhere else. 'I think we can attribute this to a general sense in Rwanda that this is the place to be,' Mrs Kimacia continued. 'Rwanda is growing at a faster rate than other emerging markets

and the government is invested deeply in a progressive development agenda.'

This strong sense of confidence is not matched by a corresponding commitment to increasing headcount in the short term. 'Their more modest plans regarding headcount over the next 12 months could be the result of a perceived skills shortage,' commented Mrs Kimacia. 'This perception is changing, particularly as the government, development partners and companies continue to build capacity and focus on productivity and efficiency. But it takes time.'

As Rwanda's economy becomes more sophisticated, CEOs are re-evaluating their corporate strategies. 'The global economic crisis did not have a profound impact on the economy in Rwanda.

'Rwanda consistently demonstrates that it is a positive environment for investment and development even during a crisis. But companies here are not immune to the global trends shaping business development, and so they are looking at their strategy and corporate structures to support long-term growth,' concluded Mrs Kimacia.

Rwanda CEOs: % very confident of revenue prospects for the next 12 months:

Global	48%
Africa	66%
Rwanda	67%

Rwanda CEOs: % very confident of revenue prospects for the next 3 years:

Global	51%
Africa	69%
Rwanda	87%

14th Annual CEO Survey: Sub-Saharan Africa

40% of CEOs in Rwanda say that headcount will stay the same for their organisations over the next 12 months

27% of CEOs in Rwanda say that headcount will increase by more than 8% over the next 12 months

87% of CEOs in Rwanda say they will increase their commitment to creating and fostering a skilled workforce over the next 3 years as a means of improving national competitiveness and social well-being

Rwanda CEOs identified customer demand, industry dynamics, shareholder expectations and attitudes towards risk as factors influencing corporate strategy

Rwanda CEOs are re-examining their corporate structures as a response to risk

► it meets international standards. Rwandan teachers are poorly paid and there are few incentives to motivate them to do better.

It is on the political front that President Kagame's government faces the greatest criticism – at home and abroad. This is largely because of the lack of any serious form of opposition, despite the existence of a constitution that guarantees basic political, social and economic rights. International human rights groups and unregistered political activists accuse the government of gagging the media and restricting entry to the political space. Even some key RPF figures, including political allies and a number of army generals, have fallen out with the government over this issue. In 2010, as the elections approached, there was widespread conjecture about who was behind the shooting in South Africa of a former army chief of staff, Kayumba Nyamwasa, and the murders of journalist Jean Léonard Rugambage and would-be politician André Kagwa, the outspoken vice-president of the unregistered Green Party. Kayumba's attempted assassination led to a diplomatic row between Rwanda and South Africa, in which both countries withdrew their respective ambassadors.

Politics in Rwanda has long been viewed through the ethnic lens as essentially being a contest between the rival groups of Hutus and Tutsis. The majority Hutus, whose then leadership was responsible for the genocide, were thought to be the primary opponents of Kagame's Tutsi-led RPF government. While

So far there is no clear indication of who might succeed Kagame. Many Rwandans cannot imagine their country without him at the helm

the Hutu extremist militia, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda – based in Democratic Republic of Congo and made up mostly of génocidaires who fled after the killings in 1994 – were long considered to pose the main armed threat. Recently, however, things have changed. Four senior RPF officials have been sentenced, in absentia, to long jail terms after being convicted of col-

laborating with external armed forces planning to attack the country. And, several of Kagame's former allies, who were active in the struggle for the country's liberation, have joined other diaspora-based political parties working to end his rule. Increasingly, Rwanda's challenges and politics cannot be reduced to the ethnic binary.

So far there is no clear indication of who may succeed Kagame if he leaves office at the time of the next presidential election in 2017. Many Rwandans cannot imagine their country without Kagame at the helm. Under him, the economy continues to grow exponentially, particularly in urban centres. Tomorrow's challenge will be to reach out to the rural population; some 70 percent of Rwandans still depend on subsistence agriculture for survival, so the government is working to integrate these farmers into the national development programme.

For Kagame, or any leader who may follow him, the true challenge continues to be how to rule such a poor country, where the things left unsaid are as important as those that are spoken, where the past, despite best efforts, is not forgotten and where old resentments are never too deeply buried. •

2020 vision for the economy

Meticulous attention to the requirements of the most dynamic sectors has sustained the confidence of the private sector, as Rwanda's economy continues to grow, writes **Eugene Kwibuka**

"It is the private sector that develops the country's economy," said Emmanuel Hategeka, Permanent Secretary at Rwanda's Ministry of Trade and Industry. His emphasis is hardly surprising given that he is a

former CEO of the Rwanda Private Sector Federation. "We try to focus where we can do best," he added. "There is commitment of leadership to implement strategies aiming at uplifting the country's economy."

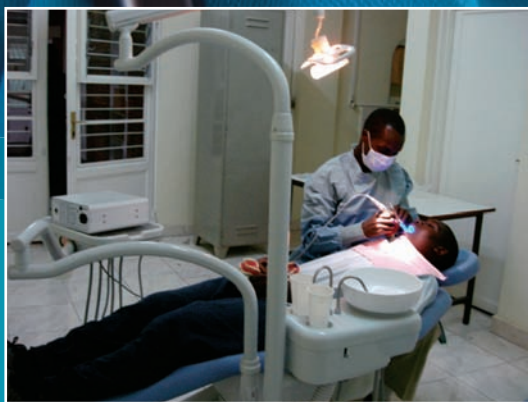
Although at heart he may be a businessman, it is clear that Hategeka is fully conversant with his government's guiding principles and approach, as he explains the secret of building a new economy for a country that has been forced to start again from scratch.

Sustained growth has visibly brought Rwanda back to life, nearly 17 years after the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis and the subsequent liberation war left the country in a very sorry state. The country's economy has now been growing consistently since 2000, at an average annual rate of between 7-8 percent, and its total GDP is currently valued at \$5.2 billion – according to World Bank figures for 2010.

This geographically tiny but densely populated country has managed to attract both foreign and domestic investment. Money is currently being injected into restructuring the main cash crops of tea and coffee, developing high-end tourism, creating new industries, introducing a working financial system and building the communications and energy infrastructure.

The key investment opportunities have ►





KIGALI HEALTH INSTITUTE

A RESPONSE TO RWANDA'S HEALTH DELIVERY CHALLENGES

The post-genocide era has been characterised by a poor doctor-patient ratio. To respond to this challenge, the Ministry of Health undertook to transform Rwanda's health sector through the provision and continuous improvement of health services in Rwanda by providing preventive, curative and rehabilitative healthcare. This goal is in line with the streamlined strategies set by the government in order to reduce poverty and enhance the well-being of the population as incorporated in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper of Vision 2020 and the Millennium Development Goals.

Since its establishment in 1996, Kigali Health Institute (KHI) has made impressive strides in training efficient and effective health professionals. So far the Institute has graduated around 2500 students ranging from nurses, dental therapists, laboratory technologists, radiology technologists, anaesthetic nurses, psychiatric nurses, physiotherapists, midwives, ophthalmic clinical officers and environmental health experts.

The Institute is proud of having upgraded some of the courses to a Bachelor's Degree level and to have developed a postgraduate professional certificate in Professional Counselling as well as a Master's Programme in Critical Care and Trauma Nursing.

With the support of donors who contributed to the development of a dental clinic and dental laboratory, trainees have been able to practise using dummies to gain skills before dealing with patients. The Institute established a physiotherapy clinic and a medical laboratory that offer services to the public and training facilities to the students, maternal and child health services as well as a community eye care centre which will soon be operational.

These programmes and consultancy services have been milestones in the Institute's mandate of responding to the healthcare challenges that Rwanda has been facing. To continue narrowing the existing gaps in healthcare delivery, the Institute is starting new programmes for Nutrition; Clinical Officers; Orthopaedic Technology; a Bachelor's Degree in Social Sciences; and a Master's Degree in Health Care Administration and Management.

KHI is optimistic that it has contributed to the government's goal to attain its targets in increasing life expectancy, reducing infant and maternal mortality rates, controlling potential epidemic diseases and reducing HIV/AIDS prevalence as outlined in Vision 2020.

Despite the Institute's achievements, it still has challenges related to human resources, infrastructure and the fact that some hospitals where students do their clinical placements are not adequately equipped. However, the government continues to support the Institution to overcome these challenges and KHI has approached donors and other partners with the call to support the acquisition of equipment, books and ICT facilities.

Kigali Health Institute, Avenue de l'Armée, P.O Box 3286, Kigali, Rwanda

Tel: +250 57 2172 / 57 1788

Fax: +250 57 1787

Email: info@khi.ac.rw, rector@khi.ac.rw

www.khi.ac.rw

Vision: To be a centre of excellence in training and development of health professionals.

Mission: To train and improve the capacity of health workers in the country.

► been highlighted and marketed through the three-year-old Rwanda Development Board (RDB), the government's business marketing and registration arm. Special priority has been given to agriculture, trade and manufacturing, tourism, ICT, infrastructure, mining and services. In 2010, the RDB said it had attracted 105 investment projects worth \$381 million from both local and foreign investors. Its 2011 target is for another \$550 million. One of the fastest growing investment sectors is tourism, which generated income of \$200 million last year, a 14 percent increase over 2009. This year's tourism earnings are estimated at \$216 million.

Rwanda's strong economic growth has been helped by the fact that the government has been diligently following its long-term development plans, such as those described in the Vision 2020 document. This has the ambitious aim of transforming Rwanda from a low-income, agriculture-based economy to a knowledge-based one, and seeks to raise the annual per capita income of the average Rwandan to \$1,000 – up from only \$200 in 2000 and the current level of \$541.

It is an article of faith for President Paul Kagame's government that achieving a service-oriented and knowledge-based economy by the year 2020 will require a steady rate of growth of 8 percent every year. This is to be achieved by reforming the way in which Rwanda does business, by investing in major infrastructure projects like power, transport and ICT, by increasing agricultural productivity and by fostering the skills needed for economic modernisation.

In the short and medium term, the Vision 2020 programme is boosted by the five-year Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy, which kicked off in 2007. Where previously Rwanda lacked concrete plans for the growth of its different economic sectors, these have now been developed on several fronts, Hategeka explained. The strategy of investing in agriculture has helped Rwanda to be food-secure, while schemes to attract high-end tourists and diversify tourism attractions have also brought benefits. After describing the different programmes that the government has been putting in place to attract investors' dollars, Hategeka said that it was clear that the approach had "paid off."

Rwanda was ranked as a major reformer in the World Bank's 'Doing Business 2010' report, which assesses regulatory environments for domestic businesses in individual countries – it jumped 76 places to 67th position out of 183 countries. Hategeka



President Kagame believes in infrastructure investment and in reforming the business climate

stressed that the secret to Rwanda's current success is "leadership and addressing the right problems with the right solutions".

As the country struggles to end poverty by means of new investment, it is also striving to end its dependence on foreign aid. Currently, the Rwandan government generates sufficient revenue to fund about 50 percent of its national budget, with the remainder provided by donor countries through budgetary support. The country's tax collection agency, the Rwanda Revenue Authority, has been doing well since it was created in 1998. It estimated annual

tax collections for the fiscal year 2009-2010 at RWF374 billion (\$631 million). By comparison, in 2000 the agency collected only around Rwf65 billion (\$109 million).

And as Rwandans work their way out of poverty, they will need the private sector to grow, Hategeka emphasised. Responding to the criticism that there is an increasingly observable gap between the rich people and the destitute in the country, he said this had to be expected: "If the economy is growing, the gap between the rich and the poor also grows."

But that doesn't mean the government in Kigali does not have plans for those Rwandans who are still living below the poverty line, especially in rural areas. The World Bank estimated that 56 percent of Rwandans could be classified as poor in 2010, with about 37 percent of them classified as extremely poor. It also reiterated the government's own ambition that, with the population growing at approximately 2.7 percent annually, Rwanda will need to achieve GDP growth of at least 8 percent per year if it is to achieve any significant reduction of poverty in the years ahead.

With the continued support of donors, the government of Rwanda has responded by initiating special programmes to donate cows to poor families, and by extending the services of small local savings and credit banks to local people. Small projects like this are intended to keep the poor not only alive but alert to the opportunities becoming available, as they wait to see if the country's multi-year visions for the future will bring a sustainable and positive change. ●

KEY DATA

- **Population:** 9,998,000
- **Main towns:** Kigali (pop 965,400), Ruhengeri (110,700), Gisenyi (106,300), Butare (103,300)
- **Land area:** 26,338 sq km
- **Arable land:** 49% of total
- **GNI:** \$4.6 billion
- **GNI per capita:** \$460
- **GDP growth:** 7.8% p.a. 2005-09
- **Inflation:** 11.7% p.a. 2005-09
- **Principal exports:** Coffee, tea, cassiterite, coltan
- **Role of agriculture:** 40% of GDP, 70% of exports, 90% of food requirements
- **Manufacturing:** 6% of GDP
- **Tourist arrivals:** 669,000
- **Telecommunications:** Main companies Rwandatel and MTN; 2,500 km of optic fibre

All data from 2009 unless otherwise stated

Eugene Kwibuka is a Rwandan freelance journalist



Rwanda Tea Authority



Nature has endowed Rwanda with the best ecological conditions, making Rwanda Tea unique and consistent in quality.

Rwanda is home to the best black tea in the world. Tea from Gisovu, a tea estate, is sought after by international tea blenders and buyers due to its unequalled flavour and strength.

Tea growing was introduced in Rwanda in the 1950s by the colonial government. Today, the tea sector consists of 11 tea factories with an annual production of over 25,000 tons of processed tea. The area under tea cultivation is approximately 15,000 hectares with a programme of extending this with 7,000 hectares by 2012.

Tea production has grown fivefold from 5,414 tons of made tea in 1995 to 23,249 tons in 2010. With a sales turn-over of US\$58 million in 2010, the tea sector contributes close to 25% of the country's foreign exchange.

Government is carrying out economic reforms, privatising the state-owned tea estates to attract foreign investment and expertise in the country's tea sector. Rwanda Tea Authority is currently managing only two of the eleven factories in the country. The other nine estates are in the hands of national and international private investors.

A number of factors explain the uniqueness of Rwanda tea:

- High altitudes
- Moderate and constant temperatures
- Good acidic and volcanic soil
- Favourable rainfall patterns, with two rainy seasons
- Close monitoring and technical expertise



Trade and investment opportunities in the Rwanda tea sector:

- Privatisation of the remaining two factories of Mulindi and Shagasha
- Construction of new factories in the extended tea plantations
- Value adding facilities e.g. blending and packaging
- Tea machinery and research activities
- Packaging materials

Contact details

Mr Anthony Butera, Managing Director, Rwanda Tea Authority, P.O. Box 1344, Kigali, Rwanda

Tel: +250 51 4797 E-mail: info@rwandatea.com www.rwandatea.com

Rwanda's women show the way

With a gender imbalance in favour of women resulting from the 1994 genocide, Rwanda's government has introduced innovative policies and laws to ensure that females can participate equally in society. After advancement in the political sphere, renewed efforts are needed to ensure that women no longer bear the brunt of the effects of poverty

Eugene Kwibuka

As Rwanda battles to reduce the poverty of its people, it is widely hoped that the increasing gender-awareness in the country can give it a special advantage. Members of parliament, of whom the majority are female, have been enacting laws to protect women's rights and enforce the principle of equal opportunity in employment. These build on earlier statutes allowing women to inherit property and giving them equal rights in land tenure.

The adoption of such laws has been directly influenced by the effects of the 1994 genocide, which left many widows and daughters alone with homes and families to manage, creating a gender imbalance. Even now Rwanda still has a slight majority-female population – the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimates that 53 percent of Rwandans are female. And, with many of them either widows or unmarried, they remain poorer on average than males.

According to female MP Faith Mukakalisa, the most important priority at present is to educate women and to allow their daughters to go to school. "The children will help their parents get out of poverty," she said. Thanks to the government's nine-year basic education policy, which was announced in 2003, children can now study for free in state-run schools from Primary One up to Secondary Three. This has helped to achieve gender equality in both primary and secondary education.

It is seven years since the country's current constitution, enacted in a 2003 referendum, mandated a 30 percent representation of women at all levels of government. Today, Rwanda's bicameral parliament holds the world record for female political representation with over 50 percent of its members being women. They now occupy 43 out of the 80 seats in the lower house (the Chamber of Deputies) as well as nine out of the 26 seats in the upper house (the Senate). The constitution has not only led to more women MPs, increasingly women are taking up positions as ministers, high-ranking police officers and local leaders – a huge advance for a country where they previously tended to remain at home as wives and mothers.



Rwanda Tourism University College founder, Zulfat Mukarubega (left), after receiving a trophy for her work

"The impact has been good and we are proud, we feel happy and we call it an achievement," said Mukakalisa. The 49-year-old single mother has occupied her parliamentary seat since 2003 and represents the country's Eastern Province. Her own experience shows that a lot has changed. Recalling the situation in the 1990s, she said, "You couldn't easily find women to even

campaign for leadership roles."

Every day, women MPs are now being urged by ordinary citizens to hold the government accountable and to enact laws to improve Rwandan society. They lead parliamentary commissions on issues ranging from the economy and social affairs to human rights. They are also very active in campaigns against gender-based violence, as well

VIEWPOINT

Aisha Umukobwa, journalist based in Kigali

A long time ago, Rwandan women used to be neglected. They just stayed in the compound, with no right to go to school. Nowadays, women are promoted in every sector of development. Gender equality is very important, not only for women, but also for Rwandan society.

In each and every council, 30 percent of women must be elected or nominated. In schools, girls are now more facilitated than boys. Marks from the national examinations do not have the same value – boys have told me that a girl who has low marks can take the place of a boy who has more than she has, in order to balance the number of girls and boys in school.

The policy is good, but my criticism is that women may think they have to be promoted without fighting for it, and some people think that the woman will win just because she is a woman, not because she deserves it.





Security With Professionalism

TOPSEC INTERNATIONAL SARL prides itself on taking security services to a new level of professionalism and has been in the security business for the last 4 years with countrywide operations in Rwanda.

We endeavour to be the most effective and efficient security company in the region and to always provide the professional security services our clients deserve and demand. Our main objective is to become a well-known and respected security provider in Rwanda.

SPECIAL AND UNIQUE STRENGTH

The quality of our security services is unquestionably amongst the best in the region, achieved through:

- Quick response intervention of seven minutes maximum in case of an intrusion
- Recruitment and training criteria of our staff
- Professionalism in our staff service delivery
- Brilliant and experienced human resources
- A mix of young, talented minds and experienced professionals

Our clients include the finest commercial firms as well as NGOs:

- Banks
- Oil distributors
- Civic organisations
- Transportation
- Academic institutions
- Hotels
- Sport and gaming centres
- Church organisations
- Telecommunication
- Public institutions
- Mines
- Hospital and Health organisations

Products and services

- Guard services
- CCTV systems
- Access control system
- Automatic gates
- Electric fencing
- Metal detectors
- Fire detection and control
- Fleet management systems

CONTACT

TOPSEC INTERNATIONAL SARL
Kimihrura
Road No.4
P.O. Box 7484
Kigali – Rwanda

Cell: +250 788 304 489
Tel/Fax: +250 58 0480
Email: topsec@tsirwanda.com

www.topsecinternational.com



Underpinning discipline among the Guard Force is an organisational strength

► as programmes to support female education. Among the most notable gender-related statutes enacted with women's input have been the 1999 Inheritance Law, which allows females to inherit their parents and husbands' property, including land, and the 2005 Land Law, which ensures that both women and men have equal rights in land tenure.

Women parliamentarians have also helped to push through a bill that outlaws violence against women. The 2008 Gender Based Violence Law sanctions a number of common practices that grossly violate women's rights, including conjugal rape, concubinage, polygamy, neglect of girl children, sexual harassment and the prevention of female spouses from working. The 2009 Labour Law, which stresses the principle of non-sexual-based segregation in employment and women's safety at work, provides protection for women in the workplace.

Female legislator Stephanie Mukantagara, who has spent two years in the Senate, said she appreciates the fact that she can talk freely in parliament and approves of women MPs shouldering leadership tasks, such as heading parliamentary commissions. She recalled that women were traditionally respected in Rwanda, stating that historically, hereditary kings had led the country with the support of their mothers. Mukantagara attributes the high level of gender promotion in the country to President Paul Kagame's leadership. "There is a political will to promote women," she explained.

Some of Kagame's critics charge him with intolerance towards his political opponents but many still express support for his pro-women policies. Erin Baines, an assistant professor at the Liu Institute for Global Issues at Canada's University of British Columbia, whose research focuses on Rwandan justice and reconciliation issues, gender, youth and

armed conflict, said: "By including women in decision-making, the Rwandan government shrewdly draws upon the nation's most important resource to help rebuild the country: women. It is a bold and smart move."

"By including women, Rwanda has already seen some of the most progressive policy developments in terms of gender equality. However, it is necessary to also democratise its political system, so that all women and men can have a voice"

But Baines has also urged the government to start looking at women's inclusion as a model for the integration of other political views into the government system. "By including women, Rwanda has already seen some of the most progressive policy developments in terms of gender equality. However, it is necessary to also democratise its political system, so that all women and men can have a voice in the future of Rwanda," she said.

The women now sitting in parliament and other decision-making institutions will increasingly be expected to provide solutions to Rwanda's problems, such as the widespread poverty which is greatest among women, especially those who live in rural areas. The UNDP estimates that 62 percent of female-headed households in Rwanda

lie below the poverty line compared to 54 percent of those with a male head. At 66 percent, the incidence of poverty is much higher in rural areas than in urban areas, where it stands at 12 percent in Kigali and 19 percent in other towns.

Both Mukakalisa and Mukantagara are proud of their commitment to helping their fellow women and countrymen. They, and many others like them in Rwanda, have become role models who inspire confidence in the ability of women to help their communities. "We are not very rich. This is Africa, but we have measures to reverse the current situation and vulnerable women are a priority," Mukakalisa said, pledging her support to continue fighting for gender equality. She added that it will only be a matter of time before Rwandans can escape poverty as more and more women go to school, engage in job creation and take part in the governance of the country. •

VIEWPOINT

Dr Christopher Kayumba, lecturer at the National University of Rwanda

With women making up 56 percent of parliament and 34 percent of the cabinet, it's no longer a question of whether women can be political leaders, it's now a question of how many are there and what are they doing.



I think the numbers of women and their visibility might have the effect of providing role models for young girls, while boys will grow up used to the idea of gender equality. We also have to remember that, with regard to policies and laws, many positive ones have been enacted, such as the family law (where women and girls can inherit and own property in their own names) and the law against violence against women. In other African countries, such laws rarely get passed. Rwanda is almost the only African country where women have inheritance rights, for example.

Despite the numbers, I have to say that a look at political parties and the military shows that they are still male-dominated. Since these are critical centres of power, we have to view such numbers in context.

VIEWPOINT

Bonaventure Nsabimana, news reporter in Kigali

Some years ago, you would often see only men wanting to participate in the improvement of economic life, in revenue generating activities, in politics, etc. But now things are changing more and more. Rwanda is seeing a lot of participation by women in these kinds of activities.

Women are now playing a big role in promoting development within their families and a big role in the implementation of some government policies – like gathering people in cooperatives, joining local banking initiatives, and social policies like health insurance, family planning – even more than men.

Economically, they may lack confidence in doing things like opening bank accounts, but the small initiatives are the ones that make the real changes in people's lives in a developing country like Rwanda.



All eyes on the knowledge economy

Teachers are under pressure to learn English, the new language of instruction, and take a whole new generation of pupils through to the end of secondary school, as the government moves forward with its ambitious education policy

Eugene Kwibuka

Having made rapid progress in expanding the reach of primary schooling across Rwanda, the authorities in Kigali are now turning their attention to secondary education, with the aim of using it to create a skills base for Rwanda's future development. They hope that a combination of technical know-how, communication technologies and the use of English as a medium of instruction will drive Rwanda's transformation into a knowledge-based economy. "We're far-sighted, we see where the world is going," said Minister of Education Dr Charles Murigande. "Over the past ten years we have been expanding access to basic education. Now that we have achieved that, we want to push up."

The aim is to provide, from next year, a 12-year basic education system in place of the existing nine-year programme (six years of primary education plus three years of lower secondary). This is intended to give children in secondary schools a better chance of continuing into the three-year upper secondary level, and so completing their high school studies. In 2009, while primary school enrolment had reached 95 percent, the figure for upper secondary was still very low, at just 13 percent.

Callixte Kayisire, an advisor at the education ministry, said the government has to ensure the children it has helped to start at secondary schools don't drop out. The recently published Education Sector Strategic Plan 2010-15 states that the priorities for the new 'post-basic education' will be the provision of a learning environment that encourages building analytical skills through a learner-centred system, enrolling more students in technical and vocational education and training (TVET), ensuring the use of information and communications technology (ICT) and using English to teach students. The bottom line is the need to provide students with skills that will meet the country's demand for labour as its economy burgeons and it competes with other countries in the regional East African Community.

Allocating resources for basic and post-basic education has, however, already resulted in reduced funding for govern-



Use of ICT is a priority of the education sector's strategic plan for 2010-15

ment-sponsored university students and for public institutions of higher education. Another challenge has been the introduction of English as the first language, replacing Kinyarwanda and French. English language proficiency amongst teachers is still at a low level across the country. A ministry survey in 2009 found that 85 percent of primary teachers and 66 percent of secondary teachers had only "beginner, elementary or pre-intermediate levels of English". To change the situation, the government has now embarked on teaching English to all teachers who wish to continue their career. "If you want to invest in acquiring a foreign language, you need to invest in English," Dr Murigande said.

The Permanent Secretary at the education ministry, Sharon Haba, also underlined the view that it is time to switch to English for "all economic purposes, for all communication purposes". She is currently overseeing an ambitious plan to buy essential books, develop new curricula, hire new English teachers and trainers and assess programmes regularly.

In a country where more than 50 percent of the population are poor, education remains the key to the achievement of better standards of living. And, the government has continued to assess its education strategy within the framework of its ambition to establish a knowledge-based economy by the year 2020.

It was back in 2003 that the government first introduced the innovative nine-year ba-

sic education policy. This abolished school fees at the primary school level – which normally takes six years to complete – and introduced a system whereby pupils graduating from primary school can study free of charge for the first three years of secondary school. In addition, lower-secondary classes – previously only available at boarding schools – are now taught at primary schools, which means that children no longer have to leave their homes to advance their education, and parents are spared fees and expenses amounting to more than \$300.

Under the nine-year programme, the government pays around \$6 per child per year, money that goes directly to the schools where the students study. Parents whose children continue their education after the primary level are encouraged to pay small cash bonuses to motivate those teachers who are responsible for providing pupils with a secondary education.

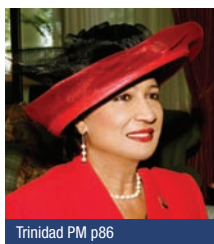
Samuel Rugambage, who heads the Rwanda office of the charity Compassion International, described the programme as an essential pro-poor education policy. "Few children would go to school before the policy was introduced," he said. "Today the children who graduate under the programme, after nine years in school, are old enough to think about creating jobs, helping their communities, or continuing in school."

The introduction of the nine-year schooling policy meant that, in the years that followed, there was severe space pressure on the classrooms in the existing primary schools, and this forced the government to scale up its school construction efforts and to introduce double-shift classes. One of the major results of the programme so far has been a sharp reduction in the number of children dropping out of school. Net enrolment in primary schools jumped from 72 percent in 2000 to 95 percent in 2009, while the primary education completion rate increased from 22 to 71 percent in the same period.

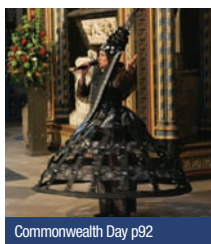
This means that Rwanda is one of the few African countries to have already accomplished the target for primary enrolment and completion under the UN Millennium Development Goal for universal primary education. ●

Commonwealth Network

Contents



Trinidad PM p86



Commonwealth Day p92



Diaspora for peace p96

Commonwealth Inbox

- 84 Major reforms on the agenda
- 85 Kamlesh Sharma on improving youth opportunities

Women as Agents of Change

- 86 Trinidad Prime Minister, Kamla Persad-Bissessar, talks about the important role women play in society
- 88 New research identifies the countries where girls do best and worst

Colloquia

- 92 Commonwealth Day celebrates the potential of women everywhere
- 93 Sonia Gandhi's Commonwealth Lecture surveys the advances and challenges on the road to greater gender equality

Close-up

- 94 The work of the Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association

Commonwealth in Action

- 95 The Commonwealth People's Forum to get more of a hearing
- 96 Young British Sri Lankans return to their homeland to promote peace and development

Postscript

- 98 Photographs trace the lives of orphans from Bangladesh
- 100 Questions & Answers: Noma Radebe



Initiatives for Christchurch repairs

Fundraising efforts for the repair of earthquake damage in Christchurch, New Zealand, have been launched around the world following the disaster of 22 February, in which some 170 people lost their lives. High-profile events have been held in London, including a memorial service for victims at Westminster Abbey, and a 'Stand Up for Christchurch' evening at the Lyric Theatre with performances by British comedians and New Zealand personalities. Fundraisers have also been planned in Australia, Canada, Ireland and the USA.

Initial forecasts put the cost of reconstruction in Christchurch at \$30 billion. Private sector infrastructure firms suggested that funds earmarked for Auckland and Wellington might be diverted to Christchurch and that companies should relocate staff and resources to the city. Canterbury Employers' Chamber of Commerce CEO Peter Townsend said that Christchurch would be the "home of construction" in New Zealand for the next decade.

Local groups have urged the Christchurch City Council to consider proposals for rent-freezes and assisted temporary accommodation while basic services, like water and sewerage, are being restored.

Local groups have urged the Christchurch City Council to consider proposals for rent-freezes and assisted temporary accommodation while basic services, like water and sewerage, are being restored.



Pakistan's assassination wave condemned

"The battle between extremism and moderation in Pakistan affects the success of the civilised world's confrontation with the terrorist menace," wrote Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari in a letter to the *Washington Post* on 6 March, in the wake of the assassinations of the Minister for Minority Affairs, Shahbaz Bhatti, and the former Punjab Governor, Salman Taseer. The president said the religious fanaticism behind the assassinations was "a tinderbox poised to explode across Pakistan".

The Centre for Human Rights Education (CHRE) in Lahore and other organisations have urged the government to in-

stitute a judicial enquiry into the murder of Bhatti on 2 March. The CHRE said the failure to apprehend his killers could encourage terrorists to commit more such acts in future.

In the case of Taseer, who was murdered on 4 January, a police commando has been charged but initial hearings in the case were adjourned while witnesses continued to come forward with statements. The accused has confessed to the killings, saying he objected to Taseer's calls to reform the blasphemy law, and crowds have rallied around the prison where the hearings have taken place, chanting slogans in support of him.

Commonwealth reforms urged

To maintain the relevance of the Commonwealth, the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) has urged the association to champion democratic values and human rights, and to work to narrow the development gap between member countries.

The key recommendations formulated by the EPG during its four meetings over the past year are for:

- A 'Charter of the Commonwealth' to be developed by and for citizens;
- More measures to help the Secretary-General (SG) and the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) to act where values are violated;
- Creating a Commonwealth Commissioner on Democracy and the Rule of Law, to advise the SG and CMAG on such violations;
- Strengthening the culture of democracy in the Commonwealth;
- Initiatives on HIV/AIDS;
- Campaigning on priority global issues;
- High-level advocacy in other global organisations;
- Focusing the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat;
- Giving the Commonwealth Foundation an explicit mandate to mobilise civil society around global issues.

When responses to its proposals have been gathered in, the EPG will complete its report for delivery to the Commonwealth Heads of Government at their next meeting in Perth, Australia, in October this year.

"We want the Commonwealth to be a champion of democratic values and fundamental human rights. We also want the Commonwealth to work towards narrowing the development gap between member countries, through bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation. The whole range of Commonwealth organisations must work more effectively together," said the group's chairperson, Tun Abdullah Ahmed Badawi, former Prime Minister of Malaysia.

To cultivate cultural ties and a greater sense of Commonwealth identity, Badawi said the EPG would like to see increased interaction among Commonwealth scholars, professionals, artists, writers, media practitioners and sportsmen and women.

African scholarships at Oxford

The University of Oxford has announced eight new scholarships for African students undertaking postgraduate studies there. Five scholarships a year will be open to graduates from African Commonwealth countries and three a year will be available for applicants from Angola, Ghana and Nigeria at St Antony's College.

Students already accepted for their courses on academic merit can apply for the scholarships. The Commonwealth scheme covers those studying for a part-time Master's in International Human Rights Law. The St Antony's scheme covers all full-time Master's programmes. The funding comes from the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission, the UK Foreign Office's Chevening Scholarship Fund and the Italian oil company Eni's Scholarship Programme.

There are currently 225 postgraduate students from African countries at Oxford. Other scholarship schemes available to Africans include the Oppenheimer Fund (for South Africans) and the Kufuor scholarship (for Ghanaians).



Queensland aims for rapid rebuild

After the Australian state of Queensland sustained enormous flood damage from Cyclone Yasi in January, the task of coordinating the rebuilding process has been put in the hands of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) and its CEO, Graeme Newton.

With the cost of rebuilding estimated at \$5.8 billion, Newton has said he will work with QRA chairman Major-General Mick Slater to make sure approvals for reconstruction projects are processed as quickly as possible.

Australia's Foreign Affairs Minister Kevin Rudd, himself from Queensland, has said that the state is recovering quickly and is "well and truly open for business".

FROM THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY-GENERAL



We are a young Commonwealth. Of our two billion people, a quarter of us are under five and half of us are under 25.

Very few of our youngest people can know the Commonwealth ties which their parents might have known: for the Commonwealth to be meaningful for them, it must offer interest and opportunity, and the chance to benefit from and with like minds.

One of the most awkward juxtapositions in the Commonwealth is between young people as the embodiment of hope and the future, and young people as the disenchanted and the marginalised. It is the struggle between the flower and the blight of youth, in which we will always see young people as a treasure and a resource, and as a huge responsibility.



Kamallesh Sharma

Young people make up a quarter of the global working-age population, but account for nearly half of the unemployed: almost every other jobless person in the world is between the ages of 15 and 24. One in three youths in the world is either seeking but unable to find work, has given up the job search entirely, or is working but still living on less than \$2 a day. Add the challenges of crime, poor education, sexual disease, estrangement, lack of political voice – as well as those we cannot quantify, such as embitterment or depression – and the challenges mount as inexorably as the population mounts. By 2015, there will be 3 billion 15-24 year olds in the world, of whom eight out of ten will be in developing countries.

How are we to rise to the challenge to help realise young people's hopes and dreams? How, especially, are we to give them both the wherewithal and the opportunity for fulfilling employment?

It is a task which has occupied the Commonwealth officially since its Youth Programme was first established over 35 years ago. It goes far beyond its work in giving young people a voice, in seeing their concerns advanced through ministries of youth and their own National Youth Councils, and in training youth leaders to empower their own. This is because the Commonwealth has always known that the democratic dividend for young people only makes sense when it is combined with the development dividend.

Two important initiatives are underway to provide business opportunities for young people, whom we always see as job creators, not mere job seekers.

The first is a model of youth enterprise which builds on a previous pilot, the Youth Credit Initiative, launched in 1995 in Guyana, India, Solomon Islands and Zambia. In the last two years alone, it has trained over 20,000 young people across the Commonwealth, and started up nearly 2,500 businesses. It has proved that young people are bankable. Ten further countries (Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Sierra Leone, Lesotho, Sri Lanka, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and St. Lucia) have since replicated the model.

The task now is to build a more comprehensive skills-building programme: from identifying to educating, to training and mentoring young entrepreneurs. And funding needs to be unlocked from beyond governments, involving international finance institutions, regional organisations, trade and industry bodies, banks and businesses. The last two – banks and businesses – are already leading the way in examples of 'character lending' in Kenya and India that will hopefully spread to the wider Commonwealth. Here, the Commonwealth is playing broker between the public and private sectors, and so, too, can it broker and share best practice.

The second big contribution the Commonwealth can make is through the Internet. Its young peoples' networks are already impressive – through its Commonwealth Youth Caucus representatives across each of the Commonwealth member countries, to its Nkabom youth leadership programmes run by the Royal Commonwealth Society, to the YoComm website set up by Commonwealth youth and youth organisations themselves.

Now 'Commonwealth Connects' – a huge Commonwealth web portal due to be launched by October – can go considerably further, in being a resource of information, connection and above all transaction. It can truly be a gateway to the world and its immense opportunities for all young people.

“In Trinidad, girls and women consistently outperform men in almost every sphere of life”

INTERVIEW

Kamla Persad-Bissessar

Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago

The Commonwealth's first female Chairperson-in-Office – who also happens to be Trinidad and Tobago's first female Prime Minister – gives her special insights into this year's Commonwealth theme: 'Women as Agents of Change'. She extols the “mature, modern society” of her home country, that allows women to excel

Global: Do you think that women effect change in a different way to men? And do the types of changes they bring about differ too?

Kamla Persad-Bissessar: I do believe that women effect change differently to men. Through our very femininity, we tend to look at a broader range of issues, not only those relating to equality and women's rights, but issues primarily affecting our quality of life. Empirical evidence has shown a direct correlation between an increased presence of women in political office and an increase in legislation relating to improvements in social and developmental issues, as well as an overall greater responsiveness to citizen needs. Women policy-makers have also been shown to display greater sensitivity to the needs of marginalised or underrepresented communities. It is undeniable that having a balance of men and women participate in decision-making at a legislative level will certainly bring a greater equilibrium to the priorities raised.

Why do we still need to promote the idea that women can and should be actively engaged in society, whether at a local, national or international level? Will there ever come a time when this idea is simply taken for granted?

We must continue to work towards the establishment of equal opportunities and acceptance for women at all levels of society, particularly in a leadership or representational capacity, simply because in a democracy, each and every citizen must be able to be actively engaged in society.

The journey towards equal and equitable participation by men and women is ongoing, and it will take time. Nevertheless, much progress has already been made over the course of the past decade in increasing women's presence in politics and lawmaking. Within the Commonwealth alone, up to 24 member states have shown a significant increase in female parliamentary representation, many falling within the 20 to 30 percent target range. The international community as a whole is making a united effort to continue to maintain and further the integration and engagement of women in all aspects of society, most notably through the UN Millennium Development Goal that focuses on gender equality, and the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015. If we continue along the path that has already been forged, eventually we will get to the point where quotas will be filled naturally and any sense of tokenism – which may continue to linger – will fade away, so that a strong female presence in political and business spheres will not only be accepted, but it will be expected.

What in your opinion are the most effective ways to achieve greater equality between women and men? What can the Commonwealth do to ensure that women and girls are treated equally within its member states?

Gender mainstreaming is key to the attainment or improvement of gender equality. By definition, this means assessing the repercussions for both men and women when developing legislation, policies or pro-

grammes, so that the issues and concerns specific to each gender will be addressed equitably, ultimately leading to gender equality. My own administration, in Trinidad and Tobago, took its first historic step towards 'gender budgeting' in our annual fiscal policy by incorporating a gender perspective into last year's budget. In this way, I hope to respond to the needs of both men and women, so that our budget might facilitate the achievement of gender equality.

We cannot forget that preconceived gender-based stereotyping also stems from the socialisation process, which begins in the home, and so gender sensitivity training in our education systems is also crucial, so that children and young people are taught from an early age about human rights and gender equality.

For their part, the various organs of the Commonwealth are invaluable in acting both as a watchdog and as a source of guidance for member states. The Plan of Action for Gender Equality has done a great deal already to sustain and promote gender mainstreaming in member states, with success. The pioneering Gender Responsiveness Budget programme has been implemented in some states, promoting the equitable distribution of funds to both men and women. Similarly, the 30 percent target quota for women in political and decision-making positions set by the Commonwealth has had a very positive response from member states. The Commonwealth Secretariat's model legislation on gender-based violence has also been embraced by some 11 Caribbean countries, which have

drawn on this model to put laws in place to address this issue.

Of course, CMAG [the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group] must also play a fundamental part in ensuring that all members uphold the values of democracy, which call for gender equity and equality. They must hold firm in this endeavour in order to ensure that no violation of these human rights should take place within the Commonwealth.

What might be the main benefits of promoting the education of girls in developing countries?

Education is the foundation that will allow girls in developing countries to see their value, and to learn that anything is within their grasp. We cannot expect girls and women to reach their full potential without providing them with the same educational opportunities as boys. As a former minister of education, university lecturer and teacher, I myself can attest to the inestimable value of education in breaking down the societal and psychological barriers that may hold girls and young women back. It is therefore crucial that girls be given the same priority as boys in accessing a formal education at all levels.

The school curriculum must also be adapted so that girls are given access to all subjects, and so that gender stereotypes are not perpetuated. Education is the mechanism which can best remove any pre-existing prejudices in both boys and girls, which they may have in their home environment, and it is therefore the most effective way to instil modern, more inclusive values into the up and coming generations and society as a whole.

Throughout your career you've achieved many firsts – Trinidad's first female Attorney General, the first female leader of the United National Congress party and now the first female Prime Minister. As a woman, how difficult was it for you break into Trinidadian politics and rise to the top and what obstacles did you encounter specifically as a result of your gender?

I was very fortunate in that I lived in the most developed, and one of the most modern, forward-thinking countries in the Caribbean. Trinidad and Tobago is a strong, rapidly maturing nation, which has showed a great acceptance and enthusiasm for the engagement of women in society, and this played a great part in facilitating my career. In a much more tangible way, a lack of funding and party support to promote women's campaigns, as well as a distinct lack of recognition for women's success stories



Achieving many firsts: Kamla Persad-Bissessar

and contributions to society, all add to the societal pressures which discourage women from pursuing political careers. However, I hope that the fact that women comprise 27 percent of the tenth parliament of Trinidad and Tobago will act as a clear indicator to all of our young women and girls that these are all difficulties and challenges which can be faced head on, and overcome.

You've been quoted as saying that Trinidad "must face the widening gap between the liberated, modern, independent women and our traditional men". How do the attitudes and actions of these 'traditional men' impact upon society, and what do you think can be done to bridge the gap you have identified?

There is a small proportion of men in Trinidad and Tobago who may still hold outdated, traditional mindsets with relation to women's role in society. This, of course, impacts upon women of this generation and the next, in that they too may feel restricted or limited to what their options may be for a career, or for their designated gender-specific role, particularly in rural areas.

However, the 'gap' between our liberated women and traditional men was in fact referenced to indicate the opposite.

Trinidad and Tobago finds itself filled with girls and women consistently outperforming men in almost every sphere of life, from primary school straight through to the highest professional echelons, regardless of ethnic or cultural background.

I am extremely proud to say that throughout the nation, a rapidly increasing and consistent percentage of women have found financial independence and professional success. I believe that this is a strong indicator of the mature, modern society of Trinidad and Tobago. Nevertheless, the point is not for women to be better than men, but equal, and so my administration must look now to rectify this imbalance, whereby our young boys and men are underachieving and falling behind the girls and women. Indeed, we must remember that the issue at hand, when we look at gender equality, is not to raise women above and beyond men, but for every citizen to enjoy the same opportunities in an egalitarian, democratic society.

It doesn't pay to be born a girl

A new report has found that even in the Commonwealth country with the greatest overall gender parity, New Zealand, women still earn only 72 percent of the male average and are outnumbered two-to-one in parliament, writes **Joanna Bennett**

'Women as agents of change', the Commonwealth's theme for 2011, is at once emotive, inspiring and deeply challenging. It is the perfect choice, but not because of what the Commonwealth has – or has not – already achieved in this area. No, this theme is hugely important because it represents a real opportunity for the Commonwealth to prove its worth. If the Commonwealth can demonstrate the value it can add to the gender equality debate and the tangible difference it can make to the lives of women around the world, then it will taste real success.

For our part, we at the Royal Commonwealth Society have been working with the development NGO, Plan, to stimulate debate by asking a very straightforward question: where is it best to be born a girl in the Commonwealth today? The answer, published in our research paper, 'Because You're a Girl: Growing Up in the Commonwealth', is New Zealand, closely followed by Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago. And the worst? Well, Tonga, Nigeria and Sierra Leone all score poorly on our ranking.

Offering a unique country-by-country snapshot of the barriers and opportunities faced by girls at each stage of their lives, our data reveals the extent of the challenges which remain in this area across the Commonwealth, as well as some remarkable pockets of progress.

Perhaps most importantly, the research reveals that poverty is not always the determining factor in levels of gender equality. In our rankings we include gross national incomes per capita (adjusted for purchasing power parity), enabling us to show how well a country is doing on our 'gender gap' rating compared to how relatively well off it is in economic terms. And we've found some startling results.

Mozambique, Rwanda and Malawi, for example, all score very highly against our criteria, despite their relative poverty. Indeed, these three countries are positioned on our Report Card more than 30 places higher than their ranking in terms of income. Of the six poorest countries in the Commonwealth in terms of income per capita, only Sierra Leone, still recovering from years of civil war, remains at the bottom. And, as we've seen, Barbados and



Girls from the South Pacific face considerably more obstacles than others elsewhere

Trinidad, rated 10th and 8th respectively on income per capita, do very well on our report card, placing ahead of much more affluent countries. Indeed, the Commonwealth's richest member, Brunei Darussalam, only comes in 24th on our chart.

Digging deeper, a number of our indicators suggest that political will and innovative legislation can have a far greater impact on gender inequality than levels of wealth. Rwanda and South Africa top our female political participation table and, in fact, are first and third respectively in the world in this regard. Rwanda's constitution stipulates that women must hold at least 30 percent of the seats in Parliament and, today, more than 50 percent of MPs are women. This represents a far higher proportion of female politicians than in the UK, where decades of campaigning has failed to deliver comparable results. Similarly, Uganda ranks higher in this table than both Canada and Australia.

Moving from political to sporting participation, by examining the ratio of female to male athletes entering and winning medals at the Delhi Commonwealth Games, we find that while – predictably – Canada and Australia measure well against this indicator, so too does Nigeria, whereas both Pakistan and India perform poorly. Financial investment in sporting resources for women

and girls surely plays a part here, but social norms and gender stereotypes must also be taken into consideration. Until more work is done to unravel and understand this complex interplay of factors, sport is one powerful tool for female empowerment which looks set to remain underutilised.

Of all our indicators, however, it is when we turn to gender pay gaps that the evidence of inequality is at its most stark. Even in the best performing countries (which also happen to be some of the Commonwealth's poorest, including Kenya, Mozambique, Malawi and Rwanda), women only earn around four-fifths of male income on average. Wealthy countries such as Australia have a relatively small pay gap, but the inequality is still marked. In Singapore and Brunei Darussalam, two of the countries where men earn the most in the Commonwealth, women's wages are around half of their male counterparts.

Indeed, it is perhaps most worrying that, even amongst the top ranked countries, our research reveals a persistent and marked gender disparity. Take, for example, New Zealand – our star performer. There are twice as many men in New Zealand's Parliament as there are women and, despite getting an 'A' in our gender pay gap Report Card, women in New Zealand still earn only 72 percent of the male average. Hardly the ideal.

Notwithstanding a small number of counterintuitive results, when it comes to the lot of those born female in the Commonwealth, our research suggests that much remains to be done. With this in mind, we plan to launch an advocacy campaign which will culminate at the Commonwealth Summit in Perth at the end of the year. There, we will seek a new commitment from leaders to improve the lives of women and girls around the globe. If the Commonwealth can't make a difference on an issue which goes to the very core of its founding values and principles, the question will have to be asked, what can it do?

Joanna Bennett is Communications Manager of the Royal Commonwealth Society.

'Because You're a Girl: Growing Up in the Commonwealth' can be downloaded from: www.thercs.org/society/research

Upwardly mobile female farmers

The earning potential of women farmers in India, and elsewhere, is being dramatically boosted through the use of mobile phones thanks to an innovative education programme from the Commonwealth of Learning

Learning is a powerful driver of change. Just ask Ms S. Valarmathi, one of thousands of female farmers in rural India who are dramatically improving their livelihoods by embracing learning opportunities.

A young married woman residing in the village of Silamalai in the Tamil Nadu region of India, Ms Valarmathi was struggling to earn a living four years ago. Her husband's income as a carpenter couldn't sustain their family and her wages as a metal worker (only \$1 a day) were not enough to live on. Having only completed Grade 4 in school, Ms Valarmathi recognised the importance of education as the path to improving her earning power. In 2008, she joined a local self-help group, 20 local women farmers who were taking part in Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3 Farmers), an initiative of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL). Today, Ms Valarmathi is a leader in her community who earns a solid income.

L3 Farmers helps rural communities find appropriate technology-based open and distance education to improve their livelihoods. The programme brings together four partners: farmers, information and communications technology (ICT) providers, educational institutions and banks.

Farmers are encouraged to form an association, or self-help group, and create their own vision of development for their village. This could be acquiring better livestock, growing new crops or improving the way they market their produce. Those ideas often generate simple questions – How do I identify a good goat? How do I process excess milk produce? How can I get my produce to market in good condition? Next, those with information answer these questions. In Tamil Nadu, a consortium was created that included universities that specialise in agriculture, veterinary sciences, open learning, engineering, technology and social science. ICT kiosks and mobile phone companies link the farmers to this consortium by providing computer access, videoconferencing facilities and learning content delivered through mobile phones. Commercial banks provide credit to the farmers.

Introduced in Tamil Nadu by the COL in

2004, L3 Farmers is now being replicated in Jamaica, Kenya, Mauritius and Sri Lanka.

The self-help group that Ms Valarmathi joined began to learn about goat-rearing and business planning through the L3 Farmers programme. Her group, along with 15 others, successfully applied to Indian Overseas Bank for a loan and each individual member received about \$770. Ms Valarmathi used her loan to buy nine female goats, one buck and a mobile phone. The telecom company, Iffco Kisan Sanchar Ltd, an L3 Farmers partner, provided her and the rest of the group with free SIM cards, opening up a world of learning via audio



Ms Valarmathi used her loan to buy goats and a mobile phone, which helped to change her life

lessons through their mobile phones. Each day they receive up to five voice-mail messages providing information about various aspects of goat-rearing, as well as banking and financial literacy.

Ms Valarmathi and her flourishing goat-rearing enterprise caught the attention of Indian Overseas Bank. Because of her in-depth knowledge of credit and banking practices – which she gained through the L3 Farmers programme – she was hired as a business correspondent in her village. The prohibitive cost of establishing branches in every village and town in India means that the bank engages local people, like Ms

Valarmathi, to conduct transactions. The bank provided training, and she now uses ICT equipment to make deposits and other transactions on behalf of villagers. Her banking job and goat-rearing business have increased her income dramatically. She now earns up to \$300 a month.

The success of L3 Farmers in Tamil Nadu has revealed a tremendous appetite for learning, particularly among women farmers. This became evident in November 2010 when 6,000 people attended a meeting in Bodinaikanur (Bodi) that brought together farmers, bankers and business people, as well as representatives from universities and government.

At that meeting, the farmers presented the bankers with a petition signed by 25,000 people, offering suggestions about how to enhance the role of the banking sector in capacity building in rural communities. It included a proposal that banks take learning into consideration when making decisions about granting credit. Ms Valarmathi, facing the thousands of people who had crowded into the marriage hall in Bodi, explained that participating in L3 Farmers had created opportunities for her and she expressed the wish that poor people all over the country would have such opportunities. “For someone who earns \$10 a month,” she said. “I am a hope.” She argued that banks stand to gain by investing in the capacity building of the rural poor. And, pointing out that the petition doesn't call for money, subsidies or grants, Ms Valarmathi told those gathered, “We are asking that banks treat rural farmers as clients, not beneficiaries.”

The bankers who attended the meeting in Bodi promised to take forward the suggestions to their organisations. And, in an effort to generate discussion at the national level, the petition has also been passed to the Prime Minister of India and other key policy makers. In the meantime, Ms Valarmathi and many other women farmers will continue to tend their goats, listen to lessons on their mobile phones and enjoy an improved livelihood for their families and broader communities.

Karen Speirs, Commonwealth of Learning

Cultural practices that expose women to HIV/AIDS

Women's rights and interests need to be advanced in law to protect them against the risks of HIV/AIDS that may be fostered by patriarchal traditions, writes **Sylvia Anie**

Since the HIV/AIDS epidemic began the global community has taken a systematic approach to reducing the spread of the virus and providing care to those affected and infected. However, gender inequality remains widespread across the world, and cultural norms and practices are often barriers to women's access to the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS.

The global epidemic has had a considerable impact on developing countries, where the virus is widespread. In these states, women often bear the brunt of the burden as they have a higher prevalence rate and are less likely than men to have access to

information and HIV/AIDS medication. They are often stigmatised by their families and communities and, where medical resources are limited, gender inequality has a profound impact on women's ability to care for themselves. A HIV positive man living in West Africa said: "I will not allow my wife to start anti-retroviral therapy, [this is] so she can continue to look after me. When I feel better, I will give her permission to begin treatment."

International legislation to advance gender equality, including the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, has been ratified by

many countries. But reviews have shown that there is often inadequate knowledge of the statutory laws in place – even lawyers are sometimes unaware of how the law applies to women's inheritance and other key issues. Moreover, customary law is the dominant legal code in many parts of the world and under some customary legal systems, male superiority is promoted and women's rights are undermined, increasing their vulnerability to harmful sexual practices and HIV infection.

Under such systems, women are often perceived as the property of their fathers, husbands or other male relatives. As a result, they are unable to purchase, own or sell land and rely on their male relatives for financial support. In societies where women are economically dependent on men, they may be forced into marriage at a young age. Many countries have laws prohibiting the marriage of under-18s, but girls are frequently married off even younger. Statistics show that globally, approximately 82 million girls, often from poor families, will marry before their 18th birthday. And they are statistically more likely to become infected with HIV, usually directly from their husbands.

Cultural practices around sexual relations are an additional and significant contributor to the vulnerability of women to HIV/AIDS. These norms have informal but powerful mechanisms of enforcement. If an individual opposes a tradition and refuses to participate in it, they may be ostracised from the community. Because of the difficulty of opposing cultural traditions, women rarely challenge these practices.

For example, for men in patriarchal societies, monogamy is not considered to be a fundamental part of marriage. In fact, sexual promiscuity can be perceived as a sign of manhood. Husbands may continue to engage in sexual relations with other women and infect their young wives. It has been estimated that some 60-80 percent of women who are HIV positive have had sex only with their spouse. And yet it can be difficult for women to suggest condom use



Women are sometimes denied the opportunity to be tested for HIV/AIDS

because this is perceived as either a lack of trust or a sign of their own promiscuity.

If a woman's husband dies, she may not be able to claim rights over the land she has tended. Instead, cultural practices such as 'widow cleansing', in which a widow is expected to have sexual relations with a relative of her deceased husband to secure property, may be enforced. A woman living in East Africa described her life after her late husband died as follows: "I was forced to move in with his brother and become his third wife. Even though my husband died of HIV/AIDS, I have not been tested because my new husband won't let me. I am given no options." If a woman refuses to marry a relative of her late husband, she can be banished from her home without her dowry, forcing her to return to her parents, who may not be able to support her.

Despite the fact that such practices have lingered, the involvement of the international community and the active engagement of national governments have already managed to eliminate many of the more harmful cultural traditions. And one of the most effective tools of social change is education, which can be used to change social norms. School curricula can remove gender stereotypes, promote girls' leadership and self-esteem and include age-appropriate information on sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS.

The Commonwealth Secretariat acknowledges the importance of addressing women's issues through gender mainstreaming. With its shared histories and common values of democracy and development, the Commonwealth has recognised the merit of laws and legal mechanisms for advancing women's rights through the Plan of Action (PoA) for Gender Equality 2005-2015. The PoA acknowledges the significance of customary laws and practices in the daily lives of women, men and their communities. Given the entrenched gender biases and discrimination that disadvantage women in the context of culture and the law, the PoA calls for advancing women's rights and interests in the administration of laws and customary practices and the law.

In addition to these essential improvements in the law, an effective response to women's vulnerability in the context of HIV can be made by means of a much greater emphasis on educating national and local policy-makers, opinion-formers and traditional leaders.

Dr Sylvia Anie is Director of the Social Transformations Programmes Division at the Commonwealth Secretariat

Key events and meetings

Secretary-General meets the presidents of Sri Lanka and Maldives

Commonwealth Secretary-General Kamalesh Sharma met Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of Sri Lanka, in London on 2 December, where the two held wide ranging discussions on economic and political developments in the country, as well as on areas in which the Commonwealth could provide support.

In a meeting with Mohamed Nasheed, President of Maldives, also on 2 December, the discussions centred on the country's democratic transition and the ways in which the Commonwealth could support the capacity building and smooth functioning of its judiciary, legislature and executive.

Secretariat celebrates Human Rights Week

International Human Rights Week was marked at the Commonwealth Secretariat on 8 December, with a focus on the rights of persons with disabilities. UN Special Rapporteur on Disability, Shuaib Chalklen, spoke on the importance of addressing the needs and aspirations of disabled people across the globe and called on the Commonwealth "to lead the world in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities".

New Commonwealth youth leaders

Noelyn Wagapu from Solomon Islands and Rebecca Solomon from Vanuatu were elected chair and vice-chair, respectively, of the Commonwealth Youth Caucus on 14 December. For the first time, delegates attending the Commonwealth Youth Leaders' Conference in Chandigarh, India, voted to elect their leaders. The positions, which rotate on a regional basis, will be held for two years. The Caucus seeks to promote the meaningful engagement of young people in the planning and decision-making process of the Commonwealth Youth Programme.

New Commonwealth office in Geneva

The Secretariat opened the doors to its new office for small states in Geneva, Switzerland, on 17 January. The Commonwealth Small States Office will provide subsidised space for the diplomatic missions of Commonwealth members, as well as a business centre for tenants and visiting small states delegations attending multilateral meetings in Geneva. Maldives, The Bahamas, Solomon Islands, Seychelles and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States have already confirmed their tenancy in the new building, which is within walking distance of the offices of the UN.

High level meeting on climate finance

Officials and experts from Commonwealth countries most at risk from climate change met in Sussex, UK, from 23 to 25 January, to explore practical ways of accessing, managing and using funds to tackle the potentially devastating effects of changing global weather patterns. The meeting was aimed at ensuring the poorest and most vulnerable Commonwealth member countries, especially the small island developing nations, low-lying coastal states, least developed countries and those in Africa, are able to access, manage and absorb funds for mitigation and adaptation.

Secretary-General visits Australia

Commonwealth Secretary-General Kamalesh Sharma paid an official visit to Australia from 31 January to 3 February. He addressed Australian business leaders in Perth on the importance of enabling young people and women to reach their potential as entrepreneurs. On 2 February, Mr Sharma met Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard in Canberra to discuss preparations for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, including the substantive issues likely to feature in the leaders' deliberations.

Conference on Caribbean integration

Leading policy-makers, academics and government officials focused on Caribbean integration and cooperation at a conference organised by the University of the West Indies and the Commonwealth Secretariat in Jamaica from 15 to 18 February. The topics discussed included regional cooperation in health, security and education; people-centred development; the changing international environment; governance; constitutional issues; and institutional development.

Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General Ransford Smith, who addressed the opening of the conference, said Caribbean countries had been working within a common market for almost 40 years, making the integration grouping in the region one of the most advanced among developing countries. He added that other developing countries would also benefit from the valuable lessons and best practices of regional integration arrangements in the Caribbean.

Azar Zaidi, Commonwealth News Writer, Commonwealth Secretariat

Highlighting the work of women

In song, dance, prayer and poetry, the annual Commonwealth Day Observance celebrated the strength, vitality and potential of girls and women everywhere

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II joined with campaigner and musician, Annie Lennox, on Commonwealth Day 2011 to draw attention to this year's Commonwealth theme, 'Women as Agents of Change'. The Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Kamla Persad-Bissessar – the Commonwealth's first ever female Chairperson-in-Office – also took part in the Observance, held in London's Westminster Abbey.

"26 million girls are born in the Commonwealth every year," the Queen said. "One almost every second of every day." According to these figures, by the time the celebrations in the Abbey had ended nearly 4,000 more baby girls would have been added to the Commonwealth's 2 billion people. "Recognising that women are 'agents of change' in so many ways: as mothers and sisters, teachers and doctors... leaders and entrepreneurs", the Queen called upon all those present and listening around the world to unite in creating greater opportunities for these newborn girls "to pursue their hopes and dreams".

Hopes and dreams were also woven into a specially commissioned poem written and performed by Poet Laureate, Carol Ann Duffy. "Here are the gifts we wish and the wishes we gift to new girls born, Antigua to Zambia", she began before offering a poignant reminder of the power of women to enrich their families and communities: "Lastly we wish she gives back in return to us her blessings, her unique gifts".

The Observance, the largest multi-faith celebration organised in the UK, saw Christian, Jewish, Sikh, Jain, and Zoroastrian faith leaders join together to lead the assembled congregation in prayer. Performances by Trinidad's number one female Calypso singer, Denyse Plummer, Indian dance company, Dance Ihayami, and the renowned gospel choir of the Maria Fidelis Convent School, filled the Abbey with an exhilarating mix of music, colour and movement.

The event is held every year on the second Monday in March. It is a day in which the living links which continue to bind together this association of nations and peoples are clear for all to see.

Joanna Bennett, Communications Manager, The Royal Commonwealth Society



Queen Elizabeth II with the Secretary-General



Singer Denyse Plummer brings some Caribbean sparkle to the Abbey

The search for equality continues

In the 14th annual Commonwealth Lecture, Sonia Gandhi highlighted the key role of women in raising environmental awareness and in humanising the great climate change debate. She also demonstrated that women in India and elsewhere, through self-help groups and entrepreneurship, are taking charge of their own futures

Women's voices and concerns should be more prominent in the global climate change debate and negotiations, so as to "help the world find a more sustainable and less consumerist path to development", the president of the Indian National Congress Party, Sonia Gandhi, has urged.

"Among all the challenges facing humankind in the 21st century, few are more pressing than climate change and global warming. Unfortunately... most of the climate debate so far has been gender-blind," Mrs Gandhi observed in the annual Commonwealth Lecture – the 14th in the series – which she gave in London on 17 March. She also reminded the Commonwealth that "investing in women is the highest-return venture", and said that "if urbanisation is the world's future, we must design urban environments and services in ways that will give women greater security".

Underlining the importance of their involvement, Mrs Gandhi said that women have long played a special role in raising environmental consciousness, and recalled that, in 1972, Indira Gandhi had expressed the link between poverty and environmental degradation – "an issue which continues to shape the current debate". Many women have, over the years, helped promote environmental awareness, including Rachel Carson, the groundbreaking conservationist and author of *Silent Spring*, the Kenyan Nobel laureate Wangari Maathai, American campaigner Erin Brokovich, Rigoberto Menchu, an activist from Guatemala, and the Brazilian politician Marina Silva.

Discussing the 2011 Commonwealth theme, 'Women as Agents of Change', Mrs Gandhi said the search for equality is far from finished. "History, culture and economics still remain weighted against women. In my own country, most worrying of all is the declining sex ratio of females to males. The age-old preference for sons, coupled with the development of sex-selection technologies, has given an alarming demographic twist to gender bias. That this is happening in regions of substantial economic prosperity within

the country is even more disturbing."

A sign of the emergence of a more positive attitude, she added, however, that in the recent Commonwealth Games in New Delhi, young women from the same regions where the gender imbalance is greatest, won the most number of medals. In a poignant interview, one of these winners had recalled that her parents had wished her to be a boy, but reconciled themselves after she developed her sporting prowess.

Mrs Gandhi set out five areas in which women have emerged as agents of change in India. These included self-help groups pooling savings and securing loans for local projects; new, elected roles for women in rural self-government; social activism through the establishment of the language of human rights for women; the creation of local enterprise collectives, some of which have been replicated elsewhere in Asia; and the setting up of village information centres and IT kiosks. She added that women's enterprise also played a role in regions ravaged by violence and conflict, and that, within India, these groups had taken the lead in mediating, peace-building and reconciliation in areas of strife.

"Today, women in India are becoming agents of change through their own initia-

tive, their energy and enterprise. Through individual and collective action, they are transforming their own situations and indeed transforming the broader social context itself... India is at the cusp of a 'demographic dividend', due to its young and increasingly educated and skilled population. Imagine what might happen when this demographic dividend is multiplied by a 'gender dividend'. It will, I believe, yield enormous economic gain and lead to profound social transformation."

Mrs Gandhi highlighted the "powerful" role of technology in reducing gender inequalities through the creation of IT sector jobs, allowing women to live independently, and the proliferation of knowledge-based enterprises run by women in rural areas, giving them access to government services.

Mrs Gandhi concluded that she hoped the 21st century would be the time when women achieved equality: "May this be, not the century of any particular country, but the century when women finally come into their own, the century when representative democracy is re-imagined to give women their due share, the century when the vocabulary of politics and culture is re-engineered fully to include that other half of mankind."



Sonia Gandhi, President of the Indian National Congress Party

Close-up

Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association

The Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association (CMJA) is an apolitical charitable association. It is the only international organisation bringing together judicial officers at all levels, with a commitment to promoting judicial independence. It works closely with international organisations such as the Commonwealth and the UN when the independence of the judiciary is threatened and has provided assistance on constitutional and judicial reforms in a number of countries.

The CMJA was one of four organisations instrumental in the formulation of guidelines that led to the Commonwealth (Latimer House) Principles on the Accountability of and Relationship Between the Three Branches of Government. Endorsed in 2003 by the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Abuja, these Principles now form part of the Commonwealth's fundamental values.

The advancement of education in the law is one of the CMJA's key aims. It has organised a number of training courses to improve practice, independence and integrity, and has cooperated with UN agencies to deliver training on child rights and environmental law. The CMJA also provides a forum for promoting the highest judicial standards right across the profession. Its Gender Section was instrumental, along with other Commonwealth organisations, in the formulation of the Gender and Human Rights Toolkit which is used to assist judicial officers, paralegal officials and lawyers with their duties and international obligations.

The CMJA welcomes as members all Commonwealth judicial associations as well as individual magistrates and judges. Members are able to utilise the organisation's broad network of contacts, to participate in training and stay informed of judicial developments through the Commonwealth Judicial Journal and the CMJA News.

The association's network is maintained and developed through regional and triennial conferences. The next one will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 18-21 July 2011, on the theme of 'Judicial Independence – Diversity, Pluralism and Challenges in the Commonwealth'.

For Further information visit the CMJA website:
www.cmja.org

Supporting justice at the grassroots



Important research into the working conditions of magistrates could form the basis of new guidelines for improving the status of those judicial officers that form the backbone of justice systems across the Commonwealth

An independent, honest and impartial judiciary is a cornerstone of democracy, human rights and good governance and, as such, it is the right of every citizen in the Commonwealth. It is integral to upholding the rule of law, engendering public confidence and dispensing justice. The quality of a country's judiciary is paramount not only to the fundamental well being of the people but also to the stability of society and economic development.

In most Commonwealth jurisdictions, the process for the appointment and removal of judges of the higher courts is set down either in the Constitution or in statutes. However, magistrates and other judicial officers in the lower courts do not necessarily enjoy such legislative or constitutional protection. And yet they form the backbone of the justice system. In England and Wales, for example, all criminal cases appear, in the first instance, before the magistrates' courts and about 95 percent of them are dealt with wholly at that level. Magistrates make vital decisions that determine what direction is best for a case and whether defendants should be granted liberty or held in custody before their case is heard.

In a number of Commonwealth countries, magistrates are lay members of society and are mostly unpaid. In others, they are legally qualified (as lawyers with five years experience or more) and even if some today are called 'judges' (district or provincial), they all adjudicate at the grassroots level. Magistrates are the first, and in most cases, the only judicial officer the public comes across when they have to go to court and therefore it is important that they are – and are seen to be – independent and unbiased.

The precursor to the CMJA, the Commonwealth Magistrates' Association, was set up in 1970 in response to the lack of security and independence facing many Commonwealth magistrates and the appalling conditions in which they were operating. Some 40 years later, there are

still problems related to the treatment, training and security of tenure across the Commonwealth and the CMJA remains committed to providing support to the magistracy and to speaking out on its behalf. To this end, a resolution was passed at the CMJA's 2009 conference in Turks and Caicos, deploring the fact that "in parts of the Commonwealth the independence of the magistracy is inadequately safeguarded" and requesting the CMJA Council and "the Commonwealth Secretariat to take positive steps to eliminate these breaches of the Latimer House Principles [on the separation of powers] wherever they occur."

As a result of anecdotal information it has received on the position of magistrates, the CMJA has recently undertaken an in-depth study of the status of magistrates' across the Commonwealth. The aim has been to assess the challenges faced by these judicial officers namely: the lack of independent systems of appointment, transfer or removal; the lack of protection of salaries and other benefits; the need for investment in the training of magistrates; and the provision of adequate resources, including court premises.

The CMJA is also currently drafting a set of guidelines for the improvement of the status of magistrates across the Commonwealth, which it hopes to submit to the Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting later this year along with the findings from its study. As has been recognised in some parts of the Commonwealth, judicial officers in the lower courts play a vital role in ensuring the rule of law is upheld, and they need to be considered as an integral part of any judicial system. Their independence and security of tenure is paramount to the good administration of justice as well as the fight against widespread corruption.

Dr Karen Brewer, Secretary General, Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association

Hearing the voices of the people

The Commonwealth People's Forum enables civil society to voice its wants and needs to Commonwealth leaders. This year, in an attempt ensure that it is well heard, the People's Forum is doing things differently, writes **Marcie Shaoul**

Walking past the Houses of Parliament in Westminster, London, visitors are always struck by the placards, flags and tents. Protesters are often bedded down not just for the night but for the foreseeable future as they make various demands of their political representatives.

Even in a well-developed, stable democracy like the UK, citizens need to have a voice; they should not just follow blindly the direction that their leaders set for them. Looking at those tents – which remained there throughout the recent harsh winter, covered in blankets and cardboard to seal in every ounce of warmth – you realise that people really have a strong desire to be heard. And it's not just that they want to have to be heard; really it is a fundamental need.

Citizens need to tell their leaders what they want. They need to bridge the gap between what is laid down in law and what exists in reality. They need to make that bridge stronger in order to let people walk across it freely in both directions. Strong bridges equal strong societies. And public access to governments should mean an understanding of rights and challenges, and ultimately a more fully functioning society.

When the Commonwealth leaders meet in Perth, Western Australia, in October 2011 – behind closed doors – how will they know what issues their citizens are concerned about? And how will they engage with those issues? The answer is the Commonwealth People's Forum.

Since 1991, civil society representatives have convened at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGM), with the aim of influencing leaders as they retreat into their deliberations. Held in the days immediately preceding the Summit, the People's Forum brings together hundreds of non-governmental groups from the association's 54 member countries to seek agreement and action on key issues facing Commonwealth people. Over the course of four days, assemblies cover topics such as climate change, culture, education, the financial crisis, food security, gender, health and human rights.

In the year and a half leading up to CHOGM, the Commonwealth Foundation works with civil society organisations from



Delegates at the 2009 People's Forum in Trinidad and Tobago



across the Commonwealth to set up regional and national consultations, accept submissions, debate issues and generate ideas, in order to formulate a statement that sets out everything that civil society needs and wants, in a way that their governments will understand. On the final day of the People's Forum, this statement – embodying the col-

lective voice of all civil society groups – is issued directly to CHOGM.

This year, the People's Forum is going to be a little different. More emphasis is being placed on the run up to the event in order to produce the statement well ahead of CHOGM, in time for Commonwealth foreign ministers to consider it at their meeting in New York, in September. In this way, civil society is giving itself the best chance possible to have a proper constructive dialogue with the leaders attending the summit. By presenting their statement in September, there is more than a month for ministers to digest its findings and solutions and take them into consideration as they set the Commonwealth's agenda for the next two years.

The People's Forum is the biggest and only event of its kind in the Commonwealth. It matters and it is necessary because citizens have a right to change and they have a right to ask for change, they just need the mechanism with which to do it. And the Commonwealth People's Forum provides just such a mechanism.

Marcie Shaoul is Communications Manager at the Commonwealth Foundation

Harnessing the diaspora for peace

The visit of a group of young British Sri Lankans to the island helped strengthen links with their parents' homeland and raise hopes of a lasting and meaningful peace in a war-torn country

One of the most extraordinary features of the Commonwealth is the millions of individuals and families who have crossed continents to seek a new life in another Commonwealth country; some fleeing conflict, others seeking greater economic opportunity and those simply motivated by a spirit of adventure.

There is a generation of young people who identify with more than one Commonwealth country and are keen to make a contribution to both their own nation and the homelands of their parents and grandparents. The need for such a contribution is arguably greatest in countries scarred by conflict and division.

With this in mind the Royal Commonwealth Society, in partnership with independent peace-building organisation International Alert, took a group of eight young British Sri Lankans, on a fact-finding visit to Sri Lanka to learn about peace, reconciliation and development on the island and to see at first hand the important role young people are playing in that effort. It was hoped that this pilot project on 'diaspora engagement', while bringing together young Britons from both the Tamil and Sinhala communities and building bridges between them and Sri Lanka, would also foster the sharing of experience between two important Commonwealth states.

As one of the organisers of the trip, for me, this project was far more than just a work obligation. My parents left Sri Lanka after the civil war began in 1983 and although I have never lived in the country I have visited many times – always as a tourist, and usually only to the capital city Colombo, where my grandparents still live. While I am interested in Sri Lankan politics, history and culture, I have consciously avoided focusing on Sri Lanka in my academic studies and my career, finding the idea fraught with emotional difficulty. But the opportunity to meet fellow British Sri Lankans and engage positively in the country's post-conflict future was too good to refuse.

Accompanied by two British MPs, we set out in late January for a busy week of meetings, workshops and visits across the island. In Colombo we met with political leaders – two Cabinet ministers and representative from three opposition parties



A pan-Sri Lankan group engaging with the country's problems

– who provided us with perspectives on the socio-economic situation in Sri Lanka and told us their conclusions on issues of peace and reconciliation. We were also able to interact with a delegation of impressive youth activists, have lunch with the leaders of international humanitarian agencies and

There is much work to be done in Sri Lanka, politically, socially and economically. While the war may be over, the island is still not the paradise its physical beauty suggests

attend an eye-opening theatre performance focusing on unemployment.

Outside Colombo, we travelled to the hill country to see an initiative by Care International engaging the young people from the desperately deprived Indian Tamil community. We also met inspiring Sinhala youth leaders in Anuradhapura and made an unforgettable visit to a village outside Vavuniya, guided by local leaders of the charity Sewalanka

Foundation, which is doing valuable work in disadvantaged rural communities.

As a British Sri Lankan, it was fantastic to share this visit with a diverse group of Sinhala and Tamil individuals, all of whom found the experience illuminating and touching. Several people we met commented that they had never heard of a 'Sri Lankan' diaspora group, only Sinhala or Tamil. But we were a pan-Sri Lankan group, with a joint interest in examining the issues that face all Sri Lankans and sharing our findings, upon our return, with other diaspora members.

There is much work to be done in Sri Lanka, politically, socially and economically. While the war may be over, the island is still not the paradise its physical beauty suggests. To claim heritage from two Commonwealth countries is a privilege, but it is also comes with a duty – to help those who suffered during the devastating war years and who need our assistance more than ever in this critical post-conflict period. But I am optimistic about the potential of the next generation of Sri Lankans and British Sri Lankans to make an effective and meaningful contribution to our wonderful country.

Anushya Devendra, Communications Assistant, the Royal Commonwealth Society

Twenty thousand days in the life

The Royal Commonwealth Society has devised a unique tribute to mark Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee: a time capsule comprised of real-life stories – one for each day of her reign – from around the Commonwealth



The dramatic release on 11 February 1990 of the South African liberation hero, Nelson Mandela, and the subsequent dismantling of apartheid. The election in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) on 20 July 1960 of Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the world's first female Prime Minister. The start of the Bangladesh liberation war on 26 March 1971. Over the last 60 years, numerous events have both shaken and shaped our world. Some of them we know well, many we don't. The stories of millions of ordinary – and extraordinary lives – remain untold. Yet in a very real way, they are the story of the modern Commonwealth.

The one enduring character of this tale is Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Since 1952, she has been the steadying hand upon a fast changing – and often tumultuous – Commonwealth. In 2012, we will celebrate her Diamond Jubilee and between now and then, the Royal Commonwealth Society plans to build a unique time capsule to mark the 60th anniversary of her reign.

We are inviting people, young and old, from every corner of the Commonwealth, to tell us about a day – any day – in the last 60 years. Their memories need not be of momentous world events; for this, we can turn to the history books. Rather we want them to tell us the stories of individuals, families and communities. Woven together, these memories will create a rich historical archive.

Preserved online in a safe and accessible format, the contents of the time capsule will be available to historians, researchers and schoolchildren for generations to come. The very best entries – one for each of the 21,915 days over the last 60 years – will be presented as a gift to Her Majesty.

We hope that this initiative will help to narrow the digital divide, engage people in exploring their history, encourage creative expression and connect men, women and children across the world. But most of all, we hope it will create something truly unique: a people's history of the Commonwealth.

Joanna Bennett, Communications Manager, Royal Commonwealth Society

The Commonwealth Jubilee Time Capsule is now open for entries. Visit: www.jubileetimecapsule.org.

Kira Wright, age 11, UK

3 February 2010, *The day I became an Auntie!*

*It was tea and I finally got the call.
I had a new niece called Leah
Elizabeth Ball.
She was born at 17:19 on a Wednesday
afternoon,
And I was VERY excited to be seeing
her soon.*

*She came home the day after I knew.
Her eyes were big and sparkly blue,
Her hair was short and her hands were
small
She weighed 7lb 3oz and that was all.*

*The smile ran straight to my face,
She was the daughter of my sister
(nicknamed Stace).*

*The present I got her was a little silver
box,
For her very first tooth and some of
her curly locks*

*Now she's older, she's laughing and
walking,
clapping, dancing, smiling and talking.
Her lovely laugh is more of a giggle,
Her crazy crawl is more of a wiggle.*

*I love Leah so much and she loves me
too,
her favourite game is peek a boo.
I can't wait until she's older and
meeting new friends,
I just hope our love never ends.*

Lara Clauss, age 16, South Africa/Germany

13 April 1992, *Untitled*

When I lived in South Africa, I was quite young, and I cannot remember much. My mother however, an Afrikaans speaking South African, spent most of her life there. I have decided to write about something she told me not long ago. As my mother does not want the exact date on which she did what I am about to narrate known, she has chosen one at random. The year, however, is correct.

My mother recalls a night in her final year of nursing training. She had been working at the orthopaedic operating theatre of the Pretoria academic hospital, then known as "H. F. Verwoerd Hospital". She had spent her whole life in South Africa and as a child she was used to seeing signs stating things like "Whites Only", in English as well as Afrikaans, her mother tongue. Most of the "Whites Only"-signs had by now disappeared. One small plaque, however, which my mother noticed above a doorway leading to the nurses' changing rooms, was still in place.

Being young, and afraid, my mother had, up to this point, never actively opposed the ruling National Party; she did not want to be arrested or ruin her chances of gaining a degree in nursing, towards which she had worked for a long time. Fuelled by her desire to remove the plaque, she decided that, as she was finally without company and not needed anywhere, the time had come. It was three o'clock in the morning.

My mother reached into the top pocket of her nurse's uniform. She had always carried a nail file in it. This now proved very practical. After making sure that she was not being seen, she reached for the plaque, and started unscrewing it, using the broad end of the nail file...

This was the only thing my mother ever did to actively, if secretly, oppose the government. She regards this as her personal political turning point. A small act it may have been, and it might not have brought about significant change in the country, but it changed the way my mother saw herself: she had more self-respect.

Courage and compassion on show

A moving photographic exhibition charts a struggle to improve the lives of orphaned children in Bangladesh

Experienced photojournalist Ian Spratt first visited the run-down Sreepur orphanage in the back streets of Dhaka, Bangladesh, in 1985. The impact of seeing so many abandoned and malnourished children had, he says, a “profound effect” on him. In particular Amina, an inquisitive little girl with luxuriant black hair and a cheeky smile, who would appear repeatedly in Ian’s pictures even when not wanted, made an unforgettable impression. As his coach pulled away from the orphanage on the final day of this first trip, Ian recalls looking back at Amina’s tear-streaked face and being moved by how much she reminded him of his own two young daughters.

Unable to shake off the memories of what he had seen, he returned to the orphanage one year later in 1986. Amina was one of the first to run and greet him. This time, her glossy hair was gone – her head

had been shaved due to a series of infections and a huge boil on her chin brought tears to his eyes. Resolving to confront the world with what he had seen, Ian set about documenting the dire living conditions of “those fragile, innocent scraps of humanity”. He called this first collection, ‘How Lucky We Are’.

In 1996 and again in 2010, he returned to Bangladesh and set about tracing the children he had photographed on the previous visits. It is a selection of these images, organised in triptychs (one photograph for each of his three visits), which feature in a new exhibition at the Royal Commonwealth Society. Black and white and printed on archival fine art paper, they resonate with a melancholic beauty.

Today Amina is 32, happily married and living in central Dhaka. She has a four-year-old son and teaches music, while her husband Shajahan works for an NGO. Her

life, Ian says, stands as an enduring testament to the courage and compassion of those working in ‘Sreepur Village’, as the orphanage came to be known.

For more than 25 years, Sreepur’s workers have struggled to improve the lives of abandoned children and destitute and abused women. Ian’s photographs are one small part of this struggle. When, in the face of other’s sacrifices, he has sometimes doubted their worth, he recalls words quoted to him by one of the founding members of the Village, “No one could make a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little.”

Joanna Bennett, Communications Manager, The Royal Commonwealth Society

‘How Lucky We Are: A Photographic Journey’ was exhibited at the Royal Commonwealth Society from 25 February to March 31 2011: www.ianspratt.com

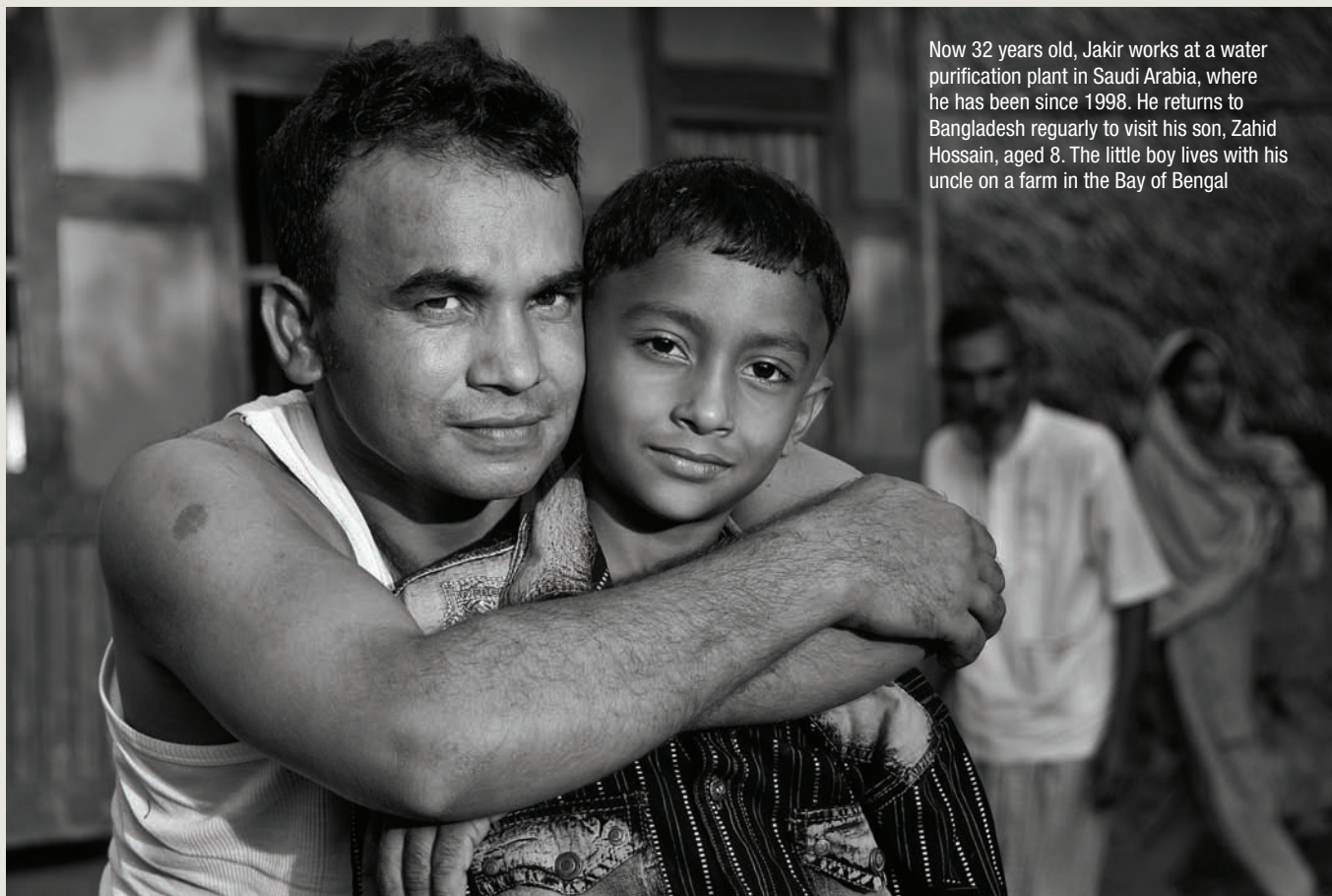


Jakir's father was an invalid. His mother joined a training program for destitute women and he was admitted to FFC on a temporary basis. Jakir was never collected

Jakir left FFC in 1994 to train as a mechanic in Dhaka



Now 32 years old, Jakir works at a water purification plant in Saudi Arabia, where he has been since 1998. He returns to Bangladesh regularly to visit his son, Zahid Hossain, aged 8. The little boy lives with his uncle on a farm in the Bay of Bengal



Questions & Answers

INTERVIEW **Noma Radebe**, a young South African businesswoman, runs her own television production company. She got into the industry by accident over a decade ago and, after working as a freelance, formed Leaps Media & Productions in 2007 with a friend, Lichaba Nthethe. Making programmes mostly for youth audiences, she is committed to passing on her skills and knowledge to the next generation. She tells *Global* about her current projects, her passion for her country's cultural heritage, her addiction to TV and her dislike of hip-hop. But whatever you do, don't mess with her books!



What sorts of television programmes do you make?

We are very keen on responsible TV and we mostly make cultural and youth oriented programmes to raise awareness about our heritage. At the moment I'm working on a live programme called 'Str8 Talk'. We have also just filmed a season of a traditional music show and another season of a youth spiritual show. With 'Str8 Talk' we are starting a conversation between the youth and their peers as well as giving them access to anyone that they feel can give them answers. The show will give them the opportunity to say: "This is my problem with the world and this is how I feel it should be resolved." We are going to use Skype to allow access from anywhere around the world so it can possibly become a global conversation with other young people from different countries.

Why do you feel that it is important to engage with young people?

The youth are the custodians of the future and our culture – they are our future leaders and decision-makers and I feel that if they are involved from an early age they can learn from our mistakes and improve on whatever we could not. And when you are talking about matters of culture and tradition it is very, very key that we engage with young people. My biggest concern is that old people are dying and the oral tradition is dying with them. I don't want to wake up one day and [find] we've lost all that, so we must involve the youth.

On a full-time basis I usually employ four students that have come straight out of school. I select kids from disadvantaged homes and train them. I don't use them as interns. By the time they have finished with me – and the training takes six months – they are ready to get into the mainstream. They are employable.

Why are you so passionate about preserving South African culture and heritage?

Especially as Africans, we are very cultural people and very traditional and our traditions inform who we are. We've got a big problem with climate change and I feel that it isn't just a scientific issue, it's a cultural issue, it's a traditional issue. I believe that a lot of the changes that can impact on the climate are embedded in our cultural practices and if we, as Africans, can start embracing that we will see a reduction in the impacts of climate change. We all need to go back to the roots.

What did you do yesterday?

I went to meet the broadcaster about the live show. We are still in the inception phase so we were going through the budget review – we are trying to negotiate for a cheaper studio quote and that went very well. Also a group of people are starting an Academy of TV and Arts and I'm part of the committee that is forming the curriculum. We had a meeting yesterday because we've got a deadline on 1 April to submit a proposal to the Minister of Education. I'm in charge of the production curriculum and we were just trying to thrash out a few details. Afterwards I went to the doctor's then I came home and I slept. Not very exciting!

How would you describe your home?

My home is my absolute haven. It's the one space that I can be myself in, relax and just take time off from everything. At the same time it can be my office, my creative space. I pretty much love my home.

What do you do to relax?

Well, strangely enough I watch TV. My friends always tell me I'm a couch potato, but it works as part of my research as well

as a form of relaxation. My other big passion is listening to music. I've got a large collection of CDs and I love almost anything – pop, rock, R&B, jazz, local traditional music. I just don't like hip-hop – I'm sorry! Maybe I don't understand it.

Who would you most like to meet?

I'd like to meet Jerry Bruckheimer [the American film and TV producer] – I love what he does on screen. David E. Kelley [an American screenwriter and producer], and yeah, I'll have to meet Oprah [Winfrey]. Oh my God, my life just revolves around TV!

If you could change anything in the world what would it be?

I would like us to be more tolerant. I don't know how one could do that but I just feel that if we were more considerate and tolerant of each other we would not be where we are right now.

What is your most treasured possession?

Outside of my family? No one touches my CDs and my books. Don't mess with my books – I don't want dog-ears. If I lend you my book it should come back in the same condition or else you buy another one. I'm very precious about them and I buy books about anything and everything.

What is the best piece of advice you have ever been given?

I've been given so much advice and it's mostly from my mum. When things are going really, really bad, my mum always says: "Don't ask: 'Why me?' because the answer will be: 'Who else, if not you?'" I should understand that there are good times and bad times and that I should embrace the bad times because they are a point of learning. I guess it was a way of teaching me not to be selfish and that I shouldn't expect things to always go my way.

Singapore International Water Week

2011

Sustainable Water Solutions for
a Changing Urban Environment
4 – 8 July



Singapore
International
Water Week



A Shared Vision for Water Sustainability

Our planet might look blue, but just how blue and liveable are our cities? More than half of the earth's population live in cities, and the trend towards urbanisation is accelerating. As cities grow and urbanise, the search for sustainable water solutions becomes more crucial.

The global platform for water solutions, the Singapore International Water Week brings policymakers, industry leaders, experts and practitioners together to address challenges, showcase technologies, discover opportunities and celebrate achievements in the water world.

At the Water Leaders Summit, a flagship programme of the Water Week, over 300 key policymakers and industry leaders of the water world will gather to engage in dialogues and strategic discussions with a focus on sustainable water solutions.

Highlights of the Water Leaders Summit 2011:

- **Water Conversation** with Mr Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of Singapore
- **Water Ministers' Plenary** with Ministers sharing on water issues in their regions and discussing solutions to address these challenges
- **Water Lecture** by the 2011 Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize Laureate
- **Water Leaders Roundtable** on the Water-Energy Nexus Challenge
- **Water Leaders Summit Workshop** on topical issues and challenges industry leaders face in a changing urban environment

Through this meeting of minds, Water Leader Summit 2011 aims to uncover new opportunities and promote innovative solutions that will benefit the global water industry and create a positive impact for communities worldwide.

* Participation at The Water Leaders Summit is "by-invitation". Email info@siww.com.sg for more information.

Find out more about the Water Leaders Summit and the Singapore International Water Week 2011 at www.siww.com.sg

There's **more** to Cyprus than meets the eye

MARKETMAX / PUBLIS



More than just a holiday destination with pristine white beaches and 300 days of sunshine, Cyprus can also cater to your business needs ranging from registering and setting up your company's operations to managing your EU, North African and Middle Eastern clients at a considerably lower cost.

As well as being an EU country and a member of the European Monetary Union since 2008, Cyprus enjoys the lowest corporate tax rate in the EU of 10%. Cyprus belongs to those jurisdictions on the OECD White List which have substantially implemented the internationally agreed tax standard.

In addition to this, Cyprus provides efficient business services, has a transparent legal and regulatory system and is committed to sustainable growth.

Cyprus welcomes both visitors and investors to work here, so, if you are searching for a new business base, consider Cyprus. It's more than just beaches and sun.

"Columbia's growth and expansion over the years is attributed to the uniqueness of Cyprus; being the island's strategic position at the crossroads of three continents, its comprehensive legal framework, double tax treaties regime, communication system, banking system, infrastructure in general and last but not least its highly educated labor force."

**Captain Dirk Fry, Managing Director
Columbia Ship Management Ltd**

"The favorable business climate, the excellent telecommunications infrastructure, the well educated and skilled human resources, the favorable tax rates and the proximity to the Middle East and Africa markets, were some of the key factors that enabled NCR to decide to move its regional offices to Cyprus in the 80's. Gradually, NCR managed to expand the office in Cyprus to cover also all the African Countries."

**Managing Director of NCR Cyprus,
Mr. George Flouros**

CYPRUS
INVEST WITH CONFIDENCE



**Cyprus Investment
Promotion Agency**
Tel + 357 22 441133
Fax + 357 22 441134
www.cipa.org.cy
info@cipa.org.cy

**The Ministry of Commerce,
Industry and Tourism**
Tel + 357 22 867100
Fax + 357 22 375120
www.mcit.gov.cy/ts
perm.sec@mcit.gov.cy

