

Africa Legal Update - March 21, 2013

Article By:

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Leading the News

Kenya

On March 16th, Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga filed a petition in Kenya's Supreme Court challenging the results of the recent presidential election. According to the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), Uhuru Kenyatta won the election with 50.07% of the vote – just enough to avoid a runoff with Prime Minister Odinga. Many member of the Coalition for Reforms and Democracy (CORD) who supported Prime Minister Odinga's candidacy rallied at the Supreme Court gates to support the petition. Additional information on Prime Minister Odinga's petition to challenge the election results can be found [here](#).

On March 18th, the International Criminal Court (ICC) heard from lawyers of President-elect Uhuru Kenyatta regarding charges of crimes following the 2007 election. Charges in connection to the crimes against Francis Muthaura, a civil servant, were recently dropped by the prosecutor when a witness recanted testimony. President-elect Kenyatta's lawyers say the trial should return to a confirmation of charges phase since he and Muthaura were closely linked in proceedings. An article with the latest developments on the case can be read [here](#).

On March 20th, President-elect Uhuru Kenyatta and Deputy President-elect William Ruto visited a Kwale International Sugar Company factory in Kwale County, Kenya. While President-elect Kenyatta used the visit to articulate his commitment to bolstering all sectors of Kenya's economy, he specifically said that strengthening agriculture-based factories, including sugar and cashew factories, will be a key step to improving the overall economy and to creating jobs for youth. More information on President-elect Kenyatta's tour of the sugar factory is available [here](#).

Zimbabwe

On March 14th, State Department Spokesperson Victoria Nuland addressed the upcoming constitutional referendum in Zimbabwe, scheduled for March 16th. Spokesperson Nuland said the referendum marks a big step for Zimbabwe and U.S. officials have been encouraging the Government of Zimbabwe to make use of the broadest possible monitoring for the elections to ensure free, fair, and transparent voting. Spokesperson Nuland's full comments are available [here](#).

On March 16th, Zimbabwe held a referendum on its new constitution. The voting process was disrupted by several notable arrests, including the arrest of prominent human rights lawyer, Beatrice Mtetwa. In addition, following voting, Zimbabwean Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai's office was raided by police and four officials were arrested for allegedly impersonating officers. An article on the arrests made in conjunction with Zimbabwe's constitutional referendum can be read [here](#).

On March 19th, the electoral commission in Zimbabwe announced that nearly 95% of voters in Zimbabwe approved the new constitution. The referendum mandates elections in October 2013 and limits presidents to two, five-year terms. Other notable changes include a provision that legislation can no longer be vetoed by the president and a bill of rights that provides for freedom of expression and a free media. Full details on the vote and the new constitution are available [here](#).

Central African Republic

On March 17th, the State Department issued a statement expressing concern for deteriorating security in the Central African Republic (CAR). State Department officials called on CAR President Francois Bozize and the Seleka Alliance to end violence and to fully implement the Libreville Agreement, signed in January. The U.S. also called for quick actions to address humanitarian concerns and to halt reported human rights abuses in the CAR. The State Department's statement on the situation in the CAR is available [here](#).

On March 18th, the Seleka rebel group detained its five ministers that held positions within the CAR Government. The group also indicated it would end a ceasefire with the CAR if prisoners were not freed and 2,000 rebels were not allowed to join the country's military. Details on the demands by the rebels are available [here](#).

On March 20th, the Seleka Alliance said its demands were not met by the CAR government, and the resumption of hostilities is a possibility. A ceasefire had been in place since January. The Seleka group and the CAR government are scheduled to meet with Chad President Idriss Deby and Congo Republic President Denis Sassou Nguesso in the coming days for peace talks. A notice on the end of the ceasefire can be read [here](#).

Nigeria

On March 13th, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan pardoned former Governor of Bayelsa State in Nigeria, Diepreye Alamieyeseigha, who was convicted of stealing millions of dollars while in office. Governor Alamieyeseigha was impeached in 2005 and arrested in the U.K. An advisor to President Jonathan said Governor Alamieyeseigha's pardon allows him to return to political life. An article on President Jonathan's decision to pardon Governor Alamieyeseigha is available [here](#).

On March 15th, State Department officials indicated the U.S. may cut foreign aid to Nigeria following Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan's pardoning of former Governor Diepreye Alamieyeseigha. According to State Department Spokesperson Victoria Nuland, U.S. officials have made it clear that the announcement marks a setback in addressing corruption in Nigeria and that while no decisions had been made regarding foreign aid that the State Department was continuing to look at appropriate courses of action. Similar sentiments were also echoed by the U.S. embassy in Abuja, Nigeria. Additional information on the potential cutting back on foreign aid to Nigeria can be found [here](#).

Rwanda

On March 18th, warlord Bosco Ntaganda went to the U.S. embassy in Kigali, Rwanda, and asked to be transferred to the ICC. Ntaganda is a prominent figure in the 20-year conflict along the border between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). It is still unclear why Ntaganda turned himself in and demanded to be sent to the ICC. While neither the U.S. nor Rwanda is a party to the ICC, the State Department has indicated that it is engaged in talks with the Government of Rwanda to facilitate Ntaganda's request. An article on the story can be read [here](#).

On March 18th, following news of Bosco Ntaganda's surrender at the U.S. embassy in Kigali, Rwanda, the Washington Post speculated on why Ntaganda voluntarily gave himself up to the ICC. The article speculated that Ntaganda's actions may have been motivated by the loss of powerful backers in Rwanda, pressure from potential sponsors in the Rwandan government, the split in the M23 group forcing Ntaganda to seek safety, or perhaps some preliminary negotiations with the ICC. More detailed speculation on Ntaganda's motives can be found [here](#).

Mali

On March 14th, State Department officials articulated that significant progress has been made in Mali since the intervention of French and African troops in the northern part of the country in January. U.S. Ambassador to Mali Mary Beth Leonard noted that international intervention has helped to undermine the capacity of extremist groups in Mali. In addition, U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria and Permanent U.S. Representative to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Terence McCulley added that ECOWAS has also provided great leadership during the recent crisis. Additional insights from Ambassadors Leonard and McCulley on the international effort to address extremism in Mali are available [here](#).

On March 17th, the 351st Expeditionary Air Refueling Squadron (EARS) of the U.S. Air Force completed its 100th refueling mission, supporting French fighter aircraft conducting operations in Mali. The 351st EARS has been supporting the French mission since January 27th and has transferred more than 4.5 million pounds of fuel since its engagement in Mali. An article on the role of the 351st EARS in supporting the French mission in Mali can be read [here](#).

On March 19th, discussions between French and Malian officials on post-war strategies began in Lyon, France. Improving the health and living conditions of Malian citizens and rural development was a central focus of the talks. Although fighting continues in northern Mali, France plans to withdraw 4,000 troops in April. French troops will be replaced with other West African forces. A BBC article on the talks can be found [here](#).

On March 20th, the charity Oxfam reported that food prices in the Gao region of Mali, where intense fighting has occurred since French intervention in the country, have increased by 70%. The report also suggests water and electricity services have been disrupted as a result of armed conflict. According to Oxfam, not enough focus has been placed on the basic needs of people in Mali. An article on the humanitarian impact of the violence in Mali can be read [here](#).

On March 21st, the State Department designated Ansar al-Dine (AAD) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). AAD is an extremist organization operating in Mali in cooperation with Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), which has also been designated as an FTO. Most recently, AQIM has supported AAD in fighting Malian and French forces and in capturing Agulhok, Tessalit, Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu early last year. A State Department press release on the terrorist designation of AAD has been posted [here](#).

United States – Africa Relations

White House

On March 14th, Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications Ben Rhodes held a conference call to preview President Barack Obama's trip to Israel. Deputy National Security Advisor Rhodes said that President Obama will reiterate themes from his 2009 speech in Cairo, Egypt, regarding religious tolerance and political engagement by young people. He also indicated that Secretary of State John Kerry would join President Obama on the trip to Israel. Additional information on the preview call can be read [here](#).

On March 18th, the White House issued a statement announcing that four African leaders will meet with President Barack Obama at the White House on March 28th to discuss economic development and democratic elections in sub-Saharan Africa. President Ernest Bai Koroma of Sierra Leone, President Macky Sall of Senegal, President Joyce Banda of Malawi, and Prime Minister José Maria Pereira Neves of Cape Verde will participate in the meeting. The full White House announcement on the upcoming meeting has been posted [here](#).

State Department

On March 14th, State Department Spokesperson Victoria Nuland addressed questions regarding Egypt's interactions with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), following the announcement of additional U.S. aid to Egypt during Secretary of State John Kerry's visit to Cairo earlier this month. Spokesperson Nuland reported that the IMF has suggested that Egypt consider a rapid financing instrument, while the Egyptian government has expressed its preference to have a full standby arrangement if negotiations allow. The full transcript of the State Department's daily press briefing is available [here](#).

On March 15th, U.S. Ambassador to the Republics of Senegal and Guinea-Bissau Lewis Lukens dedicated the new U.S. embassy in Dakar, Senegal. The new diplomatic facility includes several sustainable resources focused on reducing energy consumption and operating costs, including a system of 1,290 photovoltaic panels, solar control shading devices, and on-site treatment of wastewater that is reused for irrigation. A State Department release on the new U.S. embassy in Senegal has been posted [here](#).

On March 15th, the State Department held a farewell reception in honor of U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan Princeton Lyman. Ambassador Lyman, who has previously served as U.S. Ambassador to Niger, U.S. Ambassador to South Africa, and Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, was first appointed to the Special Envoy position in March 2011 and indicated his plans to resign in early December. Additional information on Ambassador Lyman's service as Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan and his recent resignation can be found [here](#).

On March 15th, in response to claims issued by Republican Members of Congress that approximately 30 people were wounded during the September 11th attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya, State Department Spokesperson Victoria Nuland clarified that only four people were wounded. According to Spokesperson Nuland's comments to reporters, three security personnel and one contractor were injured during the attack. Additional details regarding the injuries obtained during the attack in Benghazi can be read [here](#).

On March 19th, Deputy Secretary of State Bill Burns met with Special Representative of the

Secretary-General of the United Nations (SRSG) and Head of the United Nations (UN) Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) Tarek Mitri at the State Department. While in Washington, DC, Special Representative Mitri also met with Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs Esther Brimmer. Both meetings were listed on the State Department's daily appointment schedule, which can be viewed [here](#).

On March 20th, the State Department issued a statement in support of the March 17th decision by the Somali Supreme Court to overturn the conviction of Somali journalist Abdiasis Abdinur Ibrahim for interviewing a woman who was allegedly raped by Somali security forces. U.S. government officials expressed optimism that the court's ruling would help to strengthen the right to freedom of expression in Somalia. The full State Department release on the Somali Supreme Court ruling has been posted [here](#).

On March 20th, Secretary of State John Kerry issued a statement recognizing Namibia's independence day. In his remarks, Secretary Kerry alluded to similarities between the U.S. and Namibia, including a shared respect for human rights and the rule of law and a shared commitment to democracy and development. Secretary Kerry's full statement can be read [here](#).

On March 20th, Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Tara Sonenshine hosted a group of women leaders from North Africa at the State Department. The group of women is in the U.S. participating in State Department International Visitor Programs. The meeting was noticed on the State Department's daily schedule, found [here](#).

Department of Defense

On March 14th, a senior official at the Pentagon said the U.S. will continue to maintain a small military footprint in Africa as AFRICOM continues to mature in the services it is able to provide to allied nations. The Department official also highlighted successes in places like Somalia and noted the U.S. can learn from events in Mali. Additional comments from the Pentagon on the U.S. presence in Africa can be found [here](#).

On March 14th, the multinational maritime exercise known as the Saharan Express 2013 (SE-13) concluded with post-sail discussions and a press conference in Dakar, Senegal. The goal of the exercise was to improve cooperation between West African, European, and U.S. forces on counter-piracy efforts off the coast of West Africa. SE-13 is one of four African regional Express-series exercises known as African Partnership Station (APS). Additional details on the end of SE-13 can be found [here](#).

On March 18th, as a result of budget restrictions under sequestration, the Department of Defense (DOD) announced that it would begin issuing furlough notices as soon as March 21st, with the first furloughs to go into effect on April 25th. DOD has articulated that while uniformed service members are exempt from furloughs, that some activity duty units could be impacted. Most notably, furloughs could potentially affect 800 of approximately 2,000 AFRICOM employees. Additional information on the forthcoming DOD furlough notices is available [here](#).

U.S. Congress

On March 15th, the House Armed Services Committee held a hearing on the posture of the U.S. European Command and AFRICOM. AFRICOM Commander Army General Carter Ham testified at the hearing. During the hearing, outgoing AFRICOM Commander Ham described AFRICOM's focus

on countering violent extremism, strengthening maritime security, enhancing defense capabilities, maintaining strategic posture, and responding to crises in the region. He also discussed the limited assets of AFRICOM and noted the significant gap in military intelligence and special operations forces in the region. Additional information about the hearing, as well as an archived webcast, can be viewed [here](#).

On March 15th, Representative Duncan Hunter (R-CA) urged Congress to award Glen Doherty and Tyrone Woods, both contractors and former Navy SEALs who were killed during the September 11th attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, the Congressional Gold Medal. Despite receiving orders to remain at a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) compound during the attack, Doherty and Woods ran half a mile to provide additional support to personnel at the U.S. consulate. Additional details about Representative Hunter's effort to seek sponsorship for the Congressional Gold Medal can be found [here](#).

On March 20th, Representative Austin Scott (R-GA) introduced legislation to prohibit foreign military financing (FMF) to Egypt. The bill has been referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. More information on the proposed legislation is available [here](#).

North Africa

On March 11th, Council on Foreign Relations fellow Steven Cook wrote a blog post warning that unrest in Egypt could become the modern version of the violence seen in Egypt in 1952 that stemmed from the killing of an Egyptian police officer by British troops and culminated in the Free Officers coup. Today, violence committed by Egypt's Ministry of the Interior has led to revolts. In the blog post, Cook warns that President Mohammed Morsi is in a difficult position, stuck between superficially changing the Ministry—something seen as a political cost—or challenging the Ministry. The blog post can be found [here](#).

On March 14th, a group of unknown extremists set fire to an Egyptian Coptic church in Benghazi, Libya, marking the second attack on the church in weeks. The attack was allegedly motivated by a recent protest at the Libyan embassy in Cairo, Egypt, where a Libyan flag was burned. Demonstrators at the embassy in Egypt indicated they were protesting the death of an Egyptian at an explosion in front of a church in Libya last month. During an earlier attack on the church in Benghazi, gunmen infiltrated the church and assaulted two priests. An article on the attacks on the Egyptian Coptic church in Benghazi can be read [here](#).

On March 18th, the Libyan government announced that it was halting bids to procure the Libyan Post, Telecommunication and Information Technology Corporation (LIPTIC). Much of the private telecommunications equipment in the country had been destroyed following the Libyan revolution, and LIPTIC's infrastructure is desired by many companies, including Etisalat, Saudi Telecom Co., and Ooredoo. The country was attempting to privatize LIPTIC. No reason for the stop has been made public. An article with details on the issue can be found [here](#).

On March 19th, Morocco's King Mohamed VI's concluded his official trip to Senegal. During meetings, King Mohamed VI discussed shared interests between Morocco and Senegal related to infrastructure and the mining industry. At the conclusion of his visit, Senegal's President Macky Sall issued a statement calling for Morocco to rejoin the African Union (AU). Morocco pulled out of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1984 over territorial issues in the Western Sahara. King Mohamed VI concluded the trip by pledging to support Senegal's candidacy to the UN Security Council for 2016-2017. More insights on King Mohamed VI's trip to Senegal are available [here](#).

On March 19th, the New York Times reported that poachers killed 86 elephants in Chad last week. This marks the worst attack on elephants in the region since the poaching of 300 elephants in Cameroon early last year. There is currently speculation that the same group of poachers could be responsible for both attacks. The full New York Times report can be read [here](#).

East Africa

On March 14th, Bloomberg reported that South Sudan signed an agreement with Ethiopia and Djibouti that may enable South Sudan to export oil from ports on the East African coast using trucks while a study on building pipelines through Ethiopia and Kenya is completed. According to South Sudan Deputy Petroleum Minister Elizabeth James Bol, technical assessments of the proposed pipelines are underway and Germany's ILF Consulting Engineers are conducting a feasibility study on interim arrangements to transport oil from South Sudan by truck. The Bloomberg article on the arrangements between South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Djibouti can be read [here](#).

On March 14th, the UN General Assembly agreed to upgrade the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to a full UN organization, which will be called the UN Environmental Assembly. The Kenyan mission to the UN has been a lead advocate for upgrading the status of the UNEP, especially as the recent decision is anticipated to increase diplomatic representation in Nairobi from 58 states to include all 193 UN member states. An article on the upgrading of the UNEP has been posted [here](#).

On March 14th, at the final meeting of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) conference, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda were given a deadline of July 2014 to reduce their involvement in the ivory trade, or else face trade sanctions. Additional information on the potential trade sanctions facing East African countries supplying ivory to consumers such as China, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, and the Philippines, can be viewed [here](#).

On March 17th, the AU's Peace and Security Council arrived in Sudan for meetings regarding violence in the Darfur region. During the trip, the delegation was expected to meet with Sudanese government officials in both El Fasher and Nyala and to observe refugees in Kebkabiya. More details on the AU delegation trip to Sudan can be found [here](#).

On March 18th, Kenya Airways continued its expansion plans in Africa by announcing flights to Livingstone, Zambia. Flights to Livingstone, which is a major stop for tourists visiting Victoria Falls, will depart three times per week. A lack of major carriers in southern African has allowed Kenya Airways to fill a gap in the region. An article on Kenya Airways' expansion in Zambia is available [here](#).

On March 18th, Oxford University unveiled a new study concluding that Rwanda could potentially eradicate poverty by 2033. According to researchers, this may be possible due to the significant strides Rwanda has made in improving sanitation and water conditions. The study also cites evidence of Rwanda's recent efforts to combat poverty, indicating that government figures for poverty in Rwanda declined by 15% from 2007-2012. Additional insights on poverty in Rwanda from the Oxford University study can be read [here](#).

On March 20th, the BBC reported that a public health television advertisement in Kenya promoting condom usage has been withdrawn following an outcry from Christian and Muslim leaders. Dr. Peter Cherutich, a health official in Kenya, said the ad is essential to preventing the spread of HIV. Dr. Cherutich said 30% of married couples in the country have other partners and many of these people do not use a condom. Religious leaders said the ad was shown during primetime and inappropriately

promoted extramarital affairs. News on the ad can be found [here](#).

West Africa

On March 12th, journalists and media groups in Togo began a media blackout in the country to protest a law passed by Parliament that would allow the media regulatory body, the High Authority for Broadcasting and Communication (HAAC), to impose sanctions on the media without judicial review. Free press advocates say the law violates Article 26 of the Togolese Constitution, which says no publication can be banned unless by court decision. Details on the protest can be found [here](#).

On March 14th, Business Day reported that Nigeria's offshore drilling expenditures will reach \$2.26 billion by 2016. While Nigeria is Africa's leading oil producer, Angola is expected to have the largest offshore drilling expenditures by 2016, at a projected amount of \$6.67 billion. According to GBI Research, a surge in exploration activities off the coast of Africa is driving up spending on offshore drilling. TheBusiness Day article on offshore drilling expenditures in West Africa is available [here](#).

On March 18th, a car filled with explosives struck a bus parked at a depot in Nigeria. At least 22 people died as a result of the attack, which is potentially the work of the Boko Haram terrorist group. A New York Times article on the bombing can be read [here](#).

On March 18th, the ICC held a ceremony recognizing Côte d'Ivoire as the 122nd party to the Rome Statute that created the court. During the ceremony, Ambassador of Côte d'Ivoire Sallah Ben Abdelkader Hamza was presented with a special edition of the Rome Statute. The Statute will enter into force for Côte d'Ivoire on May 1st. Details on Côte d'Ivoire's ratification of the Rome Statute can be found[here](#).

On March 19th, Liberian Vice President Joseph Boakai said his country has numerous hydrocarbon reserves and he encouraged Indian companies to share in the discovery in exchange for helping to develop Liberia's infrastructure. Vice President Boakai was in India for a conference on India-Africa project partnerships. More information on the potential Liberia-India partnership is available [here](#).

On March 19th, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan addressed the Nigeria Summit 2013 and announced that due to the ongoing revolution in Nigeria's agriculture sector, the country will halt the importation of rice in 2016 and shift its focus to processing and exporting raw materials. President Jonathan also spoke to how Nigeria is improving its infrastructure system and power supply in order to support exports. Further details on President Jonathan's appearance at the Nigeria Summit 2013 can be viewed [here](#).

On March 19th, Ghanaian Minister of Energy, Oil, and Gas Emmanuel Kofi Buah launched the 17thOffshore West Africa International Conference and Exhibition in Accra, Ghana. In his opening remarks, Minister Buah called for the strengthening of local businesses and partnerships with foreign allies to advance Ghana's petro-chemical industry. The conference is anticipated to attract participants from 60 countries who will share technical expertise, especially on deep-water exploration. Additional information on the conference can be read [here](#).

On March 19th, Director of Lending for Guinea's Central Bank Mamady Fofana said that a new stock exchange will be unveiled in Guinea in the next 24 months. Because traditional financing through banks has grown to be ineffective, the stock exchange will be used to generate funding for Guinea's mining sector. Director Fofana also indicated that Guinea's authorities are currently preparing a shortlist of mining, industrial, and banking companies to be listed on the exchange. More details on

the vision for Guinea's stock exchange are available [here](#).

On March 20th, a wooden ship traveling in the Gulf of Guinea from Nigeria to Gabon capsized about 46 miles off the African coast. While 160 passengers were on board at the time of the capsizing, only two survivors have been rescued. Accidents of this nature are common for boats taking this trip, and rescue efforts are being coordinated in Calabar, Nigeria. A BBC article on the rescue attempt can be found [here](#).

On March 20th, Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Sanusi Lamido Sanusi announced that he will not renew his contract when his five-year term expires in 2014. After taking office in June 2009, Governor Sanusi quickly fired eight leaders within the CBN following an audit that found evidence of mismanagement and reckless lending. Details on Governor Sanusi's recent announcement are available [here](#).

Sub-Saharan Africa

On March 15th, Visa and South African Tourism (SAT) launched the Africa App Quest (AAQ) competition, challenging developers to build the best mobile application for tourism in sub-Saharan Africa. The competition will run through August 16th and the winner will be awarded \$10,000. The competition is motivated by World Bank projections that travel and tourism in sub-Saharan Africa will grow by 5.5% over the next ten years. Details on the competition are available [here](#).

On March 18th, construction of Eskom's Medupi power plant in South Africa hit an obstacle when the software operating system designed by French contractor Alstom failed three tests. Eskom faces a critical deadline of bringing the power plant online by December otherwise South Africa could be vulnerable to blackouts and load-shedding. South African Public Enterprises Minister Malusi Gigaba has become increasingly involved in the construction process, especially as contractors on the project have continued to perform poorly. An article on the challenges met in the construction of the Medupi power plant can be read [here](#).

On March 19th, Procter & Gamble said it plans to build a new, \$174 million manufacturing plant in South Africa beginning next year. The project is expected to create more than 500 jobs and provide goods to sub-Saharan and East Africa. South African Trade and Industry Minister Robert Davies hailed the investment as a sign that his country remains a gateway to the African continent. Information on the Procter & Gamble investment can be found [here](#).

On March 19th, South Africa indicated its corn output forecast will likely decrease 6.5% from a February estimate. The decrease is largely due to a drought in the corn-producing regions of the country. An article on South Africa's projected corn production rates can be read [here](#).

General Africa News

On March 13th, Richard Joseph wrote an opinion piece for the website AfricaPlus on the increasing opportunities available to American companies on the continent. Joseph said the U.S. should continue to support free and fair elections that promote democracy and empower the people of Africa. The post can be read [here](#).

On March 18th, at the inaugural session of the "India-Africa: The Growing Partnership" project, India's Minister of State for External Affairs Preneet Kaur said that India and Africa have witnessed a five-fold increase in their trade volume in the past seven years at \$65 billion. She also noted that

India has extended 150 lines of credit to Africa worth \$5.2 billion for projects including a rural electrification plant at Burkina Faso, a cassava plantation in Cameroon, and a cement plant in Djibouti. More information on the trade relationship between Africa and India can be found [here](#).

On March 19th, the Chinese government officially announced that President Xi Jinping will visit Africa as part of a four-nation tour. Chinese officials said the visit would provide a valuable opportunity for President Xi to address ways to strengthen Chinese relations with Africa. President Xi is scheduled to attend a BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) summit on March 26th and 27th in South Africa. Full details on the trip are available [here](#).

On March 19th, Naresh Trehan, chairman of Medanta-The Medicity, and Intex Construction Group and the RJ Corporation announced a collaboration known as Medanta AfriCare. The effort seeks to provide increased health services to Africa in Uganda, Rwanda, the DRC, and Tanzania. Medanta AfriCare already runs a hospital in Kenya. More details on the partnership can be found [here](#).

On March 19th, Forbes magazine noted how foreign direct investment in Africa has increased from just \$15 billion in 2002 to \$46 billion in 2012. The increase is due in large part to Infrastructure and transportation deals. China is a major investor on the continent, but India also plays a large role on the continent. Additionally, Australia has an interest in the mining and energy sectors of Africa. The article, which offers examples of recent foreign investments in Africa, can be read [here](#).

On March 19th, the Commonwealth Business Council released its 2013 Africa Infrastructure Investment Report. In the report, Chief Infrastructure Economist at the African Development Bank (AfDB) Shem Simuyemba provides an overview of initiatives that are part of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), which was approved by leaders of African governments in January 2012. According to Simuyemba, PIDA provides a framework to address fragmented and underperforming power, transportation, and water infrastructure systems across the continent. The full 2013 Africa Infrastructure Investment Report can be downloaded [here](#).

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