

# African Voices

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## *Editorial*

### **Jimmy Longun**

Hi everyone. With great pleasure, I hereby would like to present you our new issue of the African Voices.

We all seem to have gotten off to a very good start, and I foresee a marvelous year for Afrika! We welcome the first years into this Umbrella as we strive to achieve great things together. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the old as well as the new members of Afrika! for your wonderful contribution in ensuring that this Org thrives to the maximum.

I also want to give my thanks to those who contributed to this issue; I appreciate your support.

The theme for this issue is "Africa's current situation" and I hope you enjoy reading it. Please, also check out the last pages for entertaining stuff.....



## **Ebola Strikes Again: Past Lessons Faulted and Suggestions for Future Direction.**

*By: Dorothy Gondwe*

Some of us will remember the historic outbreak of Ebola Hemorrhagic Fever in 1995. At the time, the global health community and media converged in the Southeast village of Kikwit in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to witness the deadliest Ebola fever epidemic of its kind since it was first identified in 1976. In the 1995 outbreak, 245 people were killed by the deadly Ebola virus with documented fatality rate as high as 90%. Currently, there is no known cure or vaccine for Ebola. Supportive management of infected patients is the primary method of treatment, with particular attention to maintenance hydration, circulatory volume, blood pressure, and the

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## **POPULATION EXPLOSION: UGANDA'S No.1 ENEMY OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.**

*By: Jimmy Longun*

Several negative sides about the African continent have often been painted or addressed in G 8 meetings, United Nations' round tables and in Colleges and Universities around the world, but what boggles the mind is the realization that many people have actually not envisaged the issue of overpopulation. I had just been away from home for only 2 ½ years, but the changes I witnessed, population-wise, when I returned to Uganda, were unquestionably heart-pounding, or even worse, demographically worrisome.

Whether it meant walking down the famous Ben Kiwanuka Street towards St. Bbalikuddembe market or strolling down William Street to downtown Kampala, one would always have to elbow one's way through the stiff horde of city dwellers. Even more bothersome, the population of young beggars in the city is swelling at an alarming rate. These days in Kampala, it's not unusual to see, along the pavements, 3 year olds brandishing their little hands in the air in anticipation of money from generous passers-by.

From the recent estimates by the United Nations, the population of Uganda stands at a staggering 26 million. And even more disturbing, the growth rate for 2000-2006 was an astonishing 3.24 %. At this rate it is estimated that the Ugandan population might double by the year 2025. Honestly, I know that those parents back home, whether in the villages or in the city; do not care about how many children they really have to produce. Life in Kampala city is just humorous because in the morning hours, those men at the bottom of the income ladder, the hustlers, stride from their slums to the city areas to carry, on their heads, as many sacks of goods as there are for offloading, and in the evening they retreat to their dwellings to fulfill nature's call. The demographics pertaining to their socioeconomic life as well as the sustainability of natural resources are none of their business. For the men, all they care about is how they are going to get a second or third wife without having the necessary resources to sustain them. For the women, all they worry about is menopause; otherwise they would produce as many sons and daughters as God wishes (that's how they put it at least).

When we look back to the history of the

evolution of human societies, societies tended to indulge in activities that were deemed beneficial to the perpetuation of that society, clan, or tribe. Procreation was definitely one of those, because it was necessary for the sustainability of that clan or tribe. In those early years, the situation wasn't that bad because there were abundant resources to begin with, and the human population was still at its lowest. But the Earth like any other source has finite resources that are bound to be depleted, whether you like it or not. It's just a matter of time. Now we find ourselves in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century where the Earth resources are becoming meager and meager by the hour. Much as each generation tries to get the most out of its lifetime, people have to also think about the future generation. But how can we achieve sustainable development when our population is bulging at a nerve-wrecking speed?

The dynamics of natural resources and their consumption, and how they apply to population have dominated debates in social-sciences and sociological discourses alike. But the simple truth is: it does not at all require rocket science to explain to people that many of the Earth's resources are indeed non-renewable. Take for instance, the consumption of petroleum fuel and marine animals. It simply requires the application of common sense knowledge to realize that these resources immediately vanish from the face of the Earth as soon as the process of consumption is complete. Resources like carboniferous fuels, unfortunately, once consumed, do not only vanish from the face of the Earth but they also make sure that this planet dies: i.e. they charge straight to the stratosphere where they come head-to-head with the only surviving layer of Ozone. The point I am trying to put across is not that of protest against people's consumption of non-renewable resources like petroleum and marine animals, why should I? The point I am trying to drive home concerns the inverse relationship between population and non-renewable resources. For instance, as the population of Uganda continues to swell exponentially, do we have enough resources to sustain such a mammoth populace?

If a question like this is posed to those

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**Population explosion: Uganda's No.1 enemy of sustainable development....Continued from page 2**

daydreaming politicians (government officials), I bet they would say that they have never thought of anything along those lines and that they would rather spend their last couple of hours before bedtime watching late night shows or cartoon movies; rather than engage in mind boggling discourses. But the question is— what is the motive or logic behind this worryingly bizarre non-compliance to forces of sustainable development—the true human ally on whose mighty shoulders the entire existence of mankind lay?

I would imagine that many Ugandans are still living up to God's expectations as chronicled in the book of Genesis (go out and multiply). If in this 21<sup>st</sup> Century, someone would want to produce 10 kids or more, he/she would not only have unforgivably defied the laws of nature, but he/she would also be looked at as a satanic force whose goals are bitterly at odds with the millennium objectives. I may excuse those Ugandans who are still loyal to God's word. All they know is that life is what it is. And this is no surprise to me. I am going to explicitly make clear why.

In developing countries, unlike in developed countries, there are no retirement benefits. When people are too old to work, they graciously hand their fates over to their children (mostly sons). This means that children are looked at as investment in such a way that they don't only have a current value ascribed to their names, but also a precious future value. But like any other investment, there are risk factors associated with it. For example, parents with only 4 kids will feel very unsafe because out of those 4 kids, one of them might be a girl in which case she would be married off, the other boy might become a fugitive, and the other might be a crook—only one of the boys might turn out to be the savior, in other words, the bread winner. Parents cannot take chances in a field that precariously tinkers with the laws of probability. And to minimize such eventualities, parents often produce as many children as they possibly can.

The other reason is obviously the low educational standard amongst women. Many young women of reproducing age do not go to school. This means that their parents marry them off at very tender ages where they would keep producing kids until menopause. If many of these young women are educated, they would not marry early. The other point

that is closely related to education is the lack of opportunity cost for the uneducated women getting married. There is no opportunity cost for the uneducated women because economically, they have little or nothing to lose for being pregnant year in year out (I am not being sexist). The truth is that the uneducated woman stays at home while the man goes out to hustle, so that in the evening there will be bread on the dinner table. Sad as it sounds, women don't have a say in how many children to produce, even if it's very certain that the burden of child birth rests on their shoulders. If those young women were educated, they will not only have a lot to lose if their husbands insist that they be pregnant every other year, but they will also have the guts to storm out of the bedroom should the necessary occur.

Now that the causes of overpopulation seem to stem from something that most people have no control over, is the government also waiting for God to have the final say? The government need not wait for God's intervention because; unlike in the biblical times when God gave man the go ahead to go and multiply, today in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, God is one of the spectators unfortunately. So the government of Uganda needs to take fundamental measures to eradicate the scourge that is already jeopardizing our not-so-distant future. The government needs to empower women by making education accessible to most of them. The government also needs to device laws that will ensure that parents give maximum catering to every child they bring to life. In this case they would consider producing many kids a burdensome task. Finally, and most paramount, the government needs to smoke out corruption by any possible means. No doubt, corruption is the number one nemesis of sustainable development in developing countries.

If the government of Uganda does not stamp out this problem sooner than later, our population will explode like a giant balloon. This will exact a sustained pressure on the country's resources which will subsequently result in a population crunch, one that will bear semblance to the vicious cycle of anarchy.

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# SOMALIA IS IN A VICIOUS CYCLE

By: Said Guled

A wise man once said that yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery and today is a gift, that is why we call it the present. This wise man, whoever he might have been would choke on those words if he were to visit Somalia. Believe it or not, in a land where warlords, pirates and alleged fundamentalists have roamed for more than a decade, yesterday was a tragedy, tomorrow is going to be a catastrophe and today is a repeat of yesterday's horrors. What is wrong with this horn of Africa nation where the majority of the population shares the same skin color, blood and religion? The larger, more dominant tribes (I won't mention their names) are scrambling for power. For sixteen years, these tribes have slaughtered their kindred, displaced their countrymen, destroyed their own infrastructure and have torn apart the fabric of Somali society and culture.

The majority of the cabinet of the current transitional government is full of old school leaders (including warlords and kleptomaniacs) backed by arrogant Ethiopian troops and the USA, who seems to think that Al-Qaeda along with other terrorist organizations have relocated to Somalia's caves from the Afghanistan caves. Why has leadership failed in this country and are the former warlords in the current transitional government the most capable leaders? To properly engage this question, I will start by incorporating a brief history of how the transitional government came to be from one of my other articles entitled '*Somalia: A country fed to hungry dogs*'.

The Interim Government has its birth rites in Kenya starting in 2004. It started out with 275 members representing Somalia's four major clans (61 seats) and minor clans (31 seats). On the 26<sup>th</sup> of February, 2006 the parliament convened for the first time inside Somalia in the town of Baidoa. According to the [www.somali-gov](http://www.somali-gov) website a grain warehouse was used as a temporary meeting hall for 210 members of the 275-member parliament. After this first meeting it seems all hell broke loose as in June of 2006, four ministers were sacked by Prime Minister Ali Ghedi and by August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2006 a total of 32 ministers had resigned from parliament. The former of the ministers were sacked because they were apparently deaf to orders to stop fighting against the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) militia. Before the latter resignations of ministers the government consisted of 42 full ministers and an additional 60 assistant ministers. The rules in the book said that the government would have to resign if more than 50% or 22 full ministers resigned. Well, we saw that 32 full time ministers had already resigned, but why is this so called Interim Government still around? Why did all these ministers resign? The reasons for the resignation are nothing more than speculation and evil plotting. Most of the ministers quit because of the alleged entry of Ethiopian troops, others quit because the UIC was more successful. Well, at least that is what the media would like people like me to believe, but I doubt this information because it lacks one very important and grossly bad trait of Somali politics: tribal and clan tensions. Is this not the major reason Somalia has decomposed and withered to become  
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## Ethiopia Joins The Rest of The World!!! By: Dawit Mulugeta

For the past few days Meskel Square, the biggest park in Addis Ababa, has been bustling with people flocking to the capital from all corners of the country. In the past few months alone, thousands of foreigners have made their way to the country. For some, especially Rastafarians, it was a pilgrimage to what they consider as their "Mecca". Booking a flight in August to Addis was unthinkable as most of the Airliners flying to Addis were booked. I remember a friend who jokingly commented that we are yet to watch the 2002 Korea/Japan world cup. It was not a surprise to be asked in my international studies class whether I identify myself with the 20<sup>th</sup> century now or the 21<sup>st</sup>. For most Ethiopians, this day is special and it has been a source of anticipation and excitement for months.

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# The Walk That Isn't!!!!

By: Maliq Muro

What does it take for the black person to walk as a first class citizen of our world? This is a question amongst questions indeed. Amongst the dysfunction and chaos that has been dubbed a 'characteristic' of the so called 'motherland', I ask myself, what does it take for a black person to walk as a first class citizen of *our* world today?

It wasn't too long ago that Martin Luther King lamented with the following in reference to the black people in the United States, "when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, never quite knowing what to expect next, and are plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerative sense of '*nobodiness*'...". Nobodiness...No-Bodi-Ness...and you will not find this word in any dictionary! Do the people reading this know the helplessness and pain trapped in that one word? Do you know what it means not to be able to '*feel*'...'*experience*'...and I'm not just talking about emotions or things around you, but rather, the failure to '*be*'? Too many times I see my people walking with that '*hunted*' look, that '*fearful*' look, that ever so slightly '*defensive*' aura which screams of an insecurity that is embedded in our very being. Yes we have great cultures, wonderful histories, and memories worth treasuring...but how does this compare to the reality felt by the majority of our people, be it in Africa or the Diasporas? Do not talk to me about the wonders of ancient Egypt, talk to me about the improvement of the countries that make up our homeland today? Did you know that Egyptian leadership does not even consider itself a part of Africa but rather prefers to be in league with the nations of the Arab world? Do not talk to me about the past Kingdom of Dahomey or the long lost riches of Ashanti! Rather, tell me how we can feed the starving mouths of Africa's future today! Do not celebrate political independence with me when the purse strings of our nations are nowhere near our own control! The Egyptian leadership does not even consider itself a part of Africa but rather prefers to be in league with the nations of the Arab world? Do not talk to me about the past Kingdom of Dahomey or the long

lost riches of Ashanti! Rather, tell me how we can feed the starving mouths of Africa's future today! Do not celebrate political independence with me when the purse strings of our nations are nowhere near our own control!

How then, I ask, how then does a black person walk as a first class citizen of our world together with our fellow human beings? To even begin contemplating this, we have to awaken to '**today**', learn to live in the '**NOW**'! Our pride is nothing more than an illusion if it is based on ancient history, because ancient history is exactly that, '**ANCIENT**'! Take stock of the realities that face us today, the inequalities that continue to plague us, the crumbling excuses of democracy that exist back home, the emaciated mothers with dying babez on an already dead breast in the battle fields of Darfur! Take a reality tour with me through the Congo and see the rape and plunder that happens on an almost daily basis. Sit with me through Tanzania's budget approving parliament and realize that over forty five percent of the annual budget consists of loans and '**hand me outs**'. Walk with me outside the midway target and ask yourself who begs you for money 'do you have a dollar for a brother...No? A quarter? No? Anything for a fellow brother...' Need I say more? Need I point to any more challenges that confront us today?

Wake up I say, wake up and see! As we begin to walk the walk that our fellow human beings walk, we must know what faces us...'**feel it**'...'**identify**' with it! Only this will give us a solid base from whence we can march as first class citizens of the world today! Only this will give us the energy to push harder, fight more diligently...breathe easier! Only this will give us '**US**' back! Only this will reconnect us to ourselves! '**Nobodiness**' can at last begin feeling a little **less** numb, a little **less** painful...maybe a little more like '**somebody**'...anybody to begin with...the awakening Sudanese refugee, the destitute down town beggar, the lamenting Congolese...the displaced Somali...the minority student on a scholarship...reality is what we can and should work with!

The late Julius Kambarage Nyerere of Tanzania said, "While they walk, we will run" the challenges that face us **can** and **will** be overcome, but only if we learn to live in the **NOW**, in the **HERE**! The future gets defined by today ; the past remains as a teacher

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**Continued from page 4....Somalia is in a vicious cycle By: *Said Guled***

the dry bone being ripped apart? If you examined the Interim Government much more carefully, you would find out that it was doomed for failure from the get go. The de facto parliament was in anomie (lack of moral standards in a society) with severely fractured governmental structures. “We had no option but to resign because we believe if talks are postponed again it will affect the reconciliation efforts,” said Fisheries Minister Hassan Abshir Farah as quoted by CNN on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August, 2006. As quoted by the Scotsman news of the 4<sup>th</sup> of August, 2006 the Reconstruction Minister, Barre Shire Adan’s remarks after his resignation, “I have resigned because the government of Ali Mohammed Ghedi has failed to deliver,” sagaciously sums up the frustrations that have ensued, and why this sort of Government will NEVER work for a place like Somalia.

Worst of all, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of August the three top leaders of the Interim Government – Prime Minister Ghedi, President Abdullahi Yussuf Ahmed and parliamentary speaker Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden supposedly reached an agreement on talks with the Islamic Courts and the formation of a new government. According to Reuters, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of August, 2006, the President announced the dissolution of the present cabinet and Ghedi was asked to propose a new cabinet, with only 31 full ministers, within a week. The Prime Minister finally managed to appoint a new reduced cabinet of 31 ministers by the 21<sup>st</sup> of August. This new cabinet RETAINED former warlord Hussein Mohamed Aidid as the Minister for foreign affairs. The emphasis here is purposely on “retained” because this means that the old cabinet fell apart because it was close to 100% saturation with warlords or “freelance looters” as Said S. Samatar Professor of African American/ African studies at Rutgers Newark calls them. If these freelance looters could not get along for fifteen years, what makes you think they will get along now, or for that matter any time soon under such a government system? Do you think that a 31 member cabinet appointed within a week can quell the rage that exists between Somalia’s various tribes? NOPE! Okay, so the Interim Government is run by a bunch of kleptomaniacs, but what is behind the revulsion of the UIC as a legitimate governing force in Somalia?

The UIC was mainly a union of Sharia (Islamic) law courts, a product of the anarchy of the 1990s civil war. They set out to administer justice in districts in which they were established. As a result of the ongoing chaos at the time, each court maintained a military to enforce the law and protect its citizens by acting as a police force and an army. Eleven of the courts combined their military resources in February of 2006 so as to take over the once Godforsaken warlord/ pirate haven city of Mogadishu. During its short six month term as the dominant force of Somalia, the UIC managed to restore security by halting the activities of warlords and pirates. They managed to reopen major historic seaports and airports that were under the unwavering hands of the warlords and pirates. Even social justice and order had returned as marriages began to take place between members of different tribes. Their rapid success was unparalleled compared to the numerous factions that have reined Somalia since the collapse of Siad Barre’s regime in 1991. The UIC was shown the door in January of 2007 by the backers of the interim government, Ethiopia and the USA. The interim government managed to convince Ethiopia that the leadership of the UIC was bent on reconquering the Ogaden region of Ethiopia. This same interim government also managed to convince the USA that the UIC was harboring terrorist. And so it happened, the UIC was ousted and the interim government with all its evilness was installed.

It has now been approximately 9 months since the interim government was installed, and it is time to assess the gains and drawbacks of the regime. At the beginning of the transitional government’s time I was delighted to hear that curfews were put in place and a weapons collection effort had been started. Even better, an estimated force of 8,000 peace keeping troops contributed by the member countries of the African Union(AU) was to help out the weak transitional government army. Up to date only a handful of Ethiopian troops and 1,500 Ugandan troops are staged in the war raved country. Then come all the drawbacks: resignations over corruption, finger pointing in parliament, a return to insecurity as the major seaports and airports return to the hands of warlords, more displacement of civilians from Mogadishu, rampant assassinations of government officials and a recurrence of fundamentalist style suicide bombings.....**continued on the next page.**

**..Continued from page 6...Somalia is a vicious cycle....***By: Said Guled.*

Based on a current BBC report, Somalia is among the worst governed countries in Africa and at the same time is one of the world's most corrupt countries. Amidst all this, there is a delicate hope.

During the first half of September, 2007 there was a delegation of high ranking and well accomplished personnel from the Diaspora that convened in Asmara, Eritrea. Their mission was to oust the transitional government along with the Ethiopian forces and start over again. According to this group, the transitional government will be dissolved through diplomacy or, if worst comes to worst, fire power. Well, it seems all has failed in terms of diplomacy as there has been an upsurge of insurgents fighting government forces to control Mogadishu. On top of this, Eritrea has been accused of playing host to terrorists by the USA. We are back to square one! Yesterday's horrors are bound to repeat themselves and today will never be a present for a country such as Somalia, at least not now. It's a vicious cycle!

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## **ZIMBABWE: AFRICA'S LIVING HELL; WHAT ELSE?**

*By: Jimmy Longun*

I am sure many of you are well aware of the current social, political and economic upheavals that threaten to rip Zimbabwe apart. A lot has been preached by the media houses about this Southern African state—formerly known as Southern Rhodesia. There have been moments when the media tells us that it's a matter of days or weeks before a state of emergency is declared in Zimbabwe. The story concerning Zimbabwe's abysmal state of disarray has become so mundane that even those who care about global politics have now decided to pay a deaf ear. But amidst all this catastrophically overbearing turmoil, there is only one man whose head the international community has been screaming out for: that is Robert Mugabe. A mere mention of his name sends a shiver down people's spines as images of hell spring to mind. The name "*Mugabe*" has become so metaphorically distorted that it is now synonymous with doom, mayhem, supremacy and iron-fist. Judging by people's conviction of Mugabe's government, his story almost resembles that of the classic Greek tragedies recounted by Sophocles. His apocryphal pride precedes a cataclysmic downfall.

But unlike the Greeks tragedies in which the so called foreseers, referred to as Oracles, were there to plot the lives of heroes as their heroic images swiftly assumed the grime face of a villain—in Mugabe's case there will be no Oracle to turn to; which means that Mugabe would never know about his fate. But the lingering question is; how did Mugabe, once a dedicated student and later a chauvinistic leader come to follow this downward spiral?

Only after meticulously assessing this quandary, will we get closer to the clue. First and foremost, Mugabe was a proud, determined and enthusiastic fellow during his heydays, albeit radical and eccentric. He was daringly curious and had a penchant for greatness during his years as a student.

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**Continued from page 1.....Ebola strikes again: Past lesions faulted and suggestion for future improvement by Dorothy Gondwe**

the provision of supplemental oxygen. The ghost of Ebola never left the Congo it seems. On September 11, 2007 when Americans commemorated six years after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued an alert urging more doctors to travel to Congo to combat another outbreak of Ebola fever. The current outbreak affects two districts of Mweka and Luebo located on the Southeast of the Congo (See Map). It is not a coincidence that the districts are located about 185 miles (about 400km) from Kikwit suggesting the area is still contaminated with the virus.

According to the chief medical inspector for Congo's Kasai Oriental Province, which has the jurisdiction of the two districts, the current outbreak has already claimed 167 lives beginning August and 400 have fallen ill. However, the Ministry of Health (MoH) of the DRC predicts case numbers associated with the outbreak will probably continue to rise as concomitant reports of cases of typhoid and Shigella dysentery (a diarrheal disease) have been confirmed.



Map showing the Southeast Kasai Province where the recent Ebola outbreak struck.

**What lessons were learned in Kikwit?**

The WHO official report of the Ebola epidemic in Kikwit lists five main lessons learned from that epidemic. First, suspected cases should be isolated from other patients and strict barrier nursing techniques implemented. Second, contact tracing and follow-up of people who may have been exposed to Ebola through close contact with other cases is essential. Third, All hospital personnel should be briefed on the nature of the disease and its routes of transmission. Particular emphasis should be placed on ensuring that invasive procedures such as the placing of intravenous lines and the handling of blood, secretions, catheters, and suction devices are carried out under strict barrier nursing conditions. Hospital staff should have individual gowns, gloves, masks and goggles. Non-disposable protective equipment must not be reused unless they have been properly disinfected. Fourth, infection may also be spread through contact with the soiled clothing or bed linens from a patient with Ebola. Disinfection is therefore required before handling these items. Lastly, communities affected by Ebola should make efforts to ensure that the population is well informed, both about the nature of the disease itself and about necessary outbreak containment measures, including burial of the deceased. People who have died from Ebola should be promptly and safely buried.

However, even after these lessons were learned, it seems their implementation in the

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recent outbreak came too late for the people in the Kasai province. According to a recent report by CNN, in the Congolese hospital where patients were being treated -- a mud hut with a corrugated roof -- patients are not being isolated. That means that patients who have Shigella or typhoid, which are not usually fatal diseases, are mixed with Ebola patients, putting them at risk of catching the highly fatal fever. Other reports confirm that symptoms of the epidemic - high temperature, bloody diarrhea and visible hemorrhaging - were first seen in the region on 27 April, making the time lapse between the first occurrence of the outbreak and response to it, three months. To put it simply, for a disease with a fatality rate of 90%, help came too late. The late response can in part be explained by the lack of the necessary infrastructure and equipment for a timely diagnosis of the cases. CNN and BBC both reported that blood samples from people suspected with Ebola infection were sent to CDC labs in Atlanta and Gabon, thousands of miles from the site of outbreak. Both labs have confirmed the presence of Ebola and Shigella dysentery in the blood samples. Again, when the site of an outbreak is located practically thousands of miles away from the site of diagnosis, surveillance and control is harder to manage and response comes late.

#### **Good news**

The good news is even though the response came too late to save 167 lives, there has been an increased outpouring of assistance from several international health agencies and individual governments which have sent medical personnel and supplies to the affected areas. Supplies include tents and plastic sheeting to build isolation facilities

Medicines, water and sanitation materials are also being sent. "Ebola kits" have also been provided for the medical teams - they include protective gloves, boots and uniforms which are designed to be destroyed after use. Additionally, local health authorities are helping to disinfect contaminated areas. The other good news is that people of the Kasai district will not forfeit travel or trade during the time of the outbreak. Initially, the WHO had thought of restricting travel and trade to and from the infected areas to prevent the spread of the virus, but after containment the WHO has dismissed the need for restrictions. However, neighboring country of Uganda, which has itself, suffered a major Ebola outbreak in 2001 where 200 people died, has issued a red alert to border posts neighboring the DR Congo and has instructed staff at Entebbe international airport to be on the lookout for passengers who show symptoms of fever.

#### **Research for the cure and possible vaccine**

As mentioned earlier, currently there is no cure or vaccine for Ebola. However, several vaccine candidates are being tested but it could be several years before any are available. A new drug therapy has shown early promise in laboratory studies and is currently being evaluated further. However, this too will take several years. These make surveillance and control the only methods to prevent high fatalities from the disease.

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**Continued from page 1...Ebola strikes again: Past lesions faulted and suggestion for future improvement by Dorothy Gondwe**

**New direction for handling future Ebola outbreaks**

As long as there is no cure or vaccine for the disease, the urgency for improvements in early detection and containment of the infected is necessary

**New direction to handling future Ebola outbreaks**

In early detection and containment of the infected is necessary and requires full attention from the international health agencies and governments. Currently, the response to Ebola outbreaks has been slow and has relied heavily on foreign experts and advice. International agencies such as the WHO needs to increase the capacity of the local health department to handle such outbreaks including building the necessary infrastructure such as clinics and providing the necessary equipment to carry out diagnostic tests. This can go hand in hand with training local medical professionals to operate the equipment to decrease the dependency on foreign experts. Capacity building and local investment in diagnostic equipment will increase the speed and efficiency of disease detection in these areas.

Strengthening of regional surveillance networks can also help prevent the spread of Ebola to neighboring countries hence preventing even larger Ebola epidemics. In the meantime, international and local efforts hope to cease further spreading of the virus and provide adequate supportive care for the infected.

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**THE WALK THA ISNT.....continued from page 5 *By: Maliq Muro.***

of lessons learnt. The only thing we can work with is the reality we face today! Join me as I strive to see the black person start to learn how to walk as a first class citizen of this world, as it should rightfully be!

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**Continued from page 4.....Ethiopia Joins The Rest of The World!!! By: Dawit Mulugeta**

Usually the Ethiopian New Year-Enkutatash-is celebrated on the 11 of September-with all due respect to our American compatriots. Once every four years, New Year begins on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September and it was the case at the turn of the millennium; the year 2000 began at midnight on Wednesday (16:00 CMT on Tuesday) this year. The day was marked with a series of events of which one was graced by the presence of hip-hop star Black Eyed Peas. An ambitious attempt was also made to bring hip-hop diva Beyonce Knowles to the event. The occasion was also marked with the presence of African leaders and dignitaries such Kenyan president Mwai Kibaki. All over the world, Ethiopians in the Diasporas also had organized events, the biggest in the US being in DC.

So, why are Ethiopians seven years behind the rest of the world? What does this day mean to Ethiopians and Africans?

While the rest of the world uses the Gregorian calendar, the Ethiopians use the Julian(Coptic) calendar. Although there is no clear explanation as to how Ethiopians are still seven years behind the rest of Africa, one reason particularly stands out. According to professor of history at Addis Ababa University, Ahmed Zakaria, the Roman Church amended their calculation around 500 AD - adjusting it by seven or eight years and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, perhaps, in keeping with its conservative tradition, decided to stick with the old calendar. Ethiopian history, heritage and identity are deeply intertwined with the Ethiopian Orthodox church. The Orthodox Church played and still plays a large role in the lives of most Ethiopians since the Axumite Kingdom. As such, the Ethiopian calendar is a unique part of their identity. The Ethiopian calendar consists of thirteen months each with 30 days and the 13<sup>th</sup> month-“Pagume”- has only five days turning to six every leap year.

Most people do not have trouble using two calendars. For some curious minds: yes, Ethiopians do get to watch the latest episode of “Lost”.

The national newspaper prints both dates and it is as simple as switching between Fahrenheit and Celsius. The major inconvenience of using such system is that the leap years of these two calendars are out of sync and cause confusions. Of course, if you happen to be born on the six of Pagume, you join the ranks of the Leapers (29<sup>th</sup> February).

Enkutatash is a time when the long rainy cold summer gives away to a warm sunny weather. The Ethiopian highlands are adorned with Chrysanthemums. For most of us, Enkutatash signifies the emergence of new life- a new beginning. Traditionally, the day is glorified with young girls in the traditional ‘ager libs’ going door-to-door singing songs about the new season and the end of dark rainy season. The ubiquitous chrysanthemums, the presence of flamboyant girls and the endless wishes of prosperity in the coming year are an essential element of the day. Major streets are flooded with an endless river of white as people dressed in traditional white attire make their ways to various destinations. Like most Africans, an Ethiopian would rather starve for days than not celebrate this day with superfluous extravaganza. Needless to say, this day is characterized with over indulgence, abundance, joy and jubilation.

Unfortunately, this New Year was received with mixed feelings. Prior to the day, prices of consumer goods had skyrocketed. In certain food markets, prices increased by as much as triple fold leaving the average Ethiopian who earns less than a dollar a day, bewildered. For most families, the usual slaughtering of cattle had to be replaced with a trip down to the local butcher’s store for a lump of meat. Political tension is ripe. Though under the EPLF regime the country has shown some economic growth, the past few years are marked with civil unrest and atrocious political activities by the ruling government. The last so-called democratic election has claimed the lives of hundreds of protesters and many still remain detained in various prisons around the country. Freedom of press has become a thing of the past with the government cracking down on

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.....continued from page 11...Ethiopia joins the rest of the world...by Dawit Mulugeta

journalists. This atmosphere has highly impacted People's trust in the government as well as the future of the country. At present, the country is on the verge of war with Eritrea, despite being involved, not long ago, in a war that claimed the lives of many innocent civilians and cost the country billions of dollars. The current government finds itself in a sticky muddle after poking its nose in a rather complicated Somali affair; as such, the threat of Islamist insurgency is looming. Many families don't see the country going anywhere. For a country marred by continuous war, famine and poverty, a new millennium symbolically opens a new door to new opportunities. If there is one thing that any Ethiopian would be proud to speak of is the victory in The Battle of Adowa where for the first time, a barely armed African army defeated a mechanized Western force. Due to the sacrifice paid on the battle field, most Ethiopians today pride themselves with the fact that they have never been colonized. I hope this pride manifests itself in the new millennium to empower Ethiopians as they climb up high on the economic ladder. Indeed, Africans, let us hope that the year two thousand would be one for such victories. For those of us who are optimistic, we can only hope that the resilience, solidarity and the indomitable spirit of the African people takes the better part of us to overcome the challenges that engulf the motherland. Let us hope the year two-thousand marks the beginning of a new era where our hunger for good leadership, peace and democracy is quenched. I say, cheers to the New Millennium!

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## SOME AFRICAN PROVERBS:

1. Water always finds a way out.
2. The friends of our friends are our friends
3. One falsehood spoils a thousand truths
4. No one tests the depth of a river with both feet.
5. He is a fool whose sheep runs away twice
6. By the time the fool has learned the game, the players have dispersed.
7. Do not call the forest that shelters you a jungle.
8. It is the calm and silent water that drowns a man.
9. Two men in a burning house must not stop to argue.
10. He who asks questions, cannot avoid the answers
11. The witness of a rat is another rat.
12. Two waterfalls do not hear each other.
13. When the brothers fight to the death, a stranger inherits their father's estate.
14. When one is in trouble, one remembers God.
15. -If you have one finger pointing at somebody, you have three pointing towards yourself.
16. Do not tell the man who is carrying you that he stinks.
17. A roaring lion kills no game
18. It takes a whole village to raise a child
19. Copying everyone else all the time, the monkey one day cut his throat.
20. If you're not living on the edge... you're taking up too much room.
21. He who runs after good fortune runs away from peace
22. The heart of man and the bottom of the sea are unfathomable
23. Men fall only in order to rise.
24. Call kinship with the hyena, and all hyenas are your friends.
25. The axe forgets; and the tree remembers.
26. When the mouse laughs at the cat there's a hole nearby.
27. When the cock is drunk, he forgets about the hawk

He set out to pursue his childhood dreams and in the process, he met highly influential people like Julius Nyerere, Jomo Kenyatta, Kwame Nkrumah, and so forth. The vision he gained from these prominent figures become the pillar on which he later laid his pan-Africanist ideologies.

1 But gone are the days when Mugabe's rise to power was seen as nothing but the coming of the messiah—the arrival of the so called prodigal son whose sole dream was viewed as none other than that of rescuing his people from the scathing curse of colonialism. By far, Mugabe stood among men of historical significance: the likes of Julius Nyerere. At the time, he was among the so called scholars, the intellectuals, and the elite class of Africans who had what it takes to lead their people to the Promised Land. And had Mugabe remained aboard the ship that contained some of the finest leaders of our time, history would surely not judge him harshly. What Mugabe did, like several other African leaders, was to disembark from the legendary ship and board his own.

I am sure many of you have understood what I am trying to arrive at. What I am hinting at, albeit in a periphrasis manner, is that, after Mugabe had cherished the ideals he held sacrosanct, it was a matter of time before those ideals fizzled into nothingness. Mugabe was a strong believer in Pan-Africanism, self-governance, freedom, unity and irredentism. However, recent happenings in Zimbabwe have not only cast a towering shadow over these values, but they have also reduced Mugabe's image to nothing more than that of a rain drenched mocking bird. I would assume many of you know that a hefty proportion of African leaders suffer from a deadly virus referred to as "*clinging to power*". And Mugabe ,too, despite his much heralded principles that are supposed to work in people's interest, has been no exception to this strain of fatal virus that is yet to have a cure.

I am not going to delve into the details of every single deed that Mugabe and his cronies have done, since I am not writing a history paper. Anyway, I think I am probably one of the few people in the world at the moment who would dare mention something positive about Mugabe.

But in all sincerity, there is a limit to everything, and if truth be told, some of the things Mugabe has done are too despicable to be ignored. From formerly a freedom fighter, Mugabe has long departed from that trail, and has turned against his people. He has deserted the role of the good shepherd he had once vowed to uphold, and has now mastered the art of: harassing political opponents, ruthlessly suppressing peaceful demonstrations, using violence in the worst possible of ways, paying a deaf ear to the country's economic debacle, the list is endless. But if curiosity be evoked, why has Mugabe metamorphosed from a once cherished leader to this hideous demon that the world is now familiar with?

Sociologists, Psychologists and analysts can make up all sorts of theories to explain the character of a man whose rigid ideals have attracted as much irony as his diabolical deeds have. Trust me; there is no denying the fact that Mugabe is a victim of global politics. From the get-go, Mugabe was one of the few African leaders who recognized that colonialism and neo-colonialism are in fact twin sisters. He vowed to suffocate the two in the best possible way he can. And until recently, Mugabe had always acted in what he claims to be in the interest of his people. But it is the bitter antagonism with Western countries coupled with his self destructive dogmatism that would hurl him into the biting darkness he now finds himself in.

Britain and the USA have had their fair share in making Mugabe appear worse than he really is. Mugabe and his cronies had long been banned from stepping either into the EU or the USA. As if that is not enough, Mugabe has been lynched by the Western media in ways that are unimaginable. He has been blamed for starvation, poverty, economic crisis, election malpractices and so on. But can we sometimes not see that these charges are too many to be heaped on one man? Definitely something fishy must be going on. We all know that Britain has been in loggerheads with Mugabe ever since he liberated the people of Zimbabwe. His land redistribution policies which he enacted in 2003 simply drove the final nail into the coffin. Now what has all these got to do with the current chaos?

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**Continued.....Zimbabwe: Africa's living hell; what else?** By: Jimmy Longun

Well, from an economic point of view, this scathing image scares away potential investors; and just as I speak, the damage has already been done. Also due to pressure from Western countries, the IMF aborted its mission in Zimbabwe. The few agricultural products the country manages to produce can't be sold abroad because of Mugabe's image. Ever since the world turned against Mugabe, he has been trying to use any sort of extra-terrestrial power left in his closet to save this godforsaken country. Sometimes he had been pushed to do all sorts of abominable acts just to prove a point. Even if at times I am a fan of Mugabe, I believe he has been driven to the point of insanity—right to the precipice where insanity meets sanity. For example his recent array of traditional economic policies reinforces his paranoia about the West. In his response to the countries alarming case of inflation, Mugabe decided to slash off the 3 zeroes from the national currently because he believes that the whole thing is a junk of fabricated lies by the Western Capitalist Nations who want him dead.

Based on all these, we can clearly infer that Mugabe is a slave of his own mind as well as global politics. Rather than look at Zimbabwe as a country that has its own citizens, values, culture and history, he now sees it as his own property, and nobody can do anything about it. Whether or not Mugabe relinquishes his throne, now or later, the damage has already been done. Zimbabwe will huff and puff for decades before they recover from this bottomless pit. But in the meantime they will have to lick the wounds inflicted upon them by geopolitics.

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**THE WAY I SEE IT, IN THIS SYSTEM WE DON'T HAVE A CHOICE** By: Magarya Waitara.

They always say "do what you love" and other benefits will follow. This usually assumes that you have enough time and recourses to help you become adept in your chosen career. It also assumes that the importance of being happy with what you do outweighs other concerns. But we all know, consciously or subconsciously, that in the present economy, this saga does not always hold, especially in a short run. In fact, it may let you so down that you may end up depressed or even decide to quit life. Yeah, may be all this talk about "doing what you love" does not really apply to us Africans especially when it comes to choosing majors, which more often than not become our careers. And I am saying Africans without exception because I am writing for Africa and Africa is probably the most affected continent of all. But what I am about to discuss applies to others, particularly international students from what development economists refer to as "The Economic South".

Most of us enroll in business and science departments. Very few select individuals dare to major in other faculties. This trend is pervasive among international students here at Macalester no less than it is in other universities I suppose, mainly among undergrads. One may ask oneself, does this trend reflect our fascination of the workings of economic systems? Or is it due to our fascination with the beauty of science? Or is this what we truly love to do? May be one or two of these intriguing questions deserves a "Yes" for an answer. But I doubt it because it is highly improbable that Macalester recruits "like-minded" African students from across the continent i.e. those who love science and economics. Therefore there must be other explanations for this trend that has nothing or very little to do with the love of the subjects we choose to major in.

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**Continued.....THE WAY I SEE IT, IN THIS SYSTEM WE DON'T HAVE A CHOICE** *By: Magarya Waitara.*

After various discussions with other African students from various places including Macalester, I came to a conclusion that what drives us to these realms of study is survival. We have no choice but to succumb to these majors in order to survive in this country. It is how the system works. Through experience and speculation, I found that, this country is run on three things: knowledge, skill or/and talent, and drugs. Any combination of in any order will also work. You need one of these things in order to survive in this country. By surviving I mean be able to stay and have an income that can sustain you beyond hand-to-mouth lifestyle. Let me break them down.

Knowledge pertains to the ability to conceptualize and create things or perform specialized tasks. Acquisition of knowledge is usually an expensive and a time consuming process. If you acquire sufficient or desired knowledge, you will be highly valued by the society and as a consequence of the society's high regard for knowledge, you will be able to acquire a job and make a living. This is where most of us belong, in this quest for knowledge. Skill or talent describes natural or nurtured ability to do something particularly well. Most sports professionals, actors, public speakers, singers, artists and so on fall in this category. As you can attest, talent pays pretty well here. Macalester is not particularly known to nurture most of these non-academic talents. Division III sports teams just won't do it! Most people who do not belong in the first two categories have little choice but to succumb to taking or selling illicit drugs or/ and alcohol in order to survive. I hope this is not applicable to African students, so I will not add further comments.

We know that knowledge is valued in our present society. Therefore, once we get here, we realize that we have to study hard to acquire working knowledge that is going to allow us to survive. We also realize something else: simply knowledge may not be sufficient to land you a job in this economy or it may take longer than expected to

find one. The latter factor may weigh heavily to many of us because of two constraints. First, immigration regulations put a lot of pressure for us to obtain a job within a year of graduation or otherwise continue with school if we want to stay here legally. This alone takes away our freedom to choose majors that are not likely to offer quick opportunities. That means we may have to choose a certain major not because we love the subject or because it fits with our long term goals but simply because it will enable us to obtain a good and well paying jobs soon after graduation. So essentially, our goals shift from doing what we are really interests us (i.e. what we'd love to do if we had a million bucks) to doing what is needed to get a job as reflected by the labor market. Secondly, economic situation that we find ourselves in makes us even more vulnerable to pressures of this system. Some of us may lack extensive and steady support system to act as a buffer in case of financial need. I am saying this because, for some, the situation may be such that one need not only support oneself here but also one's relatives back home. If you have a family that needs your help, financially speaking, you do not have a luxury of doing what you like. You have got to get knowledge, get a job and extend support to you family and friends. No time to waste soul searching for your dream/ perfect career. So even if you love philosophy, you drop it and you do Economics or Math or a science. So, because of the realities of labor market controlled, immigration regulations and personal situations, many of us have compromised our real interests and pursued studies that will get us job first and fast. Well, is that necessarily a bad thing? Of course not. In fact it is a good thing because it carters to our immediate needs and helps us to survive. After all, survival is the most fundamental characteristic of all living creatures. The types of jobs that the system offers after finishing four years of college, if we are lucky

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enough not to spend another five more years specializing are highly technical. Jobs such as investment banking, financial consulting or working in research labs or other highly specialized environment are what we end up doing with our education. Yes, these jobs pay relatively well and they do have benefits therefore, they enable us to send remittances or even invest at home, if we work long enough. However, does this really help Africa? Are we going to be able to bring our continent out of poverty with remittances? Probably not. It is true that we may be able to help many people by sending money or other types of help back home. It is also true that Africa needs economists and scientists. But the way I see it, what Africa really needs is good governance in an international context. Most of the problems we suffer right now are not entirely local. They have international influence. So Africa can really use people with enough international political exposure to make sound judgments and policies that will benefit the majority and help the continent combat poverty. People who have received good, well balanced education (liberal arts?) and have international depth on variety of issues and policies are the asset that Africa can really use to design policies that will eventually lead to a positive stride towards meaningful development. In today's increasingly globalizing society, it is essential that our leaders and policy makers have a good grasp of geopolitics and international affairs.

But the choice of our majors and subsequent types of jobs we obtain here, do not allow us to get a breadth of experience in matters of international affairs that affect masses in the continent. Once employed, we are effectively shut off by our busy schedules trying to secure our jobs and move forward in a career ladder, from pursuing or even keeping up with matters that are happening in the continent. Therefore, we become too busy to invest enough time and resources in areas that will enable us to be good policy analyzers and makers to effect real change in the continent. So essentially, we find ourselves trapped. The way I see it, this is the real problem with the limited choice we have. It is a vicious cycle that kills Africa. It is the real brain

drain that our continent suffers. We have to realize that if want to effect change in Africa; we have to do it ourselves. Money is important and that's not to be overlooked, it can only do so much. In the long run, it is sound policies that will transform the continent. But who is going to take up the challenge of entering the political platform if the majority of us shun it?

Let no one get me wrong here, I am not saying that we should all be politicians but we should 'think' and be aware of the long term costs of the choices we make. We do not need to be politicians to contribute to political development and integrity of our continent. Various levels of decision making process need our input. Pursuing other majors or careers does not automatically disqualify anyone from involving in decision making process either. But if we spend our time investing in international matters we will be better informed about different affecting our continent therefore more likely to make sound decisions than if we spend our time investing in say accounting or programming.

Therefore, the choices open to us in this system are limited. Because of the pressure we feel, most of us opt to take an easier path that enables us to survive in this economy. The way I see it, the choices we make, although they cater to our immediate needs, they are costly to Africa's development in a long term. If the present trend does not change, we have a long way to go.

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# SPORTS EXTRA!!

## WILL AFRICA WIN THE 2010 FIFA WORLD CUP IN S.AFRICA? *By: Jimmy Longun*

When the 2006 World Cup in Germany took center stage, Africans both in the motherland and in the Diaspora were purring with grudging amusement at the prospect of an African country lifting the world's most coveted trophy. In fact having already waited for too long, many were quite convinced that one African country will surely walk away with the golden prize.

Just prior to the beginning of the tournament, there was much to savor as the exciting yet gut wrenching feeling of anxiety transpired through people's hearts. Much as I wanted the tournament to kick off, I could not shoulder the naked truth that only one country among the 32 will lift the trophy when the duel peters to its climactic stage. For those in the motherland and the Diaspora, all eyes were set on Ghana, Ivory Coast, Togo, and maybe Angola. People really didn't expect much from Tunisia except that they always went to make up the numbers.

The much anticipated clash in Group E that included the likes of Ghana, Italy, USA and the Czech Republic was one of the most talked about affairs. From the very day the draw was released by FIFA, this group was branded as the "*group of death*". Everybody knew about Italy's footballing heroics and the canning, yet venomous, approach of the Czechs. The US media also did its own part in brewing stories about how good the US team is, and how they were going to be a force to reckon with. But in all entreties, nothing was known about Ghana, as such, they were simply the dark horses. They were an emerging force who at the time had never unleashed their venom on any of Europe's or South America's soccer greats. But

people were well aware of the damage that Ghana could do. They knew that Ghana did not only possess no-nonsense players like Michael Essien in abundance, but also speed merchants like Gyan Asamoah who are more than capable of giving opponents a run for your money.

But as many people were still packing more eggs in Ghana's basket, things turned sour: Ghana was comprehensively vanquished by Italy. While some of us may not have been totally nonplussed, many people cursed the land of the blacks and wondered why history keeps agonizingly repeating itself. But as I expected the Ghanaians to jump from the frying pan into the fire, the contrary unfolded, instead. Ghana defied all odds to dislodge the USA and immediately send them packing after they had been utterly demolished by the Czechs. This time around Ghana had announced its intent to stay in the tournament other than be cowed away like some of the African countries in the past. Before their dramatic clash, the Czechs spent all day building the coffin in which the Black stars will be engulfed, but instead the opposite happened. Ghana summoned all the prowess, trickery and breath-taking pace they had never used before to outmuscle, outwit and outclass the Czechs over and over again. This was indeed trouble-shooting at its best because even the most pessimistic of fans were blowing kisses into the air.

But while history was being rewritten by the Black stars, a different set of events unfolded on the other side. Like Ghana, Ivory Coast also had gotten itself into a different group of death; one that comprised vicious lions like Argentina,  
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underperforming, but formidable Holland; and the insipient Serbia–Montenegro. As expected, for Ivory Coast to progress to the next round, they did not only had to dig deep, but also overcome the impossible. As it turned out, they failed to propel themselves past the gigantic gates of destiny, as such; their story was spuriously concluded after succumbing to both the Dutch and the Argentines

And once again, the focus turned back to the Black stars; of course after the likes of Togo, Tunisia and Angola had already done their exploration of Germany, and were now heading back to the motherland. With Ghana virtually the only remaining African country in the competition, it was quite understandable that people were begging for mercy from the almighty. The sad reality, though, was that they were to face Brazil—and hence a do or die scenario. But debates among pundits as well as diehard supporters continued to rage to deafening proportions. Many people believed that despite Brazil’s impeccable footballing tradition, Ghana will, nonetheless, put the giant soccer Nation to the sword. But history was not about to be rewritten here because the Samba boys had a different story to tell—in fact they were reading from a different script. The day came, and despite Ghana’s gallant display, it was too little and too late. The only hope on whose pillar the dreams of a continent rested came crushing down like the biblical tower of Babel; and people were left with no option, but to shed crocodile tears.

Now despite this heartbreak, many people are still convinced that we will get another chance. Fortunately for us, we will not have to cross seas and oceans because the tournament will be on our home soil. There is an old African anecdote that says that “the owner of the home is the one who eats the lion share” and this exactly is what has happened to Africa in the past: the owners of the home devoured all the flesh and we were left to squabble over the leftovers. But while it is quite easy to cite excuses, we need to be prudent in outlining what exactly is the cause of this streak of bad luck. It is only through this method that we can overcome our obstacles in the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

One of the clear and almost certain causes of our abysmal performance in the World Cup is the lack of clinical finishing. When you shrewdly analyze the World Cup games that Ghana and Ivory Coast played, you would wonder why African players simply can’t put the ball at the back

of the net. For example, the Ghanaians should have mauled the Czechs 10-0 if many of them had taken shots rather than walk into the goal with the ball. And even more disturbing, African strikers are known to pose more threat to the fans behind the opponents’ goal than the goal itself. Before we could think of challenging for honors in the 2010 World Cup, we need to address the problems in this department.

The other issue is the lack of a fierce set of players. Enough is enough; African players have been too soft. Many of them have exploited their athleticism to great heights, but we still lack ruthless players. For instance when you look at Italy, they didn’t win the World Cup because they were too skilled or better than everyone else. One of the reasons they won the World Cup is because they were able to import their Mafia gang tactics onto the football (soccer) pitch. Consider for example their midfield dynamo Gennaro Gattuso. This fellow is not only ungodly bestial, but also ferocious, and has the guts to chew on anyone’s liver should it be required to win a game. Gattuso’s caricatured image serves Italy’s interests because whenever he is in the vicinity, opponents are often made to sweat profusely. We need these kinds of players, no matter what.

The other point is that we need to breed a lot of Maradonas. I don’t mean people who can dribble and run with the ball, we already have those in abundance. I am referring to Maradona’s guile, canning, and dirty tricks that won Argentina the World Cup in 1986. Too many times African players have employed only brute strength against their opponents. But as we have seen again and again with the Italians, and other countries, you can’t win tournaments by skill or strength alone. You sometimes have to risk being called names (dirty mongrel, hopeless frog, etc) just to win that crucial penalty that will take you to the next round.

I am sure there are several other factors that can be addressed, but those are the burning ones as far as I am concerned. Africa’s footballing history has taught me a lesson. “Don’t count your eggs before they hatch”. But despite my drawn back position; I am certain that when the 2010 World Cup kicks-off, it will be the moment of retribution. The stars will fall; the heavens will roar, and the mighty extraterrestrial beings will cast their spells on Earth in agony!

# “THE COLUMN”

**Why is it that African guys here seem to be scared of talking to African girls and therefore distance themselves? Is it the girls that scare them away or do they want to explore other possibilities?"**

-An African Sister

Dear African sister,

While I am not an expert in matters of the heart, I will try to answer your question in the most explicit of ways. Even though I might not have noticed this trend of behavior myself, I truly believe you because I am sure you've done your homework and therefore I assume you know better than I do. Since I do not exactly have a concrete theory or hypothesis to explain such a behavior, I can only speculate. One of the things that could prompt our fellow brothers to exhibit such weird behavior might be down to the sisters themselves. Some brothers might feel that African girls are too laid back, in other words, if the stream is one-way traffic. I am not trying to suggest that African girls are not receptive enough, what I am implying here is the degree of receptiveness. However, I would not think that African guys are scared of talking to the African girls, though; and I am also imagining that by saying "talking" you are not referring to "going out". But if you are, then this set of reasoning will require a bit of modification due to the number of variables involved. But just to check, have you done your best to show them that you are interested? If not, then I suggest you give it a shot. Now to answer your question of whether or not African guys are looking somewhere for greener pastures, well, that's down to the individual. It could be or it could not be.

**"Before I came to Macalester, I knew that most African girls are conservative. It's in fact something they treasure so much. And based on what I have seen here in Macalester, I know that many of the girls indeed fall in this category. I-**

**am sure they would not even mind sacrificing a lot of things, at the expense of having fun. Why is this so? Macalester is quite liberal and if our African girls come here and remain with the mentality of those back home, is it really worth it? Please, I want to be enlightened"**

Dear questioner,

This is a very good question and observation that I believe a lot of Africans in Macalester can relate to. In order to do justice to this question, the definition of conservative is crucial. I do not know what you mean by conservative but I would attempt to answer this from my view.

I believe every person has a set of ideals that they adhere to and this is influenced greatly by their culture. Most African girls on campus try to hold on to these values that shape their characters and personalities. What you refer to as the 'mentality of those back home' is a set of values and morals. From the phrase, 'the mentality of those back home', I am getting a negative sense and I do not think that someone's values that you rightly stated are treasured should change because of their environment. I believe that most of the African guys in Macalester are upholding their values, so why should it be the girls who should change their 'mentality' or way of thinking when they get here? Do not get me wrong here, I am not saying these women are close minded and not open to new experiences, but there are some aspects of one's character that remain the same no matter the environment.

I am glad that you mentioned that Macalester is quite liberal, and part of liberalism is the acceptance of differences. It doesn't mean that if

you attend a liberal arts school you should lose your values. I believe it means that you are in a place where you are free to express yourself and your ideas.

To answer your question directly, it is worth it to uphold your principles and morals in life. I do not believe that African women have to sacrifice anything to have fun, why should they? From my opinion these ladies have fun and do not sacrifice anything. African ladies have defined their way of behaving in society, obviously based on their values from home. It seems as if this behavior is what you defined as conservative. Does conservative mean waiting for a guy to come ask you out instead of going up to the guy and asking him out?

In a nutshell, African girls are upholding their principles from home, but being in a society with different standards makes them appear conservative. I'd encourage you to talk to one of these ladies to be enlightened more on this subject.

**I am a first year student. I still don't know a lot of things around here and I would be glad if somebody could help me out. I want to meet people and maybe even hookup. Should I go to parties a lot or what?"**

Dear first year student,

Thanks for writing to us about your concerns. Since you did not indicate your gender, I will go ahead and assume you are male. In your first weeks as a new student at Mac, it is normal not to know a lot of things around you. You are in a new environment with new people and expectations; so don't worry. With time, you will get to know people. If you want to meet people, get yourself involved in group activities. Also get involved in sports. I would especially recommend soccer and cross-country because I hear people say that those groups are well endowed. Also try to take some classes in Carnegie or play some instrument with the African Music Ensemble people or anything that is worth the try. I can guarantee you; you will meet someone nice there. For the short term though, go ahead with the parties and party like a rock star. You don't have to go to all parties, but you will need to be very

clinical if you wanna hookup. Dance well. If you are kind of a wallflower, it is okay to take some beers to loosen up your inhibitions. Never drink too much though, because excessive drinking is known to result in a lot of regrettable happenings. Be smart. One last thing, parties are good for hookups but when you are there, be realistic. Don't be too carried away by what you want to get. Just have fun, and the rest will follow. In case of doubts, please feel free to seek help from some of the upperclassmen. Good luck!!

**I am curious to know who introduced Boyz Nite and what is it anyway? It seems like this event is taken seriously by the boys, in fact very seriously, why? And I am also itching to know what the boys do when they are in there?**

**Anonymous**

Dear Anonymous!

Thank you so much for your question. With regards to Boyz Nite, I will answer your question as earnestly as the rules of Boyz Nite shall allow me. First off, this event, famously known as Boyz Nite, is claimed to have been born during Kofi Annan's time, something the boyz are particularly very proud of. I have no proof of how it started during Kofi's time, but what I can say is that the Boyz are quite cool with this sort of mythical allusion. However, despite the fact that this event is sometimes filled with rituals and what not, it is actually meant to be a fun, down to earth sort of gathering. The boyz (well actually men) swap manly stories, give each other tips and most importantly, they party the night away. What happens in Boyz Nite is supposedly classified under the code of conduct that governs this event—but for your information; we don't really do anything that violates Macalester regulations or the State law. It often happens that a lot of R-rated stuff is articulated during this event, usually in a disguised jargon, and under no circumstances shall such stuff be disclosed to a third party.

***PS: The names of the columnists are withheld to protect them from any backlash or inconvenience that might accrue as a result of what is written in this column!!!!***

## AFRIKA!'S UPCOMING EVENTS

1. In the Kitchen( Nov 6)
2. MIO Cultural show( Nov 16)
3. Fall Dance ( Dec 1)

Last but not least, everybody is welcome to our meetings. We have meetings every other Tuesday @ 9:00PM in Room No. 214, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Campus Center. One of our goals this semester is to enlighten people on as many issues as time will allow, and most of these issues will pertain to the African continent as well as the Diaspora. Please come and share these ideas with us.

Finally, I would like to unveil the theme for the next issue so people can start thinking about it. The theme will be **“AFRICA’S WONDERS”**. Too often people have dwelled on the negatives of the African continent, but if this continent is that bad, why are people still happy to live in it? In other words, what is awesome and enthralling about your home, your country, or anything to do with your history, tradition, culture, neighborhood, sense of community, people, you name it. Most of us are in fact very excited to go home, why is that so? While this is the central theme, please feel free to explore different areas of your interest! Adios!!

**“AFRICAN VOICES” WISHES YOU A  
TREMENDOUS SEMESTER!!!!!!!**

