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# Denialism, Divisionism Soar

*27 yrs after the Genocide against the Tutsi*



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President Kagame becomes first EAC leader to test for COVID-19 jab



Rwanda's mogul SINA Gérard boosts online shopping, launches new products in the fight to combat Covid-19



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Light Publications Ltd and Rwandans in general again take this opportunity to convey deep sorrow to the family of Tanzania's President Magufuli and the people of the United Republic of Tanzania on the passing of H.E President John Pombe Magufuli on March 17, 2021. The region lost a true, great son of Africa and leader who worked zealously and passionately to improve the welfare of his people.

"The nation will remember him for his contribution to the development of our country," Zitto Kabwe, the Tanzanian opposition leader said through a Twitter.

Meanwhile, the historic visit of the French President Emmanuel Macron to Rwanda was a good gesture and a breakthrough in the efforts to mend the diplomatic relations that have been cold for over two decades due to the allegations that implicate France in the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

Finally, Rwanda welcomes the report by French historians commissioned by President Macron to probe



potential investors in ICT industry will follow suit in order to roll out the latest technology in region.

The Government of Rwanda (GoR) is still committed to carrying on the COVID-19 fight by encouraging masses to observe governments' health guidelines and regulations to mitigate further spread of the pandemic.

Like before, Rwanda shall vigilantly continue to be at the forefront of the fight to help governments manage the post COVID-19 economic recovery agenda. Most governments in the region are gradually lifting a ban on movements, operations of learning institutions and social gatherings with a call on citizens to continue observing the health guidelines such as wearing of masks and frequent hand washing. We encourage the citizens to massively participate in the ongoing COVID-19 vaccination programmes.

**Ernest Nyetera**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Light Publications Ltd

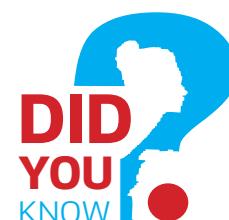
France's role in the genocide that killed over one million Tutsi. The report acknowledged France's "overwhelming responsibility",

Aside, we congratulate Nokia and Safaricom upon success in the launch of 5G commercial services in Kenya. We're hopeful that other



## Jerusalem violence: Deadly air strikes hit Gaza after rocket

Israel has launched air strikes against militant targets in the Gaza Strip, after rockets were fired from the territory towards Jerusalem. (PHOTO/Internet)



## Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe?

**FACT: Yes. The COVID-19 vaccines currently in use have all been through a rigorous testing and approval procedure to ensure they are safe and effective.**

Many of the COVID-19 vaccine trials have included people living with HIV, and so far the results show that the vaccines are safe for people with HIV.

As with most vaccines, some people may experience mild symptoms in the days after having a COVID-19 vaccination. This can include a sore arm, mild fever or generally feeling unwell. A small number of people have had an allergic reaction after being vaccinated, but this is very rare and can be safely managed.



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27th Commemoration of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi | Kwibuka27 Kigali, 7 April 2021



President Kagame and First Lady Jeannette Kagame receive COVID-19 vaccine | Kigali, 11 March 2021



Commissioning Ceremony of Officer Cadets | Gako, 26 April 2021



Swearing-in Ceremony of new Judges | Kigali, 14 May 2021



Meeting with Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, UK Commonwealth Minister of State | Kigali, 29 April 2021



27th Commemoration of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi | Kwibuka27, Kigali, 7 April 2021



Special cabinet session on the Levy Firestone Muse report "A Foreseeable Genocide The Role of the French Government in Connection with the Genocide against the Tutsi."



Official visit of President Emmanuel Macron of France | Kigali, 27 May 2021



RPF extended National Executive Committee meeting | Kigali, 1 May 2021



Meeting with French historian, Vincent Duclert | Kigali, 9 April 2021



ICGLR Mini-Summit on the political and security situation in the Central African Republic | Luanda, 20 April 2021



Meeting with President of Mozambique Filipe Nyusi | Kigali, 28 April 2021



"What Rwanda wants is peace, and the freedom to carry forward the business of transforming our country. We do not want to stand in anyone's way nor do we want anyone to stand in our way." Chairman Kagame | RPF extended National Committee meeting.



"To stop the climate crisis from becoming a permanent catastrophe, we must limit global heating to 1.5 degrees Celsius. To do this, we must get to zero emission of greenhouse gases by mid-century," António Guterres, Secretary-General of the UN.



"We know that the supplies have been modest. We know that the demands are huge. We know that it will be a long time before the entire humanity can be vaccinated," Narendra Modi, the Indian Premier.

Congratulations to those that have seen good times in April/May, and to those that have experienced their darkest days continue believing in the good times ahead for there is no situation too big for confident, strong-willed people to weather through.



**Samia Suluhu Hassan**, 61, from ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party and semi-autonomous region of Zanzibar was sworn in as the first female President of the United Republic of Tanzania after the demise of President John Pombe Magufuli. She served as President Magufuli's Deputy since 2015.



Uganda's opposition leader and President of National Unity Platform (NUP), Robert Kyagulanyi aka Bobi Wine lost the February 2021 Presidential poll and never conceded defeat. He claims the election was marred by irregularities he blamed on the ruling NRM backed electoral commission.



Rwandan artiste **Bruce Melodie**, 29, managed by Cloud9 Entertainment Ltd and the C.E.O and Founder of Igitangaza Music Label, early May 2021 signed a 3-year partnership worth over Rwf 150 million. The partnership aims to showcase Melodie as a premier African artiste in addition to positioning Kigali Arena as the continental hub for music and entertainment. He's a song writer, guitarist, Recording Producer and actor with many songs like Saa Moya and Katerina.



French historians commissioned by President Emmanuel Macron to investigate France's role in the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi released a report early 2021 whose findings revealed France's "overwhelming responsibility". France had for close to 27 years denied that it helped the genocide regime to plot and execute the massacres.

## RELIGION

## Pope Francis appeals for peace in Jerusalem

Pope Francis calls for peace and a shared solution to the violence occurring in Jerusalem, as Palestinian protesters continue to clash with Israeli police.

After renewed clashes in the streets of Jerusalem, Pope Francis on Sunday urged all parties to seek a common solution and put aside violence.

The Pope said at the Sunday Regina Coeli address that he is following the events in Jerusalem with concern.

"I pray that the city might be a place of encounter and not of violent clashes, a place of prayer and peace," he said.

"I invite everyone to seek shared solutions, so that the multi-religious and multi-cultural identity of the Holy City might be respected and that fraternity might prevail," said the Pope.

"Violence generates only violence," he concluded. "Enough with the clashes."



### WHAT'S THE SITUATION IN JERUSALEM?

The Pope's appeal came following the latest in a series of violent confrontations which have coincided with the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

The unrest was sparked when Israel blocked off a popular area where Palestinians traditionally meet at the end of their day-long fast.

That sparked a fortnight of clashes before Israel finally recanted and lifted the restrictions.

### RENEWED VIOLENCE

But the clashes resumed last week after Israel threatened to evict dozens of Palestinians from a district of east Jerusalem.

Now in the latest round of violence, 136 people were wounded at the Al-Aqsa compound, and elsewhere in Jerusalem, on Friday and Saturday nights.

According to the Palestinian Red Crescent, most were hurt after being hit in the face and eyes by rubber bullets.

VATICAN NEWS



Former Governor of Rwanda's Northern Province **Jean Marie Viény Gatabazi** was early this year appointed the Minister of Local Government and concurrently the Mayor of Nyabihu District, Dancilla Nyirarugero was appointed the new Governor of this Province.



India's Prime Minister and leader of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Narendra Modi (PHOTO/Net)

## Cooperation is a potential remedy to problems that threaten the entire humanity – PM Modi

BY GEORGE KALISA

India's Prime Minister and leader of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Narendra Modi, said while addressing world leaders that creation of the new world order that utterly focused on how to prevent the First and Second World Wars was an oversight because it overshadowed the need to prevent the reoccurrence of catastrophes that threaten humanity.

Modi said that there's need to create new structures that can potentially address "the most challenging issues facing the global community" because the prospect of violence is ever-present despite of the presence of the world order.

"In fact while humanity has not faced the Third World War, the threat of violence has not reduced in people's lives. With a number of proxy wars and unending terror attacks, the prospect of violence is ever present," remarked Modi.

He partly apportioned blame of the current humanity crisis on the age of

competition that has eclipsed the spirit of cooperation.

"I'm sure that if our thinking has been along such lines, very different solutions would have emerged," observed on April 13, 2021 during the 6th edition of the Raisina Dialogue held in a virtual format.

Modi noted that after the end of the Second World War many structures and institutions were created under the shadow of the two wars they were

**India tried to support the pandemic response efforts of others by encouraging coordinated regional response to the crisis in their neighborhood.**

aimed at answering only one question – "How to prevent the Third World War?"

The Indian leader called on world leaders to reorient their thinking and bury under the carpet the mistakes and misdeeds that took centre stage in the past seven decades, and reshape the world order.

He said that the Covid-19 pandemic has presented an opportunity to "create systems that addresses the problems of today and challenges of tomorrow".

"And we must think of the entire humanity and not merely of those who are on our side of the borders. Humanity as a whole must be at the center of our thinking and action," added the Premier.

The Indian administration has done whatever it could take to protect more than 1.3 billion citizens from the pandemic, but also demonstrated the spirit of cooperation to assist other communities beyond India with the limited resources.

In spite of the presence of the world order millions of people across the globe continue to face calamities like proxy wars, diseases and hunger.

India tried to support the pandemic response efforts of others by encouraging coordinated regional response to the crisis in their neighborhood.

Last year, India shared medicines and protective equipment with over a hundred and fifty countries.

This year despite many constraints, India has supplied vaccine to over 80 countries from different continents including Africa.

Modi reiterated his country's commitment to continue sharing their experiences, expertise and resources with the entire Humanity in the fight against the pandemic, and building hope to all citizens of the world regardless of their economic status.

He called upon world leaders to emerge as a powerful voice for a human centric approach.

He thanked Rwanda's President Paul Kagame, the Prime Minister of Denmark and the Prime Minister of Australia and the President of the European Council for their valuable presence.

## President Kagame becomes first EAC leader to test for COVID-19 jab



President Paul Kagame receiving the COVID-19 jab

BY OUR REPORTER

President Paul Kagame early this last February tested for the COVID-19 jab becoming leader in East Africa to take COVID-19 jab.

Kagame is famed in the African Continent for his exemplary leadership

and revered by world leaders for unreservedly being at the forefront of the fight in event of a humanitarian crisis on the Continent and beyond.

Rwanda contributing to the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), (AU)- UN Assistance Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and in Central African

Republic (CAR). The Rwanda National Police (RNP) concluded its peacekeeping mission in Haiti in 2019 where participated in peacekeeping and the rebuilding of the Caribbean nation.

He was the first leader in the East African Community (EAC) economic bloc to test for COVID-19 when it was first declared mid-March 2020. The President's photo and that of his wife Jeannette Kagame were posted on the official Twitter Account of Rwanda's Presidency, Village Urugwiro while they were receiving the jab.

More than 200,000 people had received the vaccine, said a tweet on the same account.

Some 100,000 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech drug and 240,000 doses of the AstraZeneca/Oxford medicine had reached Rwanda by February becoming the first country in region to vaccinate against the novel Coronavirus. The Rwandan government gave the first priority to high-risk groups like healthcare workers.

In addition to the two vaccines, Rwanda had acquired close to 1,000 doses of the Moderna jab as of February 2021.

The country's Health Ministry said they plan to have vaccinated 30 percent of her people this year and 60 percent by the end of 2022.

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# Kagame reiterates Rwanda's commitment to deepen ties with India



H.E President Paul Kagame Narendra Modi, the Indian Premier chat in Rweru model village in Bugesera (PHOTO/Courtesy)

BY GEORGE KALISA

President Paul Kagame said that Rwanda's goal is to deepen the relationship between India and his country, which continues to flourish, adding that both countries particularly collaborate on important infrastructure and development initiatives.

"The relationship between India and Rwanda continues to flourish, and our goal is to further deepen our ties. Kagame reiterates Rwanda's commitment to deepen ties with India," observed Kagame.

**"The relationship between India and Rwanda continues to flourish, and our goal is to further deepen our ties.**

Kagame remarked on April 13, 2021 during the 6th edition of the Raisina Dialogue held virtually due to the novel Coronavirus pandemic that has

overwhelmingly devastated the world economy and claimed millions of lives.

"Rwanda and India continue to collaborate on important infrastructure and development initiatives," he added.

The President recognized India's production capacity of the COVID-19 vaccine and spirit of solidarity that made it possible for Africa to access the vaccine.

"India, despite its own challenges, has produced most of the vaccine doses sent to Africa, under Covax and related programs," remarked President Kagame, "Without India's production capacity and spirit of solidarity, it is possible that Africa would not yet have received much vaccine at all"

Kagame said that the key objective of deepening the Rwanda-India ties is "to increase the educational and employment opportunities available to young people in both India and Rwanda".

He added: "Knowledge, innovation, and the green economy will still be the key drivers of growth after the pandemic".

The Raisina Dialogue is India's premier conference on geopolitics and geo-economics committed to addressing the most challenging issues facing the global community. Every year, leaders in politics, business, media, and civil society converge in New Delhi to discuss the state of the world and explore opportunities for cooperation on a wide range of contemporary matters. The Dialogue is structured as a multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral discussion, involving heads of state, cabinet ministers and local government officials, who are joined by thought leaders from the private sector, media and academia.

The conference is hosted by the Observer Research Foundation in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. This effort is supported by a number of institutions, organisations and individuals, who are committed to the mission of the conference.

This year's conference was hosted in a hybrid format with in-person conversations and digital discussions.

The next edition will take place in Rwanda's capital Kigali in 2022.



H.E President Paul Kagame giving a speech during 27th Commemoration of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi | Kwibuka27 | Kigali, 7 April 2021 (PHOTO/Courtesy)

# Denialism, Divisionism Soar

***27 yrs after the Genocide against the Tutsi***

BY GEORGE KALISA

President Paul Kagame pointed a blaming finger at some Western countries that continue to host and protect suspects of the 1994

Genocide against the Tutsi under the guise of defending their human rights and freedoms. Kagame said that genocide perpetrators have for the last 27

years been trading lies including political persecution as a cover up of their role in the genocide. Without citing any example, Kagame said that some of the rich



countries have adamantly chosen to refer to the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi as “the 1994 Genocide”, a crime that translates to denial, trivialization (gupfobya jenoside) revisionism and negation.

The United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution to refer to the massacres of the Tutsi in Rwanda as “the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi”.

And, on April 20, 2020, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a Resolution 74/273, titled International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

“Among those who are undergoing trial, there are those who have been living outside, protected, one way or the other,” observed Kagame in

**The United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution to refer to the massacres of the Tutsi in Rwanda as “the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi”.**

**And, on April 20, 2020, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a Resolution 74/273, titled International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.**

a speech on April 7, 2021 at the beginning of 100 days of the 27th commemoration of the Genocide against the Tutsi.

This is the second time the annual commemoration event is held

virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over one million Tutsis were killed during the Genocide that was masterminded and executed by genocidal regimes and their allies including France with a goal of cleansing the Tutsi. Since 1994 the French authorities have, however, been denying responsibility in the genocide.

French President Emmanuel Macron commissioned French historians to investigate France’s role in the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, and the report released recently acknowledged France’s “overwhelming responsibility”, and Kagame welcomed the findings as “an important step toward a common understanding of what took place”.

“And it is all connected with the story of denial, distortion, and



publication of all kinds of things. It’s interesting to find that when these trials are ongoing, for some—especially those who were hosting these people—the issue is not what they did which they are being tried for, the issue is how they got here,” added Kagame. .

The Kigali administration has repeatedly warned genocide suspects on the run in America and Europe hosted as “asylum seekers or opposition politicians” over distorting and falsifying Rwanda’s history especially the facts about the genocide against the Tutsi.

Revisionists and deniers based in host nations propagate genocide ideology, theories of double genocide and hate through digital platforms such as online radio stations, YouTube-based media channels and blogs.

Statistics at the National Public Prosecution Authority indicate that some 940 genocide ideology cases implicating some 1,172 genocide ideology suspects were handled in a space of three years.

Today, the National Commission

for the Fight against Genocide (CNLG) and the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) say that the lies propagated through various digital platforms negatively impact on the unity and reconciliation initiatives that the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF)-Inkotanyi led government has rolled out in the country, under the visionary leadership of H.E President Paul Kagame since he stopped the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

The so called defenders of human rights and “models of democracy” were either watching or supporting the Hutu extremists that started the ritual killings following the murder of Juvenal Habyarimana, killed along with the Ex-President of Burundi Cyprien Ntaryamira who was, also, aboard the plane downed on April 6, 1994.

UK hosts some key genocide suspects like Emmanuel Ntezirayayo, Vincent Bajinya, Célestin Mutabaruka Célestin,





Ugirashebuja and Charles Munyaneza while many perpetrators are marauding the American Continent.

The 1946 Convention says that victims of genocide must be those targeted for elimination "in whole or in part". In spite of this Convention, still the so-called authors of democracy and justice continue to contest the appellation "the 1994 Genocide the Tutsi"

"Falsehoods become facts, and victims become villain," the President wondered.

"There are a couple of cases where we told their hosts that they are actually criminals. They have killed, they have stolen, they have raped, they have done all kinds of things. And we have the capacity to try them. But they say no, these are critics of the leaders of Rwanda. These are people fighting for freedom, for rights of all kinds," said Kagame.



**"There are a couple of cases where we told their hosts that they are actually criminals. They have killed, they have stolen, they have raped, they have done all kinds of things. And we have the capacity to try them. But they say no, these are critics of the leaders of Rwanda. These are people fighting for freedom, for rights of all kinds."**

Over the last 27 years, Rwanda's leadership has made strides in the social and economic spheres, and all Rwandans today enjoy improved wellbeing due to good governance that has promoted unity and reconciliation. Within the borders of Rwanda, perpetrators and victims co-exist – enjoy access to all social services including education, health, water, electricity et cetera regardless of the perceived ethnic differences that were introduced by their colonial masters.

# EA environment activists express dismay over Total oil deal between Total and the world's longest heated crude oil pipeline



## DEAR PRESIDENTS MUSEVENI AND SULUHU HASSAN

Your Excellencies, building the world's longest heated crude oil pipeline in the midst of a climate emergency is a terrible development that must be stopped

As you were signing the long-awaited contract that will finally allow the construction of the East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline - African longest crude oil pipeline - hundreds of young people, activists, environmentalists and ordinary citizens from all over the world, including representatives

from East Africa, were gathered online (<https://bit.ly/3uSv2wu>) for workshops, panels and discussions focused on a just and sustainable recovery not only from the

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COVID-19 pandemic, but also from the climate crisis and other multiple socio-economic injustices facing our communities, particularly in southern countries.

The three agreements you signed with the French oil companies Total and the China National Offshore Oil Corporation pave the way for the construction of the pipeline that will run through a number of sensitive biodiversity areas and wetlands of designated international importance in your countries. You were delighted with this progress described as "the core

of bigger developments (<https://bit.ly/3e2Urgb>)" and even invited neighboring countries to use the pipeline.

As East African citizens and climate activists, it is our duty to share with you and with the public our regrets and deepest concerns that these oil projects and the linked pipeline are going to have on our communities, our ecosystems, our climate as well as our future as a regional block with a common and shared destiny. You may have heard these concerns before but we thought they are worth raising again at this particular moment when the launching seems imminent.

#### A PROJECT WITH MULTIPLE DIRE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Firstly, the construction of a 1,443 km long heated pipeline that crosses several villages and towns in both Uganda and Tanzania will have - and is already having - enormous consequences on local populations. Most of the communities affected by Total's projects have clearly indicated that they are not actually free to use the land as they wish. Such restrictions on rural and farmers communities have dire effects on their livelihoods, and consequently,



on their right to food, education and health. Put simply, this project is undermining the well-being of over 80,000 people (<https://bit.ly/3gbuZb7>) in both countries.



Secondly, the pipeline poses significant risks to critical water sources, wetlands and several rivers in both countries. Approximately 460 km of the pipeline will be within the freshwater basin of Lake Victoria, Africa's largest lake, which directly supports the livelihoods of more than 40 million people in the region. What would happen to such people in a likely scenario of oil spills? Are both countries well equipped to handle such disasters and to prevent pollution and ensure clean water access to such a large population?

Thirdly, the pipeline clearly threatens one of the most ecologically diverse and wildlife-rich regions of the world. This is a region home to a number of unique, iconic and endangered animals which have been attracting thousands of tourists. What would happen to the local tourism industry, a source of livelihood to thousands in both countries? Will all of them be employed by the oil projects? What are the mitigation measures in place to address the strong potential loss of jobs in the tourism sector and the related local socio-economic sectors?

Fourthly, allow us the opportunity to remind you that the project is estimated to generate over 34 million tons of carbon emissions each year. This is an unimaginable prospect as the scientific community, as well as world leaders have agreed that all new fossil fuels must be kept in the ground if we are to reach the goals set by the Paris Climate Agreement you have adhered to in order to avoid further catastrophic climate change.

Though the East African region, and Africa at large bear the least responsibility for rising emissions, this shouldn't serve as an excuse to add tons of extra millions tons of carbon emissions yearly. As the wiseman said, every adversity contains within it the seeds of opportunity and growth. Today's climate challenge and associated crisis should be seen as a golden opportunity for Africa to develop in a way that is truly fair and sustainable and that prioritises the interests and well-being and future of its youthful population. Uganda, Tanzania and many other African nations are blessed with abundant sources of energy that are clean and green that can satisfy its current and future energy needs while creating thousands of jobs.

#### DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE DEALING WITH?

As we conclude this letter, allow us to highlight a few facts about Total, the largest shareholder of the deals recently concluded. This is a multinational which has been behind some of gravest environmental degradation and several human rights violations in Africa (<https://bit.ly/3a8M81i>) and beyond. From Algeria to Cameroon, from Libya, Angola to Nigeria. Total is gradually withdrawing from Central and West Africa over the depletion of resources and now



duty of vigilance of multinationals, in order to force it to develop and effectively implement adequate measures capable of putting an end to the violations of human rights and prevent future violations as well as irreversible damage to the environment and climate.

Your Excellencies, building the world's longest heated crude oil pipeline in the midst of a climate emergency is a terrible development that must be stopped. No responsible government or ethical financial institution or operator should venture into such deadly business at this stage. We sincerely hope you will reconsider this ill advised project which is likely to benefit only Total and CNOOC at the expense of local communities hardly hit by the effects of climate crisis and pandemic.

Yours sincerely,  
Vanessa Nakate, Climate Activist,  
Founder of RiseUp Movement  
Landry Ninteretse, 350Africa.org  
Regional Director

SOURCE: 350.org

# DP World launches e-commerce platform as a new digital trade corridor for Africa



H.E President Paul Kagame (PHOTO/Courtesy)

## BY GEORGE KALISA

Clare Akamanzi, the CEO, Rwanda Development Board (RDB) said April 29 that DUBUY.com will offer solutions to technological challenges that have previously made it impossible for many Rwandan entrepreneurs and companies to exploit their potential. Akamanzi said that people across the globe are looking to technology to manage the post COVID-19 recovery.

DUBUY.com brings efficient, reliable B2B eCommerce to Africa enabling market access for local and global companies launched first in Rwanda before expansion across Africa and beyond.

"DUBUY.com will make the previously impossible, possible, for

many Rwandan entrepreneurs to trade with the UAE - and beyond. People and companies everywhere are turning to technology to fuel their post-pandemic recovery and improve access to global trade. World class eCommerce platforms backed by innovative, reliable logistical networks can lead the charge, transforming how business is done across the continent."

**DUBUY.com brings efficient, reliable B2B eCommerce to Africa enabling market access for local and global companies launched first in Rwanda before expansion across Africa and beyond.**

Trade enabler DP World has launched DUBUY.com, a global wholesale e-commerce platform. DUBUY.com is available first in Rwanda with plans to expand across Africa and around the world.

DUBUY.com adds digital trading corridors to the physical corridors DP World has built across the African continent with its investment in ports, terminals, and logistics operations. DUBUY.com is partnering with local businesses and the Rwandan Government to help unlock access to global markets for small and medium-sized local enterprises, using DP World's end-to-end integrated supply chain services to fulfil orders for export and to receive goods. The platform also enables global companies to find and serve new

trading partners in Africa, opening access to fast growing markets.

Online marketplaces are a significant opportunity for economic growth in Africa which today accounts for less than 0.5 percent of global eCommerce according to the United Nations Conference on Development and Trade. The combination of DUBUY.com with DP World's physical logistics infrastructure and data-driven logistics solutions will solve some of the key challenges to the growth of eCommerce, including reliable fulfilment, secure financial transactions, and the movement of goods. Pan African digital payments provider DPO Group has also been brought on board, bringing its extensive experience of supporting payments for businesses of all sizes across Africa.

DUBUY.com is the first online store created for all Rwandan licensed exporters, importers, and manufacturers. In Rwanda DP World has already invested in a logistics hub which offers container handling, cold chain, and bonded warehouses. DP World Kigali enables trade as a key gateway to the heart of Africa and connecting to Mombasa and Dar Es Salaam on the Indian Ocean. The addition of DUBUY.com will empower business owners in Rwanda and help realise the country's vision of becoming a digitally enabled African economy, while also accelerating recovery from COVID-19.

Mahmood Al Bastaki, Chief Operating Officer of Dubai Trade World, added: "DUBUY.com represents a new model of partnership with the UAE, designed to strengthen the existing potential in Rwanda, opening businesses and markets organically, by enabling trade and supplying innovation. This technology allows home grown businesses to become international manufacturers and



exporters - by linking them with new markets in Africa, the Middle East and eventually the rest of the world. In Rwanda, this includes the promotion of valuable exports like tea, coffee, and horticulture, through a network which significantly upgrades the country's supply chain logistics - both in urban and rural areas; as well as providing access to new digital tools that will help local businesses prosper. We're not just building in Rwanda; we're building with Rwanda - for Rwanda."

Alongside DP World Kigali, DUBUY.com is partnering with the Rwanda Development Board, the National Agricultural Export Board, as well as industry associations representing coffee, tea, and horticulture. These relationships will help design and coordinate last-mile logistics solutions that reduce the cost of transport, cut delays, mitigate post-harvest losses, and increase farm family incomes.

**DUBUY.com is the first online store created for all Rwandan licensed exporters, importers, and manufacturers. In Rwanda DP World has already invested in a logistics hub which offers container handling, cold chain, and bonded warehouses.**

The DUBUY.com platform offers a one-stop-shop, ensuring all transactions on the site are secure, from onboarding only trusted suppliers through to integrating leading payment service providers, like DPO Group. There are pre-negotiated, heavily discounted shipping tariffs in place, with weekly console boxes moving between origin and destination with guaranteed transit times, incentivized shipping costs. The shipping methods are also customized according to the scale of each transaction and the urgency of shipments. This all adds up to create a platform which is agile, responsive and will enable Rwandan entrepreneurs to fully benefit from the advantages of increased access to world markets.

DUBUY.com by DP World is the business gateway to Africa. Backed by DP World, a global logistics business with 127 business units in 51 countries, our innovative digital platform provides a B2B e-marketplace with end-to-end supply chain solutions for the continent and beyond. Connecting African businesses to regional and international markets, ensuring goods are delivered safely, reliably and on time. With over 50 nations and a population of 1.3 billion people, Africa provides a unique opportunity for companies large and small.



Tycoon SINA Gérard, the Founder and MD of Entreprise Urwibutso (PHOTO/Eric)

# Rwanda's mogul SINA Gérard boosts online shopping, launches new products

BY GEORGE KALISA

Tycoon SINA Gérard and market leader in the Agri-business Sector has said the COVID-19 pandemic was a silver lining to farmers as it was time to review the ways they did business and reinvent new tactics to catch up with the negative impact of the pandemic on the economy and people's livelihoods.

Rwanda's imminent agriculturalist and exporter of foods and beverages says that Entreprise Urwibutso/SINA Gérard revamped online shopping as a response to the COVID-19 impact on traditional trade patterns particularly international trade.

"I couldn't sit back in a comfort zone during the tough days when the COVID-19 pandemic was plaguing

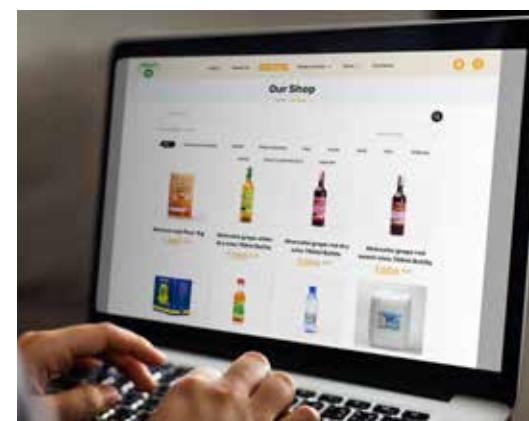
the country. The outbreak prompted the government to slap restrictions on travels including recurrent lockdowns and prohibitions on interprovincial travels and I had to think of new innovations of engaging my clients such as online shopping," said SINA Gérard during a recent exclusive interview with The Light Magazine at the home of Entreprise Urwibutso/SINA Gérard, Nyirangama in Rulindo District.

He said that his agro-processing company capitalized on the period marked by low business to come up with new innovations that would allay a reverse of a progressive record the local Agri-business company boasts of in the fast growing sector.

SINA Gérard, the Founder and Managing Director of Entreprise Urwibutso/SINA Gérard is optimistic that online shopping is much safer, time-saving and effective in the prevention of the further spread of the COVID-19 pandemic as esteemed clients.

"Our customers can now access online all our products and for detailed information they can contact the nearest branch Entreprise Urwibutso/SINA Gérard. Rwanda's leading Agro-processing firm [Entreprise Urwibutso/SINA Gérard] has presence in nearly all provinces.

Today, all clients of Entreprise Urwibutso/SINA Gérard, can buy access a long its products and purchase them online.



**The local entrepreneur produces a variety of soft drinks, foods and beverages which include Akandi natural mineral water [Rwanda's leading pure water] Chili Oliva oils (AKABANGA), AKANOZO, AKA Mayonnaise, AKIWACU Strawberry Jam, ICYEZERE Natural Honey et cetera.**

The tycoon says that online shopping has gone a long way in helping Rwanda's leading Agro-processing firm catch up with the economic challenges that COVID-19 set forth. Customers do shopping of Nyirangarama products from their homes and work places, an innovation that had eliminated movements to the shops, branches and Nyirangarama city which is home to Entreprise Urwibutso/SINA Gérard processing firm.

Sina Gérard extended his gratitude to the Rwandan government for putting in place safe health guidelines and regulations which Entreprise Urwibutso/SINA Gérard Entreprise continues to observe to the letter. Moreover, the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry (MINAGRI) allowed employees in Agriculture to continue with work even during the pandemic.

The pandemic, Rwanda's millionaire says, was unprecedented event that reminded farmers to embrace value chains in Agriculture. During the pandemic SINA says they managed to increase production of processed products from the crops Rwandans grow and milk from cows they keep into various products including cheese (Akamuri –salted butter), yoghurt, juices from pineapples, passion fruits and sugar cane, and biscuits from sweet potatoes (Akarabo).



The local entrepreneur produces a variety of soft drinks, foods and beverages which include Akandi natural mineral water [Rwanda's leading pure water] Chili Oliva oils (AKABANGA), AKANOZO, AKA Mayonnaise, AKIWACU Strawberry Jam, ICYEZERE Natural Honey et cetera.

## NEW NYIRANGARAMA PRODUCTS HIT MARKET AS RESPONSE TO COVID-19

As the new Coronavirus plagued the regional economy, including Rwanda, H.E President Paul Kagame was one of the first world leaders and the first in the region

to call upon citizens to fight the pandemic by preventing further spread through frequent hand washing with soap and observing other best health practices like social distancing.

In this spirit, Entreprise Urwibutso/SINA Gérard responded to the call by starting to produce effective, high quality and affordable sanitizers dubbed AKINGENZI (Hand Sanitizer) and AKAMANZI (hand washing soap).

SINA Gérard adds the tough days were a blessing in disguise when players in the sector got ample time to review their marketing

strategies and approaches alongside tailoring their products list to help them come up with products on high demand on both the local and foreign markets.

To catch up with the changing trade patterns and rising demand for COVID-19 paraphernalia like face masks and sanitizers that significantly helped in mitigating the spread of the pandemic.

#### SINA AS AN EDUCATIONIST AND PHILANTHROPIST

Sina is a man who does not easily give up especially in the face of a problem or challenge. He had to find a feasible solution before the problems related with the high rate of dropping out of school could lead to adverse economic effects on the processing plant and area at large. He, thus, founded the school to partly beat the social and economic vices that were linked to the lack of access to relevant education and to occupy the youths that had plenty time, which they would fill by stealing.

School enrolment has been on the upward trend since Collège Fondation SINA Gérard opened in the area. Today, at least 2,000 youths pursue their education at this school and hundreds of workers, 100 of them are teachers, mostly from the neighbourhoods do different jobs there.

All the 129 students who sat for Ordinary Level national



examinations and 59 at Advanced Level in 2019 passed translating to 100 per cent at each education level. They had maintained excellent performance for more than five years in a row.

As of 2019, Collège Fondation SINA Gérard that started operations in 2003 boasted of a total of 2,092 students 1,294 of them are in the boarding section. It has all the education levels right from Nursery to Advanced Level with a highly facilitated Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) section.

The students get skills in Carpentry, Tailoring, Welding, Food processing, Agronomy [crop production], Veterinary Medicine [animal health] and Mechanics.

Sina Gérard contends that education devoid of Christian values is useless, stressing that he is investing in Religion to give students an opportunity to get holistic education that builds a complete person.

“Discipline, humility, reliability and trustworthiness are some of the values Christianity instills and reinforces. The new missionaries we have received today will help the students grow as God-fearing people with the desired values for them to get employment,” remarked Sina Gérard on February 25, 2020 during a colourful ceremony when Kigali Archdiocese opened a new convent for the Missionaries of Sacred Heart (MSC).

SINA Gérard the Founder and Managing Director of Entreprise Urwibutso and Collège Fondation SINA GERARD says that he constructed CHAPELLE St. GERARD in a bid to offer Rwandan youth studying there a holistic education which builds a complete person.

Most people know SINA as an industrialist, investor and agriculturalist. But, a few people know that the businessman is a teetotaler, perfectionist and Philanthropist whose charity activities had by 2020 transformed livelihoods of thousands of vulnerable Rwandans, particularly in Rulindo District of the Northern Province where he hails from.

Today, the area whose economy basically thrives on Agriculture, doubles as home to his Agro-processing plant and SINA GERARD Entreprise Urwibutso, an Agro-processing firm that dates back in 1987.

The beneficiaries of Sina’s charity programmes and acts of a humanitarian nature are mostly widows, single mothers, orphans and vulnerable people who were living in dilapidated and inhabitable houses and high risk shelters due to mainly grinding poverty, and perpetual involvement in traditional agriculture. Subsistence farming had limited them to hand-to-mouth incomes. Northern and Western Rwanda are highly prone to natural calamities typically landslides

and floods for their terrain. Their children, also, lived with no tinge of hope of getting an education. In the past, many residents would lose their lives and properties including crops due to landslides and floods caused by heavy storms typical of this region. Food insecurity and acute malnutrition, family conflict had found refuge in nearly all the household in this area.

Today, thousands of parents live happily and their children attend school. Every year, Sina sponsors between 600-700 children from poor households. In addition to paying their school fees, they get all scholastic materials at his schools. Sina says letting social differences thrive in schools is one of the big causes of high school dropout rates in developing countries, and suggests that to effectively deal with this problem in Africa’s education sector, governments, parents, educationists and other stakeholders should focus more attention and direct more efforts and resources in implementing prevention policies and programmes. Programmes that can increase access to education, especially for children made vulnerable by Rwanda’s bad history, poverty and complexes based on gender.

The tycoon said doors are still open for the guests to Nyirangarama.

“We still need more visitors to see the breathtaking sceneries on the Mount Tare plus a variety of animals, and we thank whoever has spent time and money to visit the emerging tourism destination,” remarked SINA recently.

Formerly a famous stopover for travellers and tourists heading to the secondary cities of Rubavu and Musanze, Nyirangarama (the capital city of Rulindo District) has evolved into a lucrative tourist attraction. The Kigali-Musanze-Rubavu highway links Rwanda to Goma, a border city in the Eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and beyond.

Nyirangarama started sprouting since millionaire Sina Gérard



#### RWANDANS ARE THE SOURCE OF MY MOTIVATION

Rwandan exporter of Akarusho wines and Akabanga (Chili oils) says that he takes prides in the customers of Nyirangarama products because they variously support his firm to grow to greater heights by choosing his products and attributes rising popularity of the products to their reliability and ready market. SINA pledges to continue going an extra mile in whatever they do to give value to the money of their clients and also meet their expectations in terms of quality and standards.

“Rwandans are a great source of my motivation – we make the wines and other products from the bananas, pineapples, sweet potatoes et cetera that they grow on Rwandan soils.



# Provincial leader lauds tycoon SINA Gérard for partnership with govt in rebuilding Rwanda



**Governor Dancilla Nyirarugero with SINA Gérard, the Founder and MD of Entreprise Urwibutso during her visit. (PHOTO/Eric)**

## GEORGE KALISA

The new Governor of Rwanda's Agricultural rich northern region and home to more than a half of the remaining endangered Mountain gorillas, Dancilla Nyirarugero said that her Provincial administration and Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) – Inkotanyi led government recognize the contribution of millionaire SINA Gérard in the social and economic transformation of the people of Rwanda.

“As leaders we recognize SINA Gérard as a model farmer in the Agriculture Sector whose selflessness and zeal to uplift the wellbeing of Rwandan rural farmers and Rwandan youths through empowering them with skills of practicing commercial farming

and promoting value chains in the sector has been infectious and appreciated throughout the country over the years,” observed Dancilla Nyirarugero, the new Governor of the Northern Province.

Nyirarugero replaced Jean Marie Gatabazi who is now serving as Rwanda's Minister of Local Government.

“SINA Gérard has played a key role in transforming Agriculture from traditional agricultural systems such as subsistence farming to modern commercial farming,” she added.

The Governor said that the vocational and technical education skills the Rwandan youth acquire at Fondation College SINA Gérard have helped them become more

employable and earn a living through starting their own jobs or work for reputable economically sound agribusiness companies among others.

Nyirarugero remarked on April 20, 2021 during her first visit to the modern demonstration farms and factories of Entreprise Urwibutso/ SINA Gérard Agribusiness Company since she assumed office early this year.

Agriculture is the second foreign exchange earner of Rwanda coming after Tourism. The sector directly and indirectly employs more than 70 per cent of the Rwandan citizenry.

In spite of the heavy rains the Governor flanked by leaders of the Rwanda National Police (RNP), Rwanda Defense Forces (RDF) and the Mayor of Rulindo District toured the processing plant, carpentry workshop and the modern farms including pigsty at Entreprise Urwibutso/ SINA Gérard Agribusiness firm where white pigs grow, relax and feed while listening to music of all sorts.

SINA Gérard is Rwanda's icon in Agribusiness Sector and Founder and Managing Director of Entreprise Urwibutso/ SINA Gérard Agribusiness company, which exports Akabanga (Chili oil) and Akarusho wines to the US and European markets. He also owns Fondation College SINA Gérard which offers quality vocational and technical education as part of its curriculum.

On his part, SINA Gérard reiterated his commitment to continue the existing partnership with the government in its efforts to transform agriculture and increase the exports base to improve the current trade deficit.

“Entreprise Urwibutso/ SINA Gérard has gradually grown in terms of production and visibility locally and regionally. For a couple of years we have been exporting different products like Chili oils (Akabanga), Akarusho wines and we

**“As leaders we recognize SINA Gérard as a model farmer in the Agriculture Sector whose selflessness and zeal to uplift the wellbeing of Rwandan rural farmers and Rwandan youths through empowering them with skills of practicing commercial farming and promoting value chains in the sector has been infectious and appreciated throughout the country over the years,” Governor Dancilla Nyirarugero, observed.**



all Rwandans to join him in building a knowledge-based economy.

In the light of this, SINA Gérard expanded his realm of investment to include education as a way of responding to President Paul Kagame's call of walking together the talk of creating a knowledge-based economy as well as to bolster the Private-Public partnership (PPP) in the country. In 2003, Rwanda's millionaire opened Collège Fondation/SINA GERARD, which he built right in his home area.

SINA said that he has managed to maintain a steadfast supply of raw materials such as bananas, passion fruits, milk, pineapples et cetera to his factories through mobilizing and supporting Rwandan farmers with farm inputs and toolkits. SINA has expanded cash crop varieties on his farm to include macadamia, grapes, and plums (ibinyomoro).

He is working with local cooperatives and smallholder farmers in all districts in the Province particularly the Rulindo District where Entreprise Urwibutso/ SINA Gérard, the leading Agribusiness Company is headquartered.

SINA is optimistic that the Governor's visit will increase the visibility of his products and the social and economic activities at large.

Millionaire SINA Gérard is one of a few Rwandan business people that heeded to the plea made by H.E President Paul Kagame more than a decade ago to the private sector and

leavers would not continue with post Primary education largely because there was no single Secondary school in the area. Yet, many parents engaged in subsistence agriculture and couldn't afford to pay school fees for their children leave alone having enough food in their households.

By then, Rulindo was one of Rwanda's remotest areas with alarming levels of illiteracy and poverty. Two people out of five had completed Primary education. Most youths were unemployable not only due to lack of relevant skills but also having plenty of time that they'd to fill by resorting to reckless activities. The youths in this part of the country had indulged in irresponsible drinking and stealing of the residents' property, especially food crops. They would steal foodstuffs from residents' farms.

Indeed, stealing had become a way of life for hundreds of youths. The folks of Tare say that Sina was one of the victims whose passion fruits and pineapple farms had turned into communal assets for whoever was hungry to harvest and take home for eating and/or selling.

The students get skills in Carpentry, Tailoring, Welding, Food processing, Agronomy [crop production], Veterinary Medicine [animal health] and Mechanics.

SINA Gérard contends that education devoid of Christian values is useless, stressing that he is investing in Religion to give students an opportunity to get holistic education that builds a complete person.

“Discipline, humility, reliability and trustworthiness are some of the values Christianity instills and reinforces,” remarked SINA Gérard at the presser.

“If such values are incorporated with the Rwandan cultural values and national aspirations like unity of all Rwandans, I'm sure we shall produce responsible citizens who put Rwanda above all individual interests that make corruption thrive and negatively impact on the economy,” added SINA.

# These high-tech strawberries cost \$6 apiece. Here's what they taste and smell like

BY HANNAH SELINGER

Some months ago, a curious new strawberry began appearing in my social media feeds. The berry, which comes in packages of three, six or eight, was a uniform pale red. Each berry in each plastic carton looked almost exactly the same — heart-shaped, symmetrical and indented on the surface where, in a store-bought strawberry, yellow seeds would appear. One more notable thing: They cost between \$5 and \$6.25 apiece.

The Omakase Berry, a Japanese variety grown by the New Jersey-based company called Oishii, bills itself as an entirely different strawberry experience. The website even offers advice when it comes to eating them: Allow berries to sit at room temperature for 10 to 15 minutes; let the berries' aromatics "fill the room"; inhale the "bouquet"; eat.

Oishii grows its berries indoors vertically, leveraging technology that its co-founder and CEO, Hiroki Koga, 34, explored in Japan. "I got my first start in the vertical farming industry as a consultant in Japan, where it took off before anywhere else in the world," he said. "But the whole industry failed pretty quickly, you know, in the early 2010s in Japan, because it was too expensive to grow leafy greens in a very tech-savvy, costly environment." The technology, he said, was there; someone just needed to find the right way to use it.

The first run of berries (the Omakase cultivar) has been geared toward the luxury market and is available only in the New York City area. But the company is in the process, Koga said, of expanding its market share. Some of the varieties the company is experimenting with can be grown in a much more cost-efficient way, he said, "which means that we should be



able to place these into the market at a significantly affordable, reasonable price, compared to what it is today."

Koga came to the United States in 2015, first to California, where, he said, the quality of produce was unexpectedly good, though not as good as in Japan. The strawberries he selected for the company's first vertical farms in New Jersey are known as "short-day cultivars." In Japan, "They're grown during the winter in a greenhouse environment in a little more wet environment," Koga said.

Long-day cultivars — American summer berries — are, he said, "optimized for mass production," at the expense of flavor. Koga says Oishii's low yields are guided by the same principles as fine wine production: An intentionally depleted crop, achieved by such tactics as crop-thinning, forces the plant to push more of its nutrients and flavor into fewer berries, yielding a more concentrated flavor. The growing environment, according to Koga, is also optimized so that berries yield the maximum amount of nutrients and sweetness.

## THE APPEARANCE

Perhaps most striking about the Omakase Berry is its utter uniformity.

Each orangy berry — I purchased a package of eight for \$50 — looks exactly the same. Glance quickly and you might mistake the berries for marzipan candies, their exterior is so flawless.

The Driscoll's berries (\$3.99 for the company's standard 16-ounce plastic clamshell) were far deeper in pigment — the company aims for "deep red," said Scott Komar, 58, the company's senior vice president for global research and development — and were larger, overall, than the Omakase, though there was variability in size. They were covered in tiny yellow seeds. In selecting berry plants, Komar said, Driscoll's considers "the color of the strawberry, the shape, the size and the mouth texture."

## WHY DOES A STRAWBERRY GROWN DOWN THE ROAD COST MORE THAN ONE GROWN IN CALIFORNIA?

My local strawberries (a quart for \$9) were smaller, deeply pigmented and visually much less consistent. The traditional heart shape that is associated with the fruit became more triangular here on Long Island, where conditions are unpredictable. Balsam Farms, said Ian Calder-Piedmonte, 41, the farm's co-owner, uses a technique called plasticulture. A barrier between plants and the ground is formed using plastic, aiding farmers with weed control, assisting with water management and keeping berries cleaner.

Plasticulture, Calder-Piedmonte said, combined with pruning runners, keeps the plants compact and the berry placement concentrated. Without the plastic, he said, berries can "try to set down roots between rows, and actually will take away from the growth of the mother plants." Still, holding in my hand the tiny first berries of the Long Island season, it was hard not to consider how much work had gone into producing just a pint of fruit.

## THE AROMA

Oishii isn't lying when it says the aroma of its berries will fill the room. When I unearthed my plastic

container from its refrigerator pack, I could already smell them. Opening the box, I was assaulted with the most strawberry-smelling fruit I'd ever encountered. Aroma, Koga said, is one of the classic characteristics of the Omakase Berry.

In this category, there was no competition. My Driscoll's berries did not have much of a scent, but aroma may not be at the top of the list in breeding priority. "We conduct quantitative measurements on the sugars, acids and aromatics of our berries," said Komar of Driscoll's berries. "Then that information helps us pick the berry varieties we will commercialize for our brand." Driscoll's places a high premium on flavor and color, and the variety I tried may not have been bred, specifically, for aroma.

My Long Island berries smelled very much like strawberries, although their scent was not nearly as potent as the Omakases. "I think there's probably more variation on local strawberries, as there are with probably everything that's locally produced," Calder-Piedmonte said. Other berries that come from "incredibly controlled" environments "where it's sunny every day" are more likely to be consistent in size, shape, flavor and even aroma. On Long Island, he said, "I think there are a lot more variables."

## THE TASTE

Do you prefer a tart berry that's firm to the tooth? Are you enamored by sweetness? What type of berry the average consumer perceives as "best" depends on such personal preference. The Omakase Berry was, without question, the sweetest that I sampled. (However, Driscoll's grows a trademarked, premium fresh berry segment called the Sweetest Batch for strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and blackberries, which Komar said are "unique selections" from the company's breeding program; I did not try these.)

The Driscoll's berries were the firmest of the three, with a consistent mouthfeel and flavor. It seemed to me that the objective in their breeding

was a distinct balance between sweet and tart — and that balance certainly came through on each bite. In some ways, the acid, a quality in food and drink that compels you to keep consuming, makes sense: You're unlikely to eat only a single strawberry, but Driscoll's berries come in large, satisfying packages. It's okay to keep eating.

As for my local berries, there was something compelling about the unpredictability. They were not the sweetest berries I'd ever tasted, but they varied between sweet and tart. Pop a strawberry in your mouth and come alive with the surprise of how sweet it is. Get a slightly underripe berry and pucker in delight. That contrast might make you wish that berries at the farm stand were sold by more than just the quart.

And, as Ian Calder-Piedmonte pointed out, the distinct advantage of a local strawberry is that you're eating it the day it's picked. "They really are harvested that day or the day before," he said. Many berries are picked and then held in refrigerators (or refrigerated trucks) for days before they reach the consumer, and flavor can diminish each day. A fresh-picked berry tastes far different from a berry that has been off the plant for a few days or, as happens in some cases, a week.

Then came the Omakase Berry. The berry, Koga said, was "specifically selected out of 250 cultivars that exist in Japan," optimizing for "very strong aroma and high sweetness level." "Because most of the conventional strawberries here in the U.S. have a very high acidity and very low sweetness level, we just wanted to differentiate our product," he added. This berry, with its heightened sweetness, is the type of berry that sits heavy on the tongue. Eat one, consider it, let the sugar coat the palate. That's more than enough. The point isn't to keep eating. The point, in fact, is to stop. So I did.

Selinger is a writer based in East Hampton, N.Y.

# Stakeholders thumb up growing awareness that ICTs are critical in managing recovery in post COVID-19 era

BY GEORGE KALISA

The fast growth in the number of mobile internet users recorded in EAC in nearly one-and-a-half years is widely seen as great achievement in the ICT Sector though it has taken place against a background of the COVID-19 outbreak. The unprecedented rise in subscriptions to mobile internet services registered by telecommunications operators is hugely attributed to the increasing awareness across the region that ICT solutions play a central role in preventing further spread of the pandemic as well as managing economic recovery in the post COVID-19 era.

Analysts in the region contend that this gain is a major breakthrough along the long journey to connect more EAC citizens to the mobile internet. The growing realization that ICTs are more reliable and effective in tackling social and economic challenges in day-to-day activities is fast spreading to other sectors particularly education, health, banking and transport.

EACO has committed enormous efforts in promoting development of telecommunications, broadcasting and postal sectors since its establishment back in 2017.

Over the years, EACO in collaboration



with partners has developed and implemented a long list of the best strategies to achieve fast, reliable, secure, affordable and efficient communication services.

Drawing from the fascinating lessons learned when the pandemic was biting deeper into the marrows of the EAC economy, now developers in the ICT industry echo a call to stakeholders to continue encouraging the use e-learning, e-health, e-commerce et cetera to reap the various benefits of ICT, especially in the tough times when the region is struggling to get back to its feet and manage economic recovery after heavy devastation by COVID-19.

There is agreement by all stakeholders that the best practices that were strengthened and popularized during the pandemic such as carrying out cashless transactions as opposed to physical money should be encouraged to reduce the risks of contracting COVID-19 and/or allay an emergence of a new wave of the pandemic. Rwanda is one of the partner states where the practice of paying for services electronically through a mobile phone is becoming more

popular. Despite variations in levels of citizens' responsiveness in respective countries, the governments are doing whatever they can to encourage cashless transactions in the hospitality, trade, banking and transport sectors.

Technology has eliminated congestion in service centres like banks alongside increasing convenience.

Experts at EACO think that partnership between educational institutions, internet services providers and media houses that started after the closure of school should be strengthened as it promotes learning in virtual reality.

Vigilance of other stakeholders in other sectors particularly transport is equally important to prevent a new wave of Coronavirus.

**Analysts in the region contend that this gain is a major breakthrough along the long journey to connect more EAC citizens to the mobile internet. The growing realization that ICTs are more reliable and effective in tackling social and economic challenges in day-to-day activities is fast spreading to other sectors particularly education, health, banking and transport.**





Bruce Melodie (2nd left) and his manager (2nd right) during the agreement ceremony with QA Venue Solutions. / Courtesy photo.

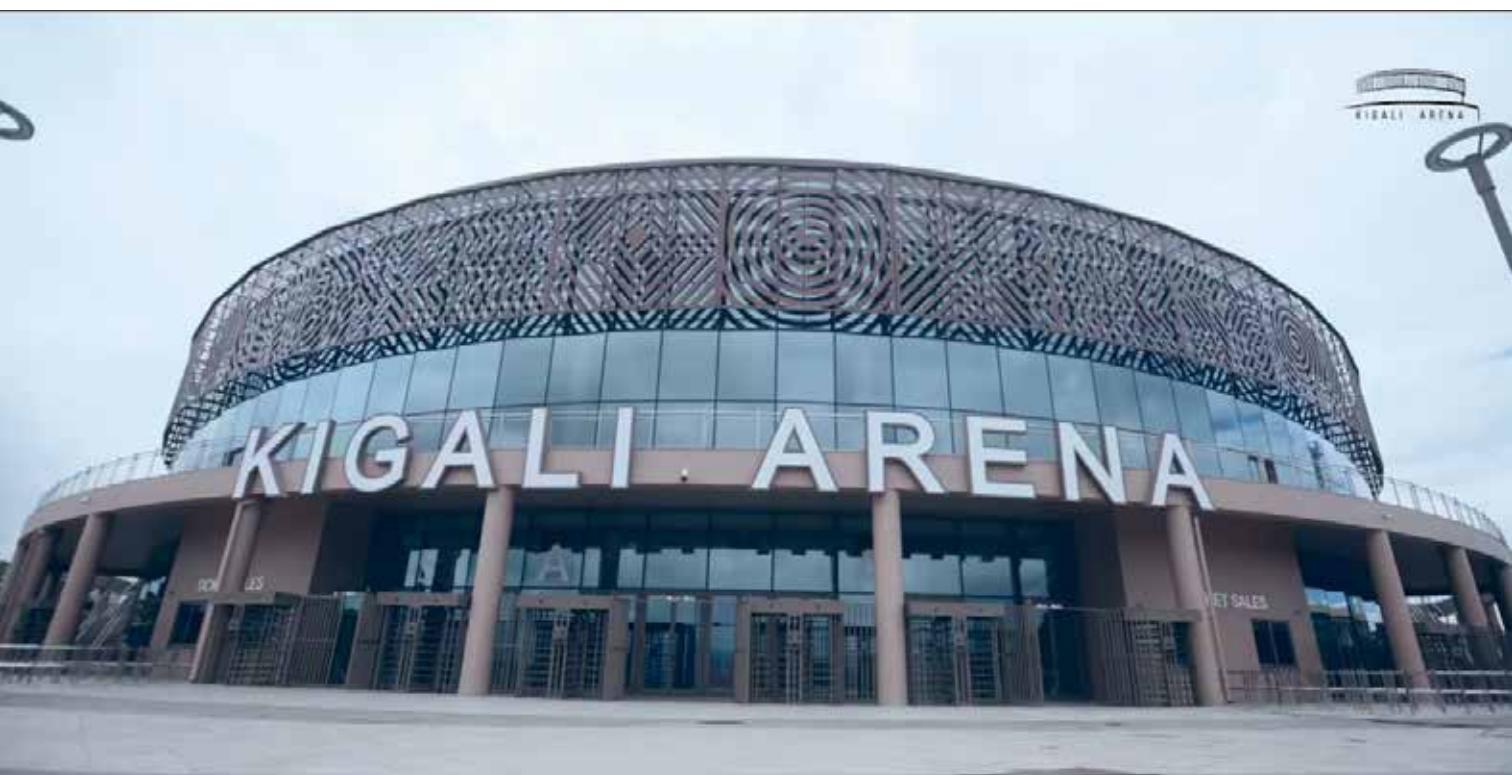
## Kigali Arena, Bruce Melodie partner to position venue as regional entertainment hub

Kigali Arena, represented by QA Venue Solutions Ltd, and Rwandan artist Bruce Melodie, managed by Cloud9 Entertainment Ltd, have signed a ground-breaking three-year partnership that aims to showcase Bruce Melodie as a premier African artist in addition to positioning Kigali Arena as the continental hub for music and entertainment.

The partnership, worth over Rwf 150 million, includes a three year residency that will see Bruce Melodie headline mega concerts, intimate shows and other appearances. In addition, Bruce Melodie will showcase Kigali Arena globally as a top African destination for sports, arts, entertainment and events.

The partnership, worth over Rwf 150 million, includes a three year residency that will see Bruce Melodie headline mega concerts, intimate shows and other appearances. On its part, Kigali Arena and QA Venue Solutions Ltd will support Bruce Melodie in his ambition of becoming Africa's biggest artist by partnering with him and Cloud9 Entertainment to showcase his talent and music both in Rwanda and on the continent.

Speaking on the partnership, Kyle



Schofield, Director at QA Venue Solutions, said:

"The partnership agreement signing is a testament to the fact that we are working with growing Rwandan artists and brands to position the Kigali Arena as the region's hub for all entertainment events. Through our partnership with Bruce Melodie and Cloud9



Bruce Melodie signing the agreement with QA Venue Solutions. / Courtesy photo.



Entertainment Ltd, we will work to create memorable experiences for not only Rwandans, but also the region at large. This agreement is proof of our commitment to support the local promoters and artists to develop a full and robust events calendar for the Kigali Arena".

On his part, Bruce Melodie said:

"An artist's dream is to grow. More so when we partner with like-minded brands. Kigali Arena is an iconic brand that from now on I shall call my home. I thank my management and the management of the Arena for making it happen. I look forward to hosting memorable experiences for my fans at this magnificent facility, and hopefully soon when the pandemic is over, we can meet here in person for more amazing events. It's a great honour to take my country and Kigali Arena with me wherever I go in the world."

# COVID 19: Pandemic Preparedness and Response and Impact on Rwanda

BY PROF. VICENTE C. SININING,  
PH.D., PDCILM

Rwanda's first recorded case of COVID-19 was on March 14, 2020. The EAC nation immediately implemented decisive measures to contain the spread of the disease. By March 21, a full lockdown was implemented. To minimize the spread of the virus, the country adopted containment measures, social distancing and lockdown, school closures, the prohibition of public gatherings, and the closure of non-essential business and economic activities. These measures, although key factors in the effective management of the health crisis, have far-reaching social and economic consequences. But the government took the risk of keeping its people safe from the virus.

A global ranking of 98 countries by the Australian think tank Lowy Institute has ranked Rwanda first in Africa and sixth globally in managing the Covid-19 pandemic and making the information accessible to the public.

As a result of lockdowns, people have lost their incomes pushing the poor and marginalized groups to chronic poverty. Latest assessments have indicated that many households that were previously above the poverty line, in the "non-poor insecure" category, have moved into poverty, and some who were previously non-poor have moved into income insecurity, which in turn, led to social vulnerability and weakened coping capacity. Kigali, with the most households employed in sectors outside of agriculture, was hit the hardest by the COVID-19 crisis.

The Covid19 pandemic has negatively impacted Rwanda's service-led development strategy. The closure of many retail and hospitality establishments and the imposition of transport and travel restrictions have



to continue to review new measures if COVID-19 cases continue to rise. In recent months, the government has allowed the resumption of businesses in the capital Kigali with essential staff, not more than 30%, as the country began easing its coronavirus lockdowns.

Before COVID-19, Rwanda was in the middle of an economic boom with real economic growth of 9.4 percent in 2019, driven mostly by large public investments for the implementation of the National Strategy of Transformation. Conservative estimates for 2020 have reduced economic growth by about 7 percentage points to between 2 and 3.5 percent.

UNDP's June 2020 assessment report notes that Rwanda has a very strong basis to manage the crisis. The country has a clear vision with the National Strategy for transformation grounded on Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063. The report says that Rwanda has good leadership, well-functioning institutions including the health system, good social protection mechanisms, good infrastructure and a focus on innovations, a sound macroeconomic situation with good debt management, and a track record of high-level growth rate and a solid data system allowing a good analysis. However, the country's resilience suffered a negative impact due to its dependency on core services such as hospitality, hotels, and tourism. It is further compounded by the negative consequences on the negative impact of the transportation sector and the informal sector during the pandemic.

The report further notes that the socioeconomic effects of COVID-19 will slow down and undermine the gains made by the Government of Rwanda to promote community resilience and enhance graduation from poverty and extreme poverty and eradicate malnutrition.

Some of the actions proposed by the Rwanda Economic Update to protect and improve human capital in Rwanda include

accelerating deployment of COVID-19 vaccines to contain the pandemic, combating the poverty impact of the pandemic by expanding coverage of social safety nets, improving targeting accuracy to make social safety nets more cost-effective, and expanding social insurance to the informal sector, and reducing learning losses through optimization of remote education due to the COVID19 disruptions, improving skills and strengthening accountability in education.

In 2020, the Africa Center for Disease Control and Prevention declared that Africa will need a "continental capacity" to produce covid-19 vaccines. The continent needs to vaccinate more of its 1.3 billion people. Early in 2021, At least 22 of Africa's 54 countries have received Covid-19 vaccines through the COVAX program. The continent has set a target of vaccinating at least 60% of its people. Dr. John Nkengasong, Director of Africa Center for Disease Control and Prevention said in a [www.africanews.com](http://www.africanews.com) report that a meeting is planned for April 12 between the African Union and outside partners to create a roadmap to boost African capacity to produce vaccines. Under the WHO's Covax program Rwanda is expecting the delivery of just over a million doses - mainly of AstraZeneca's vaccine.

In the same report, Minister of Health Dr. Daniel Ngamije said that they will immediately roll out the prepared vaccination plan, which will see target risk groups across Rwanda receive their first of two vaccine doses. The target is to vaccinate 30% of our population by the end of 2021, and 60% by the end of 2022. The health minister also pointed out that the Government of Rwanda continues negotiations with multiple partners, including international organizations and other governments, to acquire additional vaccines that will cover more people in subsequent phases.

In an op-ed published on 7 February on the British news website The Guardian, President Paul Kagame has warned of the global economic consequences of delayed vaccination in Africa. He pointed to a "nationalism" of Covid-19 vaccines on the part of the United States and Europe. He said that "delaying the vaccination of the poorest countries could undermine decades of progress in human development while investing in vaccination for all would benefit international trade soon."

Released on February 8, 2021, the 16th

edition of the World Bank Rwanda Economic Update, Protect and Promote Human Capital in a post-COVID-19 World, says the dire economic effect of COVID 19 to Rwanda has severely adverse implications for households, as thousands are facing unemployment, revenue losses and increased consumer prices are pushed into poverty. The Economic Update estimates that, because of the lockdown, social distancing, and increased costs associated with the pandemic, the poverty headcount is likely to rise by 5.1 percentage points (more than 550,000 people) in 2021, with more than 80 percent of the new poor in rural areas.

In the report, Calvin Djiofack, the World Bank Senior Economist, says that "The severity of the effect is due at least in part to the fact that the crisis hit where it hurt the most, travel and hospitality services, which are the sectors for which the country has invested massively in recent years through its the MICE (Meetings, International Conferences, and Events) strategy. The crisis calls for the rebalancing of the growth strategy, with more emphasis on rural-related activities and greater emphasis on regional integration to reduce vulnerability to international shocks."

In the same report, Rolande Pryce, the World Bank Country Manager for Rwanda. Says that "The unprecedented impact of the crisis heightens the urgency of ensuring the availability of strong and adaptable programs and policies to mitigate poverty, and to safeguard the health, schooling, and employment of the population." He further notes that "By further expanding the coverage of well-targeted safety net interventions and prioritizing investments in human capital, Rwanda can quickly and effectively mitigate the effects of the shock and lay the groundwork for future resilience."

On March 3, 2021 — Rwanda received the first shipment of COVID-19 vaccines through the COVAX initiative. The first batch of 240,000 doses of the AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine arrived in Kigali. The second shipment of 102,960 doses of the Pfizer vaccine, also from the COVAX facility is expected to arrive in the same month, according to a report on the WHO Rwanda website.

On 12-13 April 2021, African Union Heads of State and over 40,000 esteemed participants attended a virtual summit on Expanding Africa's Vaccine Manufacturing for Health Security. In that meeting, AU

and Africa CDC launched partnerships for African Vaccine Manufacturing (PAVM), a framework to achieve it, and signed two Memorandum of Understandings.

Rwanda has been recognized for its significant advancements in medical and economic development over the last 20 years. In the East African region, it emerged as a leader in healthcare. The COVID-19 pandemic presented new and unique challenges for the country's infectious disease control.

Despite the challenges, Rwanda's government and healthcare system has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with innovative interventions to prevent and contain the virus.

Prime Minister Dr. Edouard Ngirente released a public notice in March 2021 announcing that the Government of Rwanda has set up a multidisciplinary team to assess and strengthen preparedness and response to the epidemic. The notice stated that Rwanda has put in place preparedness and response mechanisms to deal with a possible outbreak, and continued to urge all Rwandans to take appropriate precautions and follow the advice of health professionals.

As of March 24, 2021, the worldwide update of COVID 19 was 124,858,281 cases, with 2,747,595 deaths and 100,880,216 recovered. On the same day, Rwanda's total cases reached 20,975 with 295 deaths and 19,310 recovered. The country's total tests reached 1,095,173.

Around the world, rich and poor countries have suffered the severe impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The global disruption to businesses, job losses, and household livelihoods have resulted in increased poverty—with the poorest and vulnerable suffering the most. Health systems and social net responses are overburdened. The total impact is still unknown.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Prof. Vicente C. Sinining is Managing Director of VCS Research and Light Publications in Rwanda. He is a Senior Coordinator for Africa and Asia of the Chartered Institute for Leadership and Management. He serves as a Senior Adviser for Action for the Protection of the Environment and the protection of Agricultural Sectors (APEFA) in Rwanda. He previously served as the Vice-Chancellor and Professor of Education and Management at Mahatma Gandhi University and University Coordinator and Professor of Education and Management at the Christian University of Rwanda.

# Light at the end of the tunnel for Africa's economic recovery



**Real GDP is projected to grow by 3.4% in 2021 after contracting by an estimated 2.1% in 2020**

**BY CHUKU, ADAMON MUKASA AND YAYE BETTY CAMARA**

Africa is set to recover from its worst recession in half a century. Real GDP is projected to grow by 3.4% in 2021 after contracting by an estimated 2.1% in 2020, mainly due to COVID-19 related disruptions, according to the African Development Bank's ([www.AfDB.org](http://www.AfDB.org)) recently released African Economic Outlook (AEO) (<https://bit.ly/3lMe67I>). The pandemic also caused deep scars in the financing and

debt landscape of the continent that may linger on if not quickly addressed.

At the launch of the AEO, Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz rightly explained how the COVID-19 pandemic caused both demand- and supply-side shocks in the continent. "It affected the demand for exports of African countries...but it also affected the willingness of people to work in some of the more exposed sectors and its effects were very disparate across different sectors."

Following Stiglitz's train of thought, Africa's projected recovery will be

subject to an unusually high level of uncertainty and risks, as is also pointed out in the analyses of the AEO.

## RECOVERY PROSPECTS AND RISKS

The most obvious risk to the recovery is the disease itself. The emergence of more contagious strains of the COVID-19 virus could derail the recovery process. Furthermore, if progress in deploying safe and effective treatment is slower than expected, governments would have to reinstate restrictions. On the upside, if COVID-19 therapeutics and vaccines become accessible in the

continent earlier than anticipated, the growth projection for 2021 could be exceeded, leading to a more robust recovery.

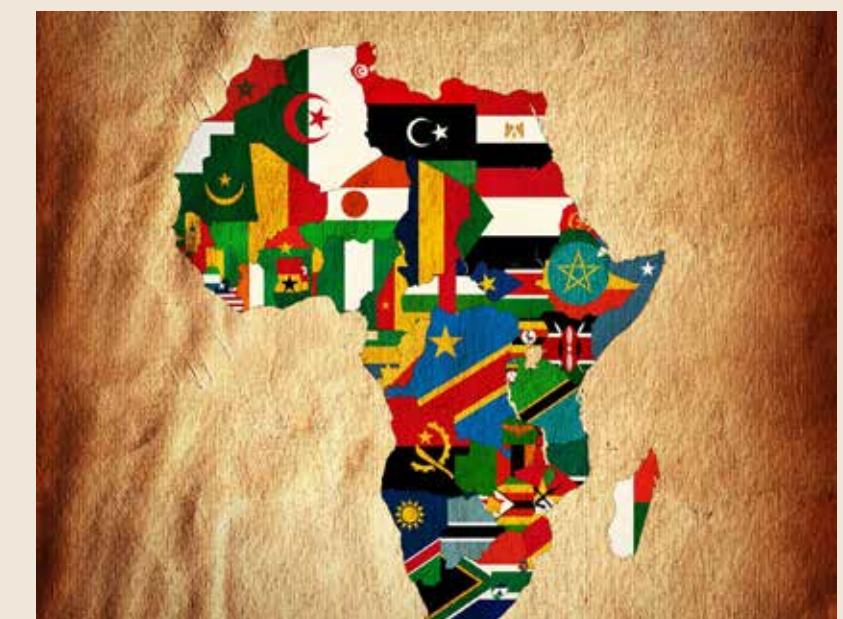
Another risk factor relates to the financial inflows to the continent. Although commodity prices have recovered somewhat from the low levels seen in mid-2020, they remain subdued compared to their pre-pandemic levels. Remittances are estimated to have dropped by nearly 10% in 2020, while tourism, foreign direct investments, and portfolio investments were halted in many countries. If these sources of inflows do not rebound, public finances in many African economies will remain suppressed, jeopardizing the projected recovery.

Social and geopolitical tensions in the region are also a major source of risk. The number of conflict-related events in the continent, including political violence, rose in 43 countries in 2020. If these tensions are not properly defused, they could result in policy uncertainty, dampening investor confidence, and could ultimately derail growth prospects.

## POLICIES TO SUSTAIN THE RECOVERY

In the end, government policies could make or break the recovery. For example, governments' containment measures have helped accelerate digitalization in Africa, with more people adopting digital transactions, virtual meetings, e-medicine, e-commerce and other electronic platforms. If digitalization is sustained in the post-pandemic era, it would accelerate productivity and foster rapid and quality growth.

Furthermore, policymakers must not prematurely withdraw the current fiscal and monetary stimulus packages that have supported recovery. Support for the health sector should continue to consolidate gains in the fight against the virus. Effective policies to retool Africa's



labour force for the future of work must also be aggressively pursued. The African Continental Free Trade Area agreement should be used to strengthen regional and multinational trade and cooperation to stimulate shared prosperity. New public investment projects should focus on pandemic- and climate-proof infrastructure to help build economic resilience.

The impact of school closures on human capital development and the inequalities it creates between the rich and the poor, and between girls and boys, must be mitigated through targeted policies. Whenever in-person learning is possible, schools should open with the appropriate safety protocols in place. Otherwise, learning should continue using traditional media – print, radio, TV – and digital technologies such as smartphones and computers. Social safety nets, including cash transfers and in-kind support, should be expanded to include previously neglected groups in slums and informal businesses, taking advantage of the accelerated digital penetration.

Policies to strengthen good governance and structural reforms

should be aggressively implemented as part of efforts to mitigate the COVID-19 crisis and avoid a looming debt crisis. African countries must eradicate all forms of "leakages" in public finances and pursue an all-out effort to harness digital technologies to propel the continent into the fourth industrial revolution and into a future that is far more resilient to economic shocks.

Distributed by APO Group on behalf of African Development Bank Group (AfDB).

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# Sugar Coated Dad

## Chapter Three: Messy days Mess up Her Life



On her fateful day Kabatesi went to live with her sisters Mbabazi and Asoumpa at Migina, Remera suburb. The three-room house belonged to a friend of theirs called Mukantabana Julie. Kabatesi like other occupants of this house changed men like clothes. Three days shy of the liberation day, July 4th; the mood in Kigali was so high that Kabatesi never wanted to be an odd man out. A friend of hers called Afande Ka who liberated her father in the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi came to her mind.

She chose to visit him with great anticipation of hanging out with him; little did she know she was to become a house wife, not a casual visitor. Afande Ka was twenty years older than Fideli; just fit to be Kabatesi grandpa. She never minded it as long as he had a fat wallet.

"Afande Ka, are you still in bed this late?" Kabatesi asked.

"Why not? Around this time two decades ago or so could you think of sleeping, let alone having a bed or house?"

He then, emerged from his bedroom in a floral towel wrapped around his belly down to the knee level and smiled at her. He unblinkingly gazed at Kabatesi who was holding a teddy bear in her hands. Ka is a giant, broad-shouldered, light-skinned with bloodshot eyes. Silence descended the sitting room.

"My heart sank and I never smiled back," Kabatesi reminisces.

After he had stretched himself several times, Ka tried to break the silence.

"When did you produce that baby darling and why wake up so early?"

"Ka, you are the father of my baby; stop asking funny questions!"

"What a wonderful gift!"

"Afande Ka, after only thirteen years, don't tell me you have forgotten that a day after tomorrow will be liberation day in Rwanda? All roads will lead to Amahoro National Stadium. Anyway, what proggie do you have for this year's celebrations?"

"Kabatesi, last night Afande Big bought us dozens of rounds of booze – of all kinds and in all colours and I drank as if there was no tomorrow. July 4th, is a very important day to us, very important to all Rwandans, and very important to all Africans," Ka said.

Afande Ka told Kabatesi that with rare determination and mere AK-47s, they managed to defeat the perpetrators and their allies, the French. Kabatesi was silent, seemingly experiencing the hard memories of the genocide. His host said that the fact that they liberated their brothers and sisters, who courageously, helpless and innocently faced all sorts of violence – rape, torture, name it, is good reason for them to celebrate.

*To be continued...*

### PLEASE ACT NOW TO SAVE LIVES THREATENED BY IGNORANCE

The author calls upon stakeholders in education and fields of advocacy for children's and women's rights to generously contribute towards the publication of this resourceful fictional novel, titled "Sugar Coated Dad".

The author tactfully and richly employs story-telling skills to tap into the modern society to show the alarming levels of permissiveness and immorality among school children as the number of horny elderly men called sugar daddies that lure them into early sex grows annually.

The story of the three school girls and three elderly rich men - the main characters - of the novel explicitly explores the real trends of moral decadence mostly among adolescent schoolgirls and sugar daddies. The novel, thus, provides lessons to girls that have not yet fallen prey to sugar daddies as well as creating mass awareness on the sex relationships between adolescent girls and adult men as a violation of children's rights.

For more information call (+250)785022003 or write to: gkssebuggwawo@gmail.com

**The author is George William Ssebuggwawo aka George Kalisa, a former English Tutor in Rwanda's Teacher Training Colleges (2009-2013), BA/EDUC, Makerere University (1997)**



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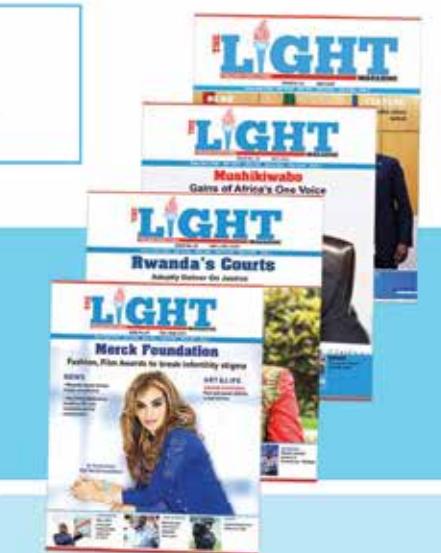
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