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The Continent



The herders' dilemma

The fight to keep Ugandan cows alive in a changing climate

Photo: Stuart Tibaweswa



COVER: A Karamojong herder watches over his cattle as they search for scarce water. The climate in north-eastern Uganda is already changing, with droughts and floods mixing to make life harder. This month it means dry riverbeds and digging holes to find drinking water. Next month it can mean heavy rains that destroy topsoil and ruin crops. Herders, documented in a stunning photo essay by Stuart Tibaweswa, have no choice but to adapt (p19). That adaptation needs data to understand how things are changing, and will change. But just 0.5% of the money for climate research is spent in Africa and there are big gaps in knowledge (p17).

Inside:

- **Welcome!** Award-winning cartoonist Gado joins *The Continent* for season 5 (p3)
- **Uganda's army** kills a student after football fight (p7)
- **War and uncertainty** mean it's boom time for commodities, but we'll pay (p8)
- **Fleeing war** and facing racism in Ukraine (p13)
- **G.O.A.T.** Eliud Kipchoge has three of the four fastest marathon times in history (p15)
- **Travel:** Taking a slow boat down the Nile (p26)

READER SURVEY:

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SHELL

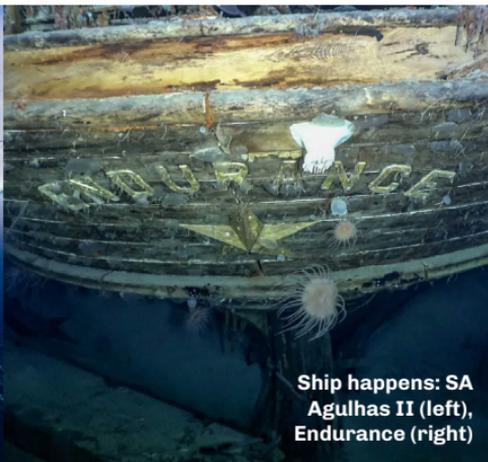
Crude behaviour, slick comeback

Shell, the petrochemical giant and renowned polluter of the Niger Basin, says it will stop doing business in and with Russia. It has promised to shut down over 500 service stations and all its aviation fuels and lubricants operations in the country which invaded its neighbour, Ukraine. To begin, Shell will stop all spot purchases of Russian crude oil. This was after it came under heavy criticism for buying Russian oil at the weekend, at a knock-down price.

CORONAVIRUS

Six million are dead, and still more will die

The official global death toll from Covid-19 is on the verge of passing 6-million – underscoring that the pandemic, now entering its third year, is far from over. The Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is still pressing for more vaccines, despite some shipments arriving with little warning for countries' health systems and others near the expiration date – forcing doses to be destroyed. Experts believe the true global death toll will never be known.



Ship happens: SA Agulhas II (left), Endurance (right)

ANTARCTIC

Unshackled at last

The world's most difficult ship-hunt ended this week when, after a month of searching, the South African science vessel *SA Agulhas II* found the wreck of *Endurance*, which was crushed by ice

and sank in 1915. The lost ship was on an expedition commanded by explorer Ernest Shackleton, to cross the South Pole's landmass. It got trapped in ice for almost a full year before slipping underwater. The crew survived, and marked the coordinates of the wreck. The South African scientists found it after a month of searching.

UKRAINE

Europe by gaslight

European Council President Charles Michel claims the reports of racism and bigotry meted out against fleeing African students from Ukraine was simple "Russian propaganda". According to Michel, "Russia activated hostile propaganda to try to instil doubt in African countries during a diplomatic battle at the UN". No word yet on verified firsthand accounts and depictions of racism making the rounds on social media. (See page 13)

KENYA

Sonko sanctioned

Nairobi's ex-governor Mike Sonko is banned from the United States because of "involvement in significant corruption", said a spokesperson for the US embassy in Kenya. Sonko's family may also not enter the country or do business there. He faces more than 30 charges, from conflict of interest to receiving bribes and money laundering, to which he pleads not guilty. He has previously served jail time for not honouring court dates.

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POP CULTURE

O2 e choke

Davido became the third Afrobeats star to sell out London's O2 Arena, following in the footsteps of Wizkid and Burna Boy. Supported by a long list of popular artists, from Africa and its diaspora, the musician performed a set so stacked that the show ran overtime by 34 minutes, earning him a hefty fine – allegedly \$448,222. He didn't seem bothered, though. Days later he flashed two newly acquired Rolex watches and a Mercedes-Maybach SUV on his social media. All's well that ends well.



Photo:
Twitter/
Davido

MODERNA

Covid patents 'will never be enforced'

On Monday Biotech Moderna signed a memorandum of understanding with Kenya to build its first mRNA vaccine manufacturing facility in Africa. This week it also updated its promises not to enforce and police its Covid-19 patents at all for the duration of the pandemic, as pledged in October 2020. Now it has undertaken to “never enforce” them against manufacturers in, or producing for, 92 low- and middle-income countries. The wider global pharmaceutical industry has faced accusations of putting profits before people by not addressing global vaccine inequity around the world, and especially on the continent.

ZAMBIA

Former president dies after cancer fight

Rupiah Banda died on Friday night after a long struggle with colon cancer. He was 95. Banda served as president from 2008-2011, but his tenure was marred by corruption allegations.

WILDLIFE

Cheetahs fading fast

Fewer than 7,000 cheetahs are left in the world. Many are poached in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, says Somaliland Heritage's Cheetah Safe House, and “trafficked to the Arabian Peninsula and sold to the highest bidder”.

Uganda

A tragic chain of overreaction

The actual army was called to rein in unruly students, and they did what soldiers do

Andrew Arinaitwe in Kampala

A 17-year old student, Gabriel Rwot Omiya, was killed in what appears to have been a drunken shooting by soldiers of Uganda's national army, at a school in Gulu. The soldiers, who were called to quell a riot, reportedly shot the boy out of the tree he had been hiding in to escape the chaos on the school grounds.

The mayhem began when school authorities denied the pupils permission to watch a football match between Manchester United and Manchester City.

"A few students started throwing stones on the roofs," Jimmy Owani, the headteacher of the private school told *The Continent*. The windows of some school buildings were broken and some computer equipment was destroyed.

An unidentified person called for

national security personnel to end the riot. The first armed forces to go to the scene were soldiers of the UPDF – Uganda People's Defence Forces, the national army. Eye witnesses said they appeared drunk.

The Gulu army commander, Bonny Bamwiseiki, didn't respond to *The Continent's* question on the sobriety of the soldiers and the regional police commander, Damalie Nachuha, neither confirmed nor denied it, saying, "drunkenness is determined by an expert".

According to Caroline Alarokuma, the deceased student's aunt, Gabriel was in the dormitory when he heard the chaos, ran out and climbed the mango tree to hide. "The soldiers were pulling them out of the dormitories!" she said.

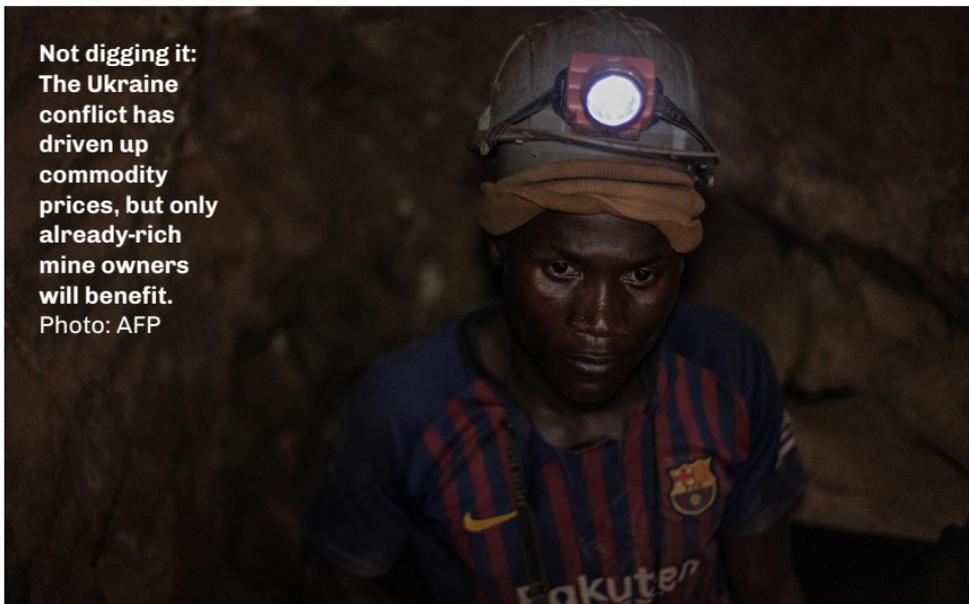
It's unclear how the tragedy then unfolded but Gabriel's family says the postmortem report says that a bullet struck his back, went through his chest and throat, and exited through the mouth, scattering teeth and dislocating his jaw.

A Uganda Police deputy spokesperson, Claire Nabakka, said that they arrested two soldiers, "RO11337, Lt. Oryema John Obi, RA194594 Private Denis Ochola and the suspects have been charged with murder by shooting."

"Five girls collapsed as a result of shock and three boys got cut with broken bottles," Owani told *The Continent*. One teacher also suffered a head injury. ■

World

Not digging it:
The Ukraine conflict has driven up commodity prices, but only already-rich mine owners will benefit.
Photo: AFP



The economic aftershocks of Putin's war

The impact of the invasion of Ukraine on commodities will make some Africans very rich – and the rest of us poorer and hungrier

When Russia invaded Ukraine, it set off a chain reaction of humanitarian, diplomatic and

economic crises around the world. These exacerbated the existing crises that Covid-19 had, in turn, aggravated.

Among these chain reactions was a precipitous rise in the value of nickel. The precious metal, essential to the production of smartphones and electric vehicles, has doubled in price. That's because Russia has the world's third biggest supply, and it is facing a barrage of economic sanctions from the western world.

The London Metal Exchange suspended the nickel market early Tuesday, after the price of the metal, used in stainless steel and electric-vehicle batteries, nearly doubled in a few hours.

It was the first time the exchange paused trade in a metal since 1985.

On the southern tip of Africa, the continent's ninth-richest man was watching these developments closely. Patrice Motsepe, the billionaire and brother-in-law of South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa, happens to own a major nickel mine. The mine – Nkomati Nickel in Mpumalanga – had been mothballed, because the price of nickel was not high enough to keep it going. Suddenly, this has changed, and Motsepe's company announced this week it was considering reopening the mine.

This is the nature of war: Even as some people suffer, others will profit. The question is who profits, and how – and what happens to the rest of us?

Implications for Africa

It's not just nickel: the war in Ukraine has made many other commodities more expensive. Russia is a major producer of rare precious metals like tungsten, tantalum and palladium. Big American companies like Apple, who can no longer purchase from Russia, need to find new suppliers of these metals, and fast.

Take tantalum: a blue-grey metal prized because it is almost completely resistant to corrosion. This quality makes it essential in smartphones, as well as nuclear reactors, aircraft and missile parts, and some surgical appliances. Rwanda is the biggest exporter of tantalum in the world, with the Democratic Republic of Congo not far behind. Ethiopia, too, is a major exporter.

These governments can expect to earn

significantly more from their mining sector this year, while the companies that actually run the mining operations can expect bumper profits.

“Exporters of metal commodities like platinum, palladium and bauxite are also likely to see their current account balances improve under stronger prices,” Yvonne Mhango, an economist for Sub-Saharan Africa at Renaissance Capital, told *The Continent*. She said that the currencies of Africa's commodity exporters are likely to strengthen.

The question is who profits, and how – and what happens to the rest of us?

It is in Nigeria, Africa's most-populous country and its largest economy, that this commodities boom is likely to have the biggest impact. Specifically the boom in one particular commodity: Oil.

The oil price has been fluctuating wildly in recent days, at one point hitting \$139 a barrel – that's 30% higher since the invasion began. Suddenly, Nigeria's federal budget is looking a lot healthier.

Pain for everyone

None of this is necessarily good news for ordinary citizens. In Rwanda and Ethiopia, mining operations are closely linked to the state – states which have been strongly implicated in human rights abuses.

In Ethiopia, especially, the state is currently engaged in a brutal civil war in which it has been implicated in multiple massacres of civilians and other major



Hot take: A metallurgy worker melts nickel, the price of which has suddenly shot up.

Photo: AFP

human rights abuses. Increased profits from mining will keep funding that war. *(On a similar theme, read on p11 about how an oil boom in the 1990s entrenched an autocratic dictatorship in Equatorial Guinea – Ed)*

Besides, profits from individual commodities are unlikely to offset the general economic pain caused by a world in crisis. Even before the Ukraine war, the World Bank estimated that the Covid-19 pandemic had already wiped \$165-billion off Africa's total wealth.

And the rising oil prices caused by the European conflict will make petrol more expensive, even in Nigeria, which still imports all of its refined petroleum. This may even offset the extra income Nigeria receives from selling its unrefined oil.

“Even for leading oil producers such as Nigeria, the picture is more complex,”

said Michael Nderitu, head of trading at AZA Finance, a Nairobi-based forex trading firm. “While revenue from crude exports may give some support to local currencies, the cost of importing refined petroleum is likely to put pressure on Africa's forex markets in the near term, with the biggest net importers – such as Kenya – suffering the most.”

The picture is similar when it comes to wheat. Russia and Ukraine together export 29% of the world's wheat, and all of that is currently under threat. That has led to a spike in the price of grain, amid fears of a global shortage. Expect the cost of bread to rise substantially in African countries that import wheat – Egypt, Ghana and Kenya among them. All of this will make the cost of living significantly more expensive – unless, of course, you happen to own your own nickel mine. ■

How Equatorial Guinea became a textbook kleptocracy

A massive oil find enabled an authoritarian regime

Enrique N. Okenve Martínez

In the mid-1990s, offshore oil extraction began in Equatorial Guinea, and many believed that the small, poverty-stricken country in the west of Central African had struck gold under its territorial waters. Along with the wave of democratisation that was sweeping through the African continent at the time, this was a second chance to start all over again (after the economic and humanitarian disaster of its first post-independence government).

Optimism, however, was misplaced. Oil extraction has not brought about the change so many dreamt of. Instead, vast revenues have strengthened the 43-year-long autocracy headed by President Obiang Nguema and his family.

Obiang took over in a coup in 1979 that was supposed to usher in democracy. But it was only in the late 1980s that other political organisations were legalised and multiparty elections organised. Soon, it became clear that he was not as popular as he had assumed, and Obiang's government soon resorted to rigging elections to stay in power.

In the absence of political legitimacy and social support, the president has been able to rely on the immense economic

resources from the country's oil to develop a very effective clientelist system. This grants access to national wealth through an intricate network of multilayered loyalties and support – all controlled by the ruling elite.

The ruling party was turned into an efficient co-optation tool to widen loyalties across all corners of the country in exchange for political and state appointments that enable illicit access to public resources.

State-sponsored corruption has turned many Equatorial-Guineans into accomplices of the generalised misappropriation of state resources. While most citizens have not benefited directly from this scheme, it would be difficult to find a family in which none of its members has got their hands dirty.

The country's spectacular economic growth from the beginning of the century gave way to a massive expansion of the country's infrastructure. Not only did this change the face of a country which, until then, had been isolated and poor, but it quickly facilitated the expansion and deepening of corruption.

Every infrastructure project – and their number grew exponentially – became an opportunity for the misappropriation of



Forever Obiang:
President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo wishes you all a very happy new year.

state resources and further enrichment of the president, who proudly claimed that the import of cement – a monopoly of his company – was the only business in which he was personally involved.

Today, when locals refer to the country as the president's *finca* – Spanish for farm or estate – one should not take this as an exaggeration but, rather, as an accurate portrayal of President Obiang's kleptocratic system: Not only does he effectively control the country's main economic resources, but he also has the power to take away whatever wealth is owned by any citizen, should he wish to set an example to encourage "loyalty".

This is the way

Equatorial Guinea has become a clear case of how autocratic rulers can easily benefit from capitalist activities that, far from generating democratic and social transformations, bolster dictatorial regimes and foster widespread corruption.

The consequences of this wasted opportunity will be felt by citizens for many generations to come. The steady fall

in oil production since 2012 has revealed how the government of Equatorial Guinea wasted an opportunity for meaningful economic and social transformation and the sustained benefit of its people.

Of course, it is not just dictators and their local cronies who are complicit in the creation of a kleptocracy. It also requires the collaboration and complicity of international corporations, an army of sophisticated lawyers, bankers, accountants and other professional enablers, and the governments that harbour them.

Too often, the international community seems to think that the combination of power-hungry autocrats, profit-hungry corporations and clearly-flawed elections will somehow lead to democracy.

Equatorial Guineans can attest that this is not the case. ■

Enrique N Okenve Martínez is a lecturer and head of the department of history and archaeology at the University of the West Indies in Jamaica.

My escape from Ukraine

Caught up in the invasion, **Bisola Ehi Ogolowa** recounts how she made it to safety – experiencing both kindness and blatant racism on her arduous journey

I am in Budapest in Hungary now, but the journey here has been intense, frustrating, depressing and confusing. I've been in a state of constant fear and uncertainty since the Russian army, with the collaboration of Belarus, started amassing troops on Ukraine's borders.

Russia said the troops were there for training exercises, but most in Ukraine saw through that ruse. In fact, many speculating over a potential invasion had initially diarised 16 February as D-Day.

Then, on the morning of Thursday the 24th, we heard two bomb blasts, our first experience of the war in Dnipro, the city in eastern Ukraine where I lived. It had started four days earlier and was already raging in Kyiv, the capital and other cities like Kharkiv, Sumy, Odessa.

We knew that the next stage for Dnipro would be implementation of curfew and martial law so, on Friday, my roommates and I went out to buy some groceries, hoping to get enough to last us a month indoors. But everybody had had the same thought! The stores and ATMs were queued up. We managed to get some groceries, but no cash. The situation was so stressful that one of my roommates kept throwing up. It didn't help that we were all recovering from typhoid fever.

By Saturday, we were hearing that Russian troops were heading towards Zaporizhzhya, about an hour-plus from where I resided. We decided it was time to leave! We headed for the train station with nothing but the most essential items: documents and clothes for a week. Mine in a hand-luggage box and a hand bag.

Once again, everyone had made the same decision as us! The station was crowded with Ukrainians and foreigners alike. Cue the racism! Though some trains were free, the one we needed required tickets – but railway workers were only selling to Ukrainians.

We decided to wait for the train anyway, without tickets. But no one was sure of the right track. We kept running up and down the stairs to different platforms trying to figure out the right one, only for the train to leave us behind because we didn't have the tickets they refused to sell to us. But we forced our way onto the next train. A few of our friends were aboard already, and they made space for us.

The journey out of Dnipro was for 18 hours, during which we neither ate nor slept properly. Arriving in Lviv, a city in western Ukraine, 70km from the Polish border, our initial plan was to go to Poland but the trains were unavailable and we

were hearing that foreigners were being rejected at that border.

By this point, there were many black men among us. They helped us, black women, get on the train to Uzhgorod, towards the border with Hungary. It was a five-hour journey. We still hadn't eaten. In Uzhgorod, we took a bus to Chop station; the last stop before crossing into Hungary.

Chop station was so choked up that soldiers had to come to create some order. Exhausted and famished, we decided to stay the night in Uzhgorod, accommodated by an acquaintance. We were able to eat at last, and rest, before setting off for Chop station early on Monday the 28th.

More racism! We stood over four hours in a ticket queue because soldiers were stopping people from going through unless they were Ukrainian women and children. Now, I had no problem with letting women and children be the priority but are *we* not women?

Then soldiers escalated the whole thing by asking us to move backwards and pushing us when we didn't. At the head of my queue was a Ukrainian woman. A black guy stood just behind her. The soldier pushed the guy backwards, saying that he wouldn't touch a woman – but when I got to the front, the soldier again demanded we move back and pushed me so badly I screamed. He didn't care where he was touching me, using his body to push me, his hands pressing my breasts.

Most of the friends I had travelled with left for Hungary but I stayed behind waiting for a friend from Zaporizhzhya so we could go to Hungary together. At the

station, I spoke to other African people/students listening to their stories of escape from Kyiv or Kharkiv. Some said they initially went to the Polish border, walking nine hours to the border, only to have to walk the distance back to Lviv after they failed to cross through because of the discriminations against foreigners.

Respite from the storm

A Ukrainian lady, mother of an acquaintance named Christina, let four of us sleep in her house that night. She treated us perfectly; gave us food, clean towels and a very spacious room with a very comfortable bed. The next day, 1 March, we left early for Chop Station and to our surprise found the place empty. A charmed day! We sailed through, got on the train and in 15 minutes we were in Zahony, Hungary!

There we met a Nigerian embassy representative who got us train tickets for to Budapest, where we were welcomed by every Hungarian there with free food and offers of free accommodation.

I chose not to take the evacuation flight provided by the Nigerian government on 3 March: I have been trying to earn my medical degree in Ukraine for nine years now. Twice it has been interrupted by Russian wars. The first time by the 2014 war in Crimea. I'm not ready to give it up yet. I got a temporary but renewable permit to stay in Hungary for a month, although I'm not allowed to cross into the rest of Europe or the Schengen area. ■

Bisola Ehi Ogolowa is a Nigerian student who was studying medicine in Ukraine.

Two hours in Tokyo

Kenyan runner Eliud Kipchoge won the Tokyo Marathon last weekend. Despite taking a wrong turn, the 37-year-old came within a minute of the world record of just over two hours and one minute – his own world record. Kipchoge now holds three of the four fastest times in history across the 42km distance. And he's won four of the six biggest marathons, as well as two Olympic gold medals.

THE WORLD'S FASTEST MARATHONS:

- 2:01:39 (Kipchoge)
- 2:01:41 (Kenenisa Bekele)
- 2:02:37 (Kipchoge)
- 2:02:40 (Kipchoge)



When will they have water?

This month brings us World Water Day (22 March) and the first World Water Forum held in sub-Saharan Africa (22-27 March in Dakar, Senegal).

Decision-makers from around the globe will confront the grim reality that billions of people – including millions of Africans – still lack access to safe drinking water, improved sanitation services, and basic handwashing facilities.

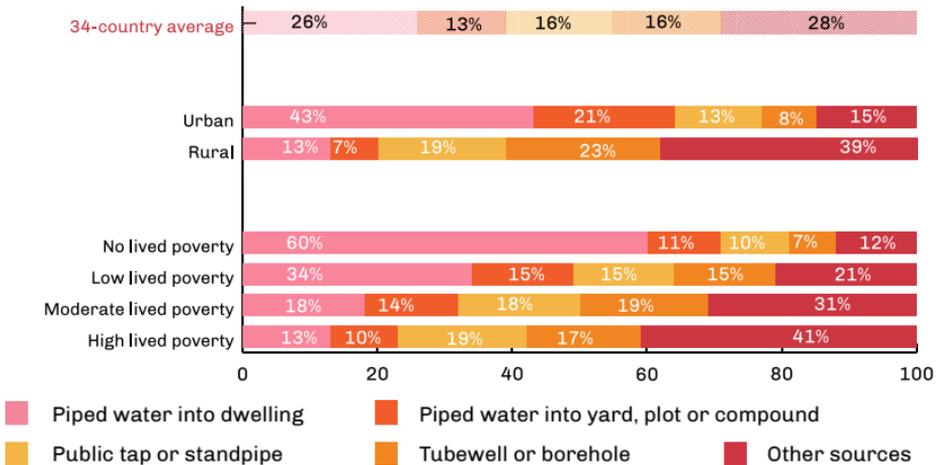
Findings from Afrobarometer surveys in 34 African countries show that more

than four in 10 Africans (43%) don't have access to piped-water systems, and only three in 10 (30%) live in areas served by sewage systems. A growing number of people – 56% in the past year – are experiencing shortages of clean water.

Access to piped water varies widely, from 99% in Mauritius to just 24% in Burkina Faso. But one reality shared by most countries is that rural residents and poor people are farthest from achieving the basic human right to clean water.

In rural areas, only 20% of people have piped water at home – one-third as many as in cities (64%). The gap is wider between the poor (those in “high lived poverty”) and the wealthy (23% vs. 71%).

Main source of water for household use | by urban-rural location and lived poverty | 34 African countries | 2019/2021



Source: Afrobarometer, a non-partisan African research network that conducts nationally representative surveys on democracy, governance, and quality of life. Face-to-face interviews with 1,200-2,400 people in each country yield results with a margin of error of +/- two to three percentage points.

Africa's climate science problem

As climate chaos envelops Africa, local scientists point to the need for urgent action – and the hope that this action will bring. But huge disparities in funding mean they are a small voice, with little data to work from.

Justina Asishana and Siph Kings

The mega climate change report released by the United Nations last week spelled out massive problems for Africa. These range from drought to wildfires, flooding, sea level rise and mass migration. It also concluded its over 3,000 pages with an urgent call to action: “Any further delay ... will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all.”

Debra Roberts is the co-chair of the group of hundreds of scientists from around the world who volunteered their time to put this report together. A South African, she was one of several scientists from the continent who were involved.

She told *The Continent* that “widespread losses and damages in every sector” will “affect everyone”. As things collapse, so much of Africa’s recent development could be reversed. As ever, this will affect those who are the least responsible the most — Africa emits about 3% of global carbon emissions

but will see the most extreme impacts of climate change. But that window of opportunity is important, she said, pointing to two key actions that need to be taken: Look after the ecosystems that already exist and rethink how African cities work (or don’t).

The climate report found that less than four percent of the money spent on climate research between 1990 and 2010 was spent on Africa. Only a fraction of that went to research done inside the continent

Edmond Totin, a climate scientist from Benin and an author of the UN report, said cities are key because so many people are already moving into them. More than half of Africa’s population now lives in cities, with over half of those people forced to live in informal settlements.

Feeding those cities — and keeping



Dire warnings: Debra Roberts, one of Africa's leading climate scientists, co-chaired the 3,000-page UN report. Photo: Twitter/IPCC_CH

people working in agriculture — is a huge challenge, he said. Africa's food sector is not resilient enough to changes in climate, especially in the majority of countries that rely on rainfall instead of irrigation systems. This is something that will need to change.

The data problem

The UN's report highlighted the significant disadvantages African scientists face, both in terms of financial resources and in how much data they have to make climate projections. Totin said real investment has to be made in early warning systems that can detect big, sudden disasters such as a cyclone earlier and more accurately, and also predict the onset of longer-term problems, like drought. This requires data.

And the climate report found that less than 4% of the money spent on climate research between 1990 and 2010 was

spent on Africa. A fraction of that went to research done inside the continent: \$140-million went to the United States and \$120-million to the United Kingdom to do research *on* Africa, while Kenya and South Africa each got \$10-million.

As the report politely notes: "Research led by external researchers may focus less on local priorities."

Climate models are therefore largely imported. There is also a massive problem with data on temperature, weather and socioeconomic indicators across much of Africa. Rwanda, for example, had little temperature data in the 1990s thanks to the genocide and change in government.

This makes it hard to say how rainfall, temperature and livelihoods are changing and will change at a local level. In the UN report this comes across with notes about low certainty on projections – in contrast with the very detailed projections on countries in western Europe. ■

PHOTO ESSAY

Uganda's climate and cattle problem

The Karimojong of north-eastern Uganda are some of the country's last remaining pastoralists. Their region is home to a fifth of the country's livestock and their way of life has developed to a precise rhythm over centuries.

But the climate here is changing. More intense rainfall yet less overall rain. Drought, high temperatures and generally unpredictable weather patterns are making their lives harder. Cattle need a clean and regular supply of water, as do the communities that keep them. They also need healthy soil so their grazing grass grows. Long-term climate projections suggest this unpredictability will only get worse. Photojournalist **Stuart Tibaweswa** spent a week with one community in Karamoja to document their daily work, which starts at 5am, and to see how they are being forced to adapt.



A young boy, Peter Lemukul, is shown in profile, focused on milking a large cow. He is wearing a green and white striped wrap. The cow is dark with white patches. In the background, another person is visible, and the setting appears to be a rural village with a thatched roof structure.

Peter Lemukul, 5, milks one of his father's cows in Ariamaoi Village, Nabilatuk district. He does this every morning and evening with his brother and cousins.



At 7am in Ariamaoi village in the Nabilatuk district, Angelle Peter and his fellow herders sit together, cleaning their teeth with sticks while sharing news and discussing which grazing routes to use after receiving an alert about an expected raid by a group of rustlers in their area. The dangers here are not just environmental: as the interpreter translates their conversation, it sparks very real concerns about our physical security.



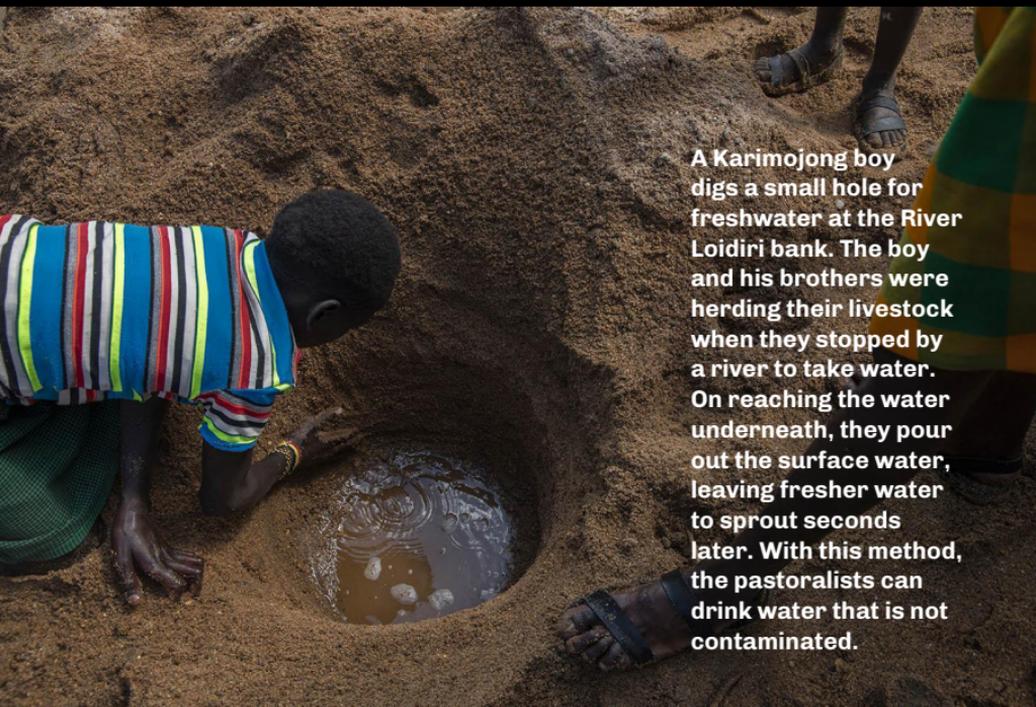
In Kotido district, a Karimojong herder watches over his cattle. This river was the herders' first water encounter of the day after walking for about four hours. It is very common in the Karamoja region to see young boys between the ages of 6 and 15 moving with their cattle, especially in safer grazing grounds around Moroto and Amudat.



In Ariamaoi village, Nabilatuk district, a family of Karimojong elders walk home after escorting herders and advising them on grazing routes that are safe to use. Iriama Anthony, 34, leading them at the front, is a household head of the manyatta (homestead) in the village. He plays a major role in providing information regarding the quantity of water and pasture versus the number of livestock in the area.



A woman washes her clothes in the river Ajijim in Nabilatuk district. It's the dry season, so the basic sources of water in this area – like boreholes – are dry with no water at all. People therefore have to travel further to access the water they need – most would rather store the little water they are able to collect from boreholes and rainwater for drinking and cooking, and use river water for their livestock and other domestic needs.



A Karimojong boy digs a small hole for freshwater at the River Loidiri bank. The boy and his brothers were herding their livestock when they stopped by a river to take water. On reaching the water underneath, they pour out the surface water, leaving fresher water to sprout seconds later. With this method, the pastoralists can drink water that is not contaminated.

A Karimojong pastoralist cools himself with surface water left over from the heavy downpour the previous night in Amudat district. During the dry season, temperatures can reach as high as 40°C, but averages at about 29°C in the afternoon.



Some areas of Karamoja benefit from the unusual rains, but certainly not all. River Omaniman, one of Karamoja's longest and fast-running rivers through Kotido district, was left completely waterless over the dry season in October. When it rains in this area of Kotido, the river fills rapidly with dense and furious water flow, which can sometimes claim the lives of people and animals.

Inside Liberia's overcrowded prisons

Liberian prisoners are living in shocking conditions – even though most have not yet been convicted

Dounard Bondo in Monrovia

Liberia's most populated prison – Monrovia Central Prison – went into lockdown in January because it couldn't feed its inmates and its keepers feared a food riot would erupt.

This was not an isolated incident.

Food shortages are an issue at prisons across the country – but they are far from the only issue.

“We are suffering,” Duo*, a 35-year-old inmate of the Monrovia prison tells *The Continent*. Prisoners don't have running water, he says, and get no skills training. The cells hold far more prisoners than they were designed to. “People sleep on the floor. Some tie rice bags high up on the walls and sleep in them. Sometimes they fall and get injured.”

Last year, the director of prisons, Reverend Sainleseh Kwaidah, said that only six out of 16 prisons had any clinical facilities or a clinician on duty each day. In the other 10 prisons, medical staff were only available on a rotational arranged schedule.

But, Duo says, it is the food situation that is truly dire. “We eat only once a day and it is just a small plate of rice. The

soup is usually bad so we have to buy some from outside. If you're lucky to have people on the outside, they will bring food for you,” he said.

In January, Duo and many others weren't able to eat for two days. It might have been longer but for the intervention of a local businessman, Upjit Singh Sachdeva, who donated food to the prison.

Overcrowded, underfunded

A major part of the problem is that Liberia has way more prisoners than it should. Sixty-three percent of the prison population across the country are pretrial detainees, according to a 2020 human rights report by the United States government.

In Monrovia Central Prison, where Duo is incarcerated, that figure is 77%. There are cases where the pre-trial detention has exceeded the maximum length of sentence that could be imposed for the alleged crime, the report noted.

Reverend Francis Kollie, the country director of Prison Fellowship Liberia, said: “We have a high number of pre-trial detainees and overcrowded prisons. This is due in part to the lack of a public



Photo: Jose Cabezaz/AFP

defence program that can adequately meet the demand of citizens.” In a country where the national per capita income was just \$570 in 2020, most people cannot afford bail or to hire a lawyer.

The government does employ public defenders to represent the poorest citizens but they are stretched thin, having to cover large areas in rural Liberia, leaving many people without adequate legal representation.

As a result, the prison system heaves with a population that far exceeds what it was built to hold. The Monrovia central prison was built to hold 374 people but in 2020 it held 1,230.

Funding prisoner welfare remains a low priority. A 2021 audit of the prison system by Liberia’s auditing commission showed that inmates had not been fed fish or meat for six months, from January 2021 to June 2021, because their monthly

food budget was cut from \$5,000 per prison to \$3,000. The year before, \$19,000 of the money meant to feed prisoners was diverted to cover security for a senatorial election in one of Liberia’s counties.

In a 2022 February press release, the government said it would build a new prison facility for the Monrovia Central Prison, which can’t hold any more prisoners than it already has. “The ministry of justice and stakeholders are to explore avenues for possible funding for the construction of a new prison facility,” the statement said. In February, the president also declared that he would be granting clemency to 500 inmates.

But Duo has a suggestion that does not involve investing even more of the country’s scarce resources in locking up even more citizens. “They need to introduce probation for good behaviour. I would have qualified by now.” ■



Five days on the river Nile

A four-night cruise on Africa's longest river offers scenic views and a memorable experience

Wale Okediran

We were still having lunch in a lovely cavernous restaurant on board our 150-passenger cruise ship, Radamis 11, when we upped anchor and set sail from the Egyptian port of Aswan.

The five-deck, 65-cabin ship nosed her way past other ships still at the dock, moving from the bank of the Nile towards the river's wide belly to commence our 220km voyage to the city of Luxor.

A number of activities had been arranged for our enjoyment. These included a "Tea Time" and "Special Dinner" on the sun deck as well as a colourful "Galabeya party" which gave guests the opportunity to dress up in traditional Egyptian clothing and dance to Arabic music, and enjoy a performance by an Egyptian belly dancer.

All the activities were listed in daily bulletins that were slipped under the door of our cabin every morning and were arranged in addition to the generous and delicious buffet breakfast, lunch and dinner.

With lunch over, I climbed to the sun deck, where I joined other passengers who, like me, had come to enjoy a better view of the River Nile.

By now the ship was picking up speed as we passed barges and fishermen in canoes who could be seen throwing their nets into the water at the edge of the great river.

Also at the edge of the river was lush farmland laden with mangoes and



Dipping a toe:
Families gather
on the shallow
waters of the
Nile. Photo: AFP

bananas, as well as forests and swamps with palm and date trees.

In the distance were estuaries of smaller rivers as they joined the Nile. These estuaries, according to one of the sailors, were full of Nile crocodiles – which are known to be very ferocious. Not quite as ferocious but getting there was the midday sun itself, directly above our heads on the deck as we watched local traders could be hawking their wares from small boats on the river to passengers four decks above them.

The young traders roped their boats to the side of the ship and, after displaying their wares, would take the clothing and scarves that had caught a passenger's eye and deftly throw them up, over and on to the sun deck. The passengers in return would throw money down to them in their canoes. Wonderful in theory. In practice many of the purchase failed to gain purchase – instead landing straight back in the river.

An hour later, we arrived at Esna as the golden sun slipped below the fluffy late afternoon clouds to cast a beautiful orange glow on the river. From minarets in some of the town's mosques came the ringing calls for the afternoon prayers. *Radamis 11* was called in a different direction however, and we continued sailing as afternoon tea was served.

After a dinner of mashed potatoes, baked salmon and fruit salad, I returned to the deck for a final nocturnal view of the great river. Standing there alone at that height with the rarefied air all around me, the whispers of the river evoked myriad creative images in my mind. Suddenly, my solitude was interrupted as another ship hove into view. On its own sun deck, passengers danced to lovely music whose melody wafted in the cool evening air to cascade down the calm surface of the river. ■

THE QUIZ

0-3

"I think I need to start reading more newspapers."

4-7

"I can't wait to explore more of this continent."

8-10

"My Afrobeats name is Quizzo. See you on Spotify."



Photo: Guillem Sartorio / AFP

1_ Muhoozi Kainerugaba is the son of which sitting African president?

2_ True or false: Zimbabwe does not border Mozambique.

3_ Which country is Africa's largest copper producer and the world's largest cobalt producer?

4_ Mike Sonko is a politician from which country?

5_ In which year was Kariba Dam opened: 1955, 1959 or 1965?

6_ What is the demonym for people from Chad?

7_ What are bicycle/

motorcycle taxis called in East Africa?

8_ Djibouti has two official languages. One is Arabic. What is the other?

9_ David Adedeji Adeleke is the birth name of which Afrobeats star?

10_ Which African president became the chairman of the African Union last month?

HOW DID I DO?

WhatsApp 'ANSWERS' to +27 73 805 6068 and we'll send the answers to you!

Would you like to send us some quiz questions or even curate your own quiz? Let us know at TheContinent@mg.co.za

Who wore out Women's Day best?



Continental Drift

Samira Sawlani

What a week it's been, dear reader. Featuring no less a day than *the* day so many companies, organisations and governments wait so desperately for each year. The *one* day a year they can put on their most Oscar-worthy performance, to show the world how wonderful, progressive and committed they are to the rights of half the global population. International Woman's Day.

After all, who needs equal pay when instead they can have a rose left on their desk by the HR department? And sure the government *could* roll up its sleeves and actually do something about gender based violence, maternal health and income disparity, but why bother with something boring like that it could post a tweet instead about how women hold up one half of the world?

Which woman amongst us would not choose speeches from our inglorious leaders about how incredible women are over, say, actually stopping funding conflicts and supporting regimes that actively harm women ever single day?

In fact we at *Continental Drift* think there should be a competition, a "who

wore it best" of sorts, in this case with the "best" being just the absolute worst.

Let us start with Kenya, where a video began to circulate in which a woman driver was attacked, stripped and sexually assaulted by a group of boda boda drivers. There were those that watched and those that *joined in* until a police officer arrived at the scene.

As the video surfaced on social media Kenyan women spoke out regarding similar experiences they have faced while others shared just how triggered watching the video or even just hearing about it had been. The following day a large group of women took to the streets of Nairobi as demanding that authorities do more to protect women.

Amid all this President Uhuru Kenyatta, clearly a champion of women's rights considering he featured in the papers of a woman named Pandora, ordered a "crackdown" on boda drivers, demanding that they go through a vetted re-registration process.

Meanwhile, the country's interior minister Dr Fred Matiang'I provided the drinkers amongst us with a game which could see them get tipsy pretty quick if they drank a shot every time certain words frequently trotted out by Kenyan government officials were mentioned.

Matiang'I said he was "shocked" (take a shot) and "disgusted" (take a shot) and has asked that the perpetrators be

“swiftly apprehended” (two shots), for their “heinous act” (take a shot), and that taskforce must be established (just finish the bottle at this point).

Party like there's no junta

From *Keeping up With The Kenyans* we flip channels over to *Keeping Up With The Coupdashions* in Burkina Faso, where authorities have approved a transition plan which would see the military junta remain in power for up to three years.

Days later, coup leader Lieutenant-Colonel Paul-Henri Damiba was sworn in again as president of the country, less than a month after the first time he was sworn in! Still, it was an excuse to get dressed up and have a party, though definitely not in attendance were any Ecowas leaders: Following the adoption of the transition plan by the Burkinabe government, Ecowas announced that the presidents of Ghana and Niger had cancelled their planned visit to Ouagadougou, and once more demanded the release of former president Roch Marc Christian Kaboré.

We're not sure how that will go, but someone who *has* been released is Tanzanian opposition party Chadema's Chairman Freeman Mbowe, after terrorism charges against him and his co-accused were dropped.

After his release, Mbowe, who had been in police custody since July last year, even met with President Samia Suluhu Hassan – leaving some optimistic that the crackdown on the opposition during her predecessor's reign is slowly being reversed. But while some are being set free, some are still clinging on... to other



Shocked: Surely Kenyan minister Fred Matiang'i is not driving us to drink?

Photo: Twitter/FredMatiangi

people's stuff. But others seem to be... giving it back? This week brought news that The Smithsonian Institute wants to repatriate its collection of Benin Bronzes to Nigeria, and relinquish any “technical” ownership. This comes after two bronzes looted by the British were returned by the universities of Cambridge and Aberdeen to Benin City in Nigeria. Over to you, British Museum! Hello? Hello? Oh dear. They hung up.

While we at Drift were keen to end this week's column by acknowledging the incredible women all across the African Continent, we are here to remind you that the fight for women cannot be reduced to one day. We need better policies, representation, protection and opportunities to create any kind of real empowerment. And our hearts are with those who have been let down by society, and the authorities who promised to keep them safe. ■

The struggle for gender parity in African cabinets

Gretchen Bauer and
Akosua K Darkwah

More governments are moving in the direction of gender parity cabinets. In early 2021, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, about a dozen countries had 50% women or more in “ministerial positions”, but this only included two African countries – Rwanda and Guinea Bissau. This raises the question of how cabinet appointment processes are gendered and what can be done to promote gender parity in cabinets in other African states.

To look at this we built on a model developed by Claire Annesley, Karen Beckwith and Susan Franceschet to interrogate the cabinet appointment process in Ghana, where women have never made up more than 32% – and are currently just 20% – of cabinet ministers.

We found that while Ghana has a fully “empowered” president who could appoint a gender parity cabinet, the formal and informal rules governing the selection of cabinet ministers work

against women’s representation. Although the constitution suggests attention to gender and regional balance, the norm of appointing one minister from each region is considered to be essential, which is not the case when it comes to gender. Another challenge is that the constitution requires that at least half of the 19 cabinet ministers must come from parliament, and only 15% of MPs are women.

The fact that which ministries are included in the cabinet varies between leaders is also challenging. Under President Nana Akufo-Addo, for example, the ministry of gender, children and social protection has been excluded. Additionally, dozens of ministers – non-cabinet ministers, regional ministers, ministers of state – are appointed outside of cabinet, many of whom are “friends and family appointments.” Thus, it is easy to see how women’s voices get lost.

Unless there is a significant change to both the formal and informal rules and to the large number of ministers outside of cabinet and to which ministries are inside cabinet, women’s ability to access and deploy political power will continue to be undermined. ■

Gretchen Bauer is a professor of political science and international relations at the University of Delaware. Akosua K. Darkwah is associate professor of sociology and acting dean, school of information and communication studies, at the University of Ghana. This analysis was produced in collaboration with Democracy in Africa.



THE BIG PICTURE

Avocado attack: An elephant grazes with a view of Mount Kilimanjaro in the background at Kimana Sanctuary in Kimana, Kenya. A turf war has erupted over a 180-acre avocado farm near one of Kenya's premier national parks, where elephants and other wildlife graze against the striking backdrop of Africa's highest peak. Opponents of the farm say it obstructs the free movement of the iconic tuskers – putting their very existence at risk – and clashes with traditional ways of using the land. The farm's backers refute this, saying their development poses no threat to wildlife and generates much-needed jobs on idle land. The rift underscores a broader struggle for dwindling resources that echoes beyond Kenya, as wilderness is constricted by expanding farmland to feed a growing population. Photo: Yasuyoshi Chiba/AFP



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