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Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes in Africa



MEDIA MONITORING

21 November 2014

UN peacekeeping review won't see field firsthand

Source: Associated Press

United Nations, 20 November 2014 - The Nobel Peace Prize winner who will lead the first major review of United Nations peacekeeping operations in 15 years says his panel will do it from afar.

In a closed-door meeting Thursday of the Security Council, apparently inadvertently broadcast on the U.N.'s internal television system, Jose Ramos-Horta said panel members have been in the field before and don't need to go. He said he would be reluctant to impose on force commanders and will opt to speak via videoconference instead.

The sweeping U.N. review comes as the world body faces its most challenging climate ever for peacekeeping, with a record 130,000 people deployed around the world. The threat of terrorist violence is increasing, and pressure to protect civilians grows.

The panel has less than a year to make recommendations.

DR Congo rethinks fiddling with constitution after Burkina revolt

Source: AFP World News

Kinshasa, 20 November 2014 - Politicians in the Democratic Republic of Congo keen to prolong President Joseph Kabila's hold on power are revising their plans after Burkina Faso's leader was deposed by a popular uprising, analysts said.

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"That changed things, coming like a thunderbolt, a real warning signal for those in power," said a foreign diplomat in Kinshasa, the capital of the vast central African country.

Kabila supporters have instead begun to seek ways to delay the presidential election due to be held by November 2016, diplomats said.

The DRC is one of a handful of African nations whose leaders are considering amending their constitutions to allow them to seek a fresh term when their mandates expire, just as long-serving president Blaise Compaore tried to do in Burkina Faso, triggering the uprising.

The army that brought Compaore to power in 1987 largely sided with the protesters last month, with the second-in-command of the presidential guard taking power before stepping down for a transitional regime.

- 'Events were censored' -

"Kabila and his acolytes must have followed the situation very closely and not without worry. The way these events were censored or played down in official statements is pretty revealing," a Congolese analyst said, asking not to be named.

Andre Atundu, a former ambassador who handles communications for Kabila's coalition, said it was unlikely that Congolese people "blindly followed what happened in Burkina".

However, Atundu conceded that Compaore's downfall bore a lesson for all politicians, who "must be careful with the power given them by the people, since the people can take it back."

Kabila, 43, came to power in 2001 after the murder of his father Laurent-Desire Kabila at the height of a second, successive war ravaging the mineral-rich nation.

He was elected head of state in 2006, when a large UN mission to the former Belgian Congo helped organise the first democratic elections since independence in 1960.

While that poll was broadly considered free and fair, when Kabila won a second term in 2011 in elections marked by violence both the opposition and the international community disputed the outcome.

Many Congolese remember how security forces used live ammunition on demonstrators in the uproar after the election.

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Constitutionally barred from running for a third term in 2016, Kabila has never spoken of his plans in public, but government members and other allies openly lobbied for a change to the basic law so he can stand again.

Parliament is poised to consider government proposals to amend part of the constitution covering provincial polls. Opposition politicians suspect the ruling coalition will seize the chance to go further.

The news from Burkina Faso has "at least for now seen the plan for constitutional revision set to one side," one diplomat said.

Parliamentary sources said deputies may instead debate a proposal to change the electoral law, made by an independent member of parliament.

Fidel Bafilemba, a local researcher for the Washington-based Enough Project, said some politicians began to back down from the idea of constitutional change even before the upheaval in Burkina.

- 'Good elections' -

Powerful members of the ruling class spoke out alongside the Roman Catholic church and foreign countries to warn of risks to democracy, Bafilemba said.

The authorities could delay the 2016 presidential election in several ways, notably by ordering a census of the population, estimated last July at 77 million by the US Central Intelligence Agency. In a nation two-thirds the size of western Europe, a census would take at least 18 months.

Some analysts and politicians argue that a census could fire up ethnic rivalries, particularly in the east, which has endured relentless conflict for more than 20 years.

The violence could be used as a pretext for stalling elections, analysts said. Some also see a recent budget increase for the army and police, and changes in military leadership, as signs of a preparation for a showdown.

The United Nations, African Union, European Union and United States all want the presidential poll held on time, but one diplomat said several countries could prove flexible if the outcome was "decent elections".

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Gouvernement de cohésion nationale : les contours se précisent

Source: Agence d'Information d'Afrique centrale

Par Alain Diasso

20 Novembre 2014 - Attendu depuis plusieurs mois déjà, le Gouvernement dit cohésion nationale pourrait finalement voir le jour avant la fin de ce mois de novembre.

La longue attente du gouvernement de cohésion nationale, annoncé tambour battant au sortir des concertations nationales, est sur le point de prendre fin. Des indiscretions recueillies en haut lieu laissent entendre que le nouvel exécutif national serait bientôt publié. Probablement d'ici la fin du mois de novembre, apprend-on. Et pour cause, le chef de l'État aurait pris l'option de ne pas se rendre à Dakar au prochain sommet de la Francophonie sans avoir résolu cette question qui tient en haleine les Congolais depuis plus de huit mois. Dans les milieux concernés, on est convaincu que, cette fois-ci, les pronostics ne seront pas déjoués. Joseph Kabila entend aborder 2015, année électorale en RDC, avec un gouvernement requinqué composé d'hommes et des femmes partageant son idéal de reconstruction du pays.

Il s'avère que les derniers réglages pour la composition du futur gouvernement auraient été opérés. S'il est quasi acquis que l'actuel Premier ministre, Matata Ponyo, est rassuré d'être reconduit à son poste, il sera toutefois secondé dans la nouvelle configuration par trois vice-Premiers ministres s'occupant chacun des domaines spécifiques, à savoir la politique, l'économie et le social. L'aspect géopolitique aura toutefois pesé dans le choix des animateurs de ces méga ministères devant provenir des provinces du Kasai occidental, du Bas-Congo et du Bandundu. Là-dessus, des noms sont déjà cités comme virtuels vic- Premiers ministres dont celui de l'actuel secrétaire général du Parti du peuple pour la reconstruction et la démocratie (PPRD), Évariste Boshab. Originaire du Kasai occidental, il est pressenti pour gérer la vice-primature en charge de l'intérieur et de la sécurité. L'on cite également l'opposant Gilbert Kiakwama Kia Kiziki, originaire du Bas-Congo qui pourrait prendre éventuellement la vice-primature en charge de l'Économie.

Mais le dernier secteur relevant du quota de la province de Bandundu, celui du social dévolu au Parti lumumbiste unifié (Palu) manque encore de prétendant sérieux. Le parti d'Antoine Gizenga continue de peser encore dans la famille politique de Joseph Kabila en tant qu'allié fidèle. De quoi lui retourner l'ascenseur en l'octroyant des postes juteux. La majorité sait qu'en composant avec le Palu comme en 2011, les gages du succès électoral sont garantis. Mais dans un parti encore gangrené par des clivages ethniques sur fond de guerre de clans, le consensus est encore loin de se dessiner autour d'une personnalité. Des indiscretions font état d'un probable retour aux affaires de Godefroid

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Mayobo, l'ancien directeur de cabinet d'Antoine Gizenga, longtemps mis en réserve. Bien plus, le Palu aurait, d'après des sources, repris le ministère du Budget à défaut d'avoir la primature qu'il convoitait de nouveau. Sabin Mashini et Willy Makiashi, deux cadres du parti jouissant de la totale confiance du patriarche, seraient bien positionnés pour occuper ce fauteuil en remplacement de Daniel Mukoko Samba dont le militantisme serait sujet à caution.

Entre-temps, d'autres indiscretions laissent entendre qu' Azarias Ruberwa pourrait aussi rentrer aux affaires par la grande porte en s'octroyant un ministère de Souveraineté, sans trop de détails. L'on raconte aussi que Bizima Kahara, l'ancien ministre des Affaires étrangères de Mzee Kabila, serait aussi dans la course. Outre Gilbert Kiakwama, plusieurs opposants sont également cités comme virtuels ministres, prêts à cracher sur la position extrémiste de leurs partis politiques peu enclins à participer au fameux gouvernement de cohésion nationale en gestation. L'on cite entre autres, Germain Kambinga du MLC, mais aussi quelques têtes couronnées de l'opposition dite radicale telles que le Fonus Joseph Olenghankoy. Les prochaines heures nous en diront davantage.

Opération « Likofi » : un jeu de ping-pong entre Human Rights Watch et Richard Muyej

Source: Agence d'Information d'Afrique centrale

Par Lucien Dianzenza

20 Novembre 2014 - Alors que le ministre congolais de l'Intérieur, Sécurité, Décentralisation et Affaires coutumières accusait cette ONG internationale de « diabolisation et de chantage », cette dernière vient de relever des contre-vérités dans les propos du ministre.

Dans une sorte de réponse, le 20 novembre, aux propos du ministre de l'Intérieur tenus lors de sa conférence de presse organisée le 19 novembre pour démentir le rapport d'Human Rights Watch (HRW) sur les dérapages enregistrés au cours de l'opération « Likofi », cette ONG internationale estime que les individus présentés par Richard Muyej ne figurent pas parmi les cas documentés par elle. Pour HRW, en effet, les noms fournis par les familles des victimes n'ont aucun rapport avec ceux qui ont été cités par le ministre de l'Intérieur.

Selon cette ONG, lors de sa conférence de presse, le ministre Muyej a présenté deux individus dont il a affirmé qu'il s'agissait de personnes figurant sur deux photographies

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publiées dans le rapport querellé, l'une d'elles étant identifiée comme ayant été tuée lors de l'opération Likofi, et la seconde comme ayant été victime d'une disparition forcée. Richard Muyej a également affirmé qu'un troisième homme, dont la photo a été publiée dans le rapport en tant que victime d'une autre disparition forcée, avait comparu devant un tribunal, puis jugé et remis en liberté. Ce dernier n'était pas présent lors de la conférence de presse. « HRW a comparé les noms cités par M. Muyej à ceux des personnes figurant sur nos propres listes, mais qui n'avaient pas été publiés dans le rapport afin de protéger les familles des victimes. Or, il y a une divergence entre les noms. Les noms fournis à HRW par les familles des victimes n'ont aucun rapport avec ceux qui ont été cités par M. Muyej. Ainsi, nous estimons que les individus présentés par Muyej ne figurent pas parmi les cas documentés par HRW », a souligné cette ONG internationale.

Un travail en synergie

HRW a, par ailleurs, émis le souhait de recueillir davantage d'informations auprès du gouvernement au sujet de ces trois individus présentés, afin d'examiner leurs cas. « Et nous espérons obtenir l'autorisation du gouvernement pour mener des entretiens avec eux », a estimé cette ONG dans sa réaction. Par ailleurs, cette association a salué l'engagement du ministre congolais à poursuivre l'enquête du gouvernement sur les allégations de meurtres et de disparitions forcées commis par la police durant cette opération, et à présenter les résultats de ces investigations d'ici à la fin de l'année. « Nous appelons de nouveau à ce que la commission chargée de mener ces enquêtes soit renforcée par la participation de représentants de la société civile et d'observateurs internationaux, afin de mieux garantir son indépendance et la crédibilité de ses conclusions », a souhaité HRW.

Richard Muyej, note-t-on, a estimé que les rédacteurs de ce rapport se sont inscrits dans la logique de « diabolisation, de lynchage médiatique, de chantage éhonté et d'humiliation contre le gouvernement de la République et le peuple congolais ». Le ministre de l'Intérieur a présenté, séance tenante, deux jeunes hommes présumés victimes de disparition forcée dont les photos ont été publiées dans le rapport de HRW. Selon Richard Muyej, ces deux jeunes hommes sont incarcérés à la prison de Makala où ils ont été transférés par le parquet. « Avec les preuves ainsi établies qui contredisent suffisamment les allégations de HRW, quelle crédibilité pouvons-nous accorder aux publications de cette ONG et aux sources de leurs informations que sont certaines familles en mal de déclarations ? », s'est interrogé Richard Muyej, qui a également mis en doute l'authenticité des photos des morts présentées dans le rapport de cette ONG comme étant des personnes tuées par les forces de la police.

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Il est également rappelé qu'en réaction à un précédent rapport sur cette opération, le gouvernement congolais a expulsé le directeur du Bureau conjoint des Nations unies aux droits de l'Homme, Scott Campbell. Des réactions ont fusé de partout pour condamner cette décision du gouvernement congolais alors que ce dernier est resté, de son côté, « serein », balayant d'un revers de la main toutes les allégations.

La présidence à vie est bien terminée en Afrique

Source: PANA Press

Paris, 20 novembre 2014 - La mise en place d'une transition civile au Burkina Faso avec la désignation dimanche soir du diplomate Michel Kafando marque la fin de la présidence à vie en Afrique et met un terme à la confiscation du pouvoir à travers les changements constitutionnels, a estimé lundi à Paris Me Philippe Missassou, avocat et analyste des relations franco-africaines.

«Ce qui vient de se passer à Ouagadougou aura un effet domino sur le reste du continent. Il est désormais clair qu'aucun dirigeant africain ne peut confisquer le pouvoir de façon indéterminée. L'impunité et la présidence à vie sont derrière nous», a-t-il insisté lors d'un entretien avec la PANA.

Prenant l'exemple du Congo Brazzaville, Me Missamou a mis en garde contre toute tentative de modification constitutionnelle qui serait, selon lui, porteuse de « graves périls » pour la paix et la stabilité du pays.

«J'affirme haut et fort que toute tentative du Président Denis Sassou N'Guesso de modifier la Constitution par quelque moyen que ce soit serait une aventure qui imposera des épreuves douloureuses aux Congolais », a poursuivi l'avocat parisien.

Pour lui, au Congo comme au Burkina Faso, le refus de la modification constitutionnelle a largement dépassé le cadre des partis politiques d'opposition pour devenir « un acte citoyen et civique».

«Il s'agit de la défense des intérêts du peuple au Burkina comme au Congo. Si le pouvoir persistait dans cette voie à Brazzaville, il y aura des manifestations violentes organisées spontanément par les populations. Elles sont déterminées à payer le prix qu'il faut pour mettre fin à la présidence à vie», a encore martelé Me Missamou.

En vigueur depuis 2002, la Constitution du Congo limite à deux le nombre de mandat présidentiel et fixe l'âge limite de la candidature à la fonction présidentielle à 70 ans.

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« Cette Constitution a été inspirée par Denis Sassou lui-même. Il doit s'y conformer et quitter le pouvoir en 2016. L'époque où un président africain peut changer aisément la Constitution de son pays est révolue. Quiconque n'aura pas compris ce virage politique, connaîtra le même sort que Compaoré qui a dû être exfiltré par la France après 27 ans au pouvoir », a regretté le défenseur de plusieurs familles congolaises dans l'affaire dite des « disparus du beach », du nom des personnes enlevées en mai 1999 au port fluvial de Brazzaville.

Le Burundi, le Bénin, le Congo, la République démocratique du Congo et le Rwanda connaîtront des élections présidentielles en 2015, 2016 et 2017 alors que leurs chefs d'Etat actuellement en fonction ne peuvent plus, selon les constitutions en vigueur, se présenter à nouveau.

Sata's widow joins succession race

Source: Independent on Line (South Africa)

Lusaka, 20 November 2014 - The battle for Zambia's presidency became even more of a family affair on Wednesday with late leader Michael Sata's widow joining the race to become the ruling party's candidate.

Christine Kaseba joins Sata's stepson Mulenga and his nephew Miles Sampa, who have also declared themselves in the running to be the governing Patriotic Front's candidate.

The country is set to go to the polls on January 20.

According to the private radio station Radio Phoenix, Kaseba said she was still mourning Sata, who was buried last week, but the pain of seeing her husband's work uncompleted would be more excruciating.

"The pain I am feeling will be nothing compared to the pain I would feel if president Sata's desires are not met," the radio station quoted her as saying.

Lusaka mayor Mulenga filed his candidacy papers on Tuesday and told reporters the party needed a youthful leader to further his father's vision.

"It is time for a vibrant, young and focused leader. We need to refresh the party while furthering the vision of my father," Mulenga said at a news conference.

His cousin Sampa, the deputy commerce minister, has also said that Sata's death should pave the way for younger leaders.

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“Sata is the last of that generation that Zambians voted for. Some people are saying I am young and I will be controlled by others. Only my uncle used to control me,” said Sampa, an economist by profession.

At least seven candidates have so far applied to run for the presidency.

Sata, nicknamed “King Cobra” for his biting rhetoric, died of an unspecified illness in London on October 29. He was 77.

He had ruled Zambia since elections in 2011.

He has been replaced by Vice-President Guy Scott until the election is held.

Rwanda to Receive U.S. \$74.47-Million AfDB Loan to Finance Transport Sector Support Project

Source: AllAfrica.com

20 November 2014 - The Board of Directors of the African Development Bank has approved a US \$74.47-million loan to finance the first phase of Rwanda's Transport Sector Support Project. The project involves upgrading the Base-Rukomo road along the Base-Gicumbi-Rukomo-Nyagatare axis.

The development objectives of the project are to contribute to socio-economic development, to improve standards of living and regional integration through an improved and sustainable transport system that links centres of economic activity and access to social services. Its comprises four components: (i) upgrading of 51.54 kilometres between Base and Rukomo (including sensitization of local communities on sexually transmitted diseases, environmental protection and road safety); (ii) the construction of multifunctional centres for women and rehabilitation of school facilities along the main road; (iii) institutional support to the project executing agency, and (iv) clearing the right-of-way.

The project will also support the regional integration objective of East African Community (EAC) member countries and Great Lakes Region. The Bank's intervention is consistent with the country's aspiration to improve its transportation services. In addition, the Base-Nyagatare road is a strategic axis offering an alternative route for international flows operated via the northern corridor, especially flows of goods between the western and northern provinces and the eastern regions of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the port of Mombasa, via Uganda.

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The project will be implemented during from 2015 to 2019 at a total cost of US \$78.99 million and counterpart funding of US \$4.52 million from the budget of the Government of Rwanda.

Rwanda and Sweden sign a grant agreement to support implementation of NEP

Source: Rwanda News Agency

Kigali, 20 November 2014 - Rwanda and Sweden today signed a grant worth 100 million Swedish krona (approximately US\$ 14 million dollars or RwF 9.3 billion) to support the National Employment Program (NEP) during the fiscal years 2014/15 – 2016/17.

“The National Employment Program is the government flagship program for fulfilling the ambitions of the EDPRS II with regards to productive employment which aims to create at least two hundred thousand jobs annually,” Claver Gatete, the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning said.

The overall objectives of NEP are (1) creating sufficient jobs that are adequately remunerative and sustainable across the economy, (2) equipping the workforce with vital skills and attitude for increased productivity that are needed for the private sector growth, and (3) provide a national framework for coordinating all employment and related initiatives and activities in the public, private sector and civil society.

Sweden sees productive employment as the main sustainable path out of poverty – as well as a way to promote inclusive growth throughout the economy.

“We see the funding of NEP as a way to support the government’s work on promoting productive jobs that provide people living in poverty a sustainable way to self-reliance,” says Ms. Maria Håkansson, Chargé d’Affaires at the Swedish Embassy in Kigali.

The approach of the NEP is well in line with Vision 2020. Moving towards productive off-farm jobs is needed to reach the ambitious targets for poverty reduction.

Creating jobs is important but in itself not enough – employment needs to be sufficiently productive to provide a sustainable source of income.

Also, people living in poverty across the country will need to be capacitated to grasp the job opportunities or to become job creators themselves.

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NEP offers an opportunity to support this broad-based agenda under one umbrella as it tackles both the demand side by promoting entrepreneurship and SME growth, and the supply side by equipping people with productive skills.

NEP provides a nationwide outreach of activities aimed to promote entrepreneurship and productive employment with a specific focus on women and youth.

The program was launched in April 2014 and became operational in July 2014. NEP is an umbrella program designed to gather previously scattered interventions aimed at promoting employment into one coordination structure that is expected to increase efficiency and effectiveness of the use of resources.

The NEP aims at promoting productive employment of women and youth through four main pillars: Entrepreneurship and Business Development, Skills Development Labor Market Intervention and Coordination and Monitoring & Evaluation. (End)

Rwanda on right track in advancing Child Rights

The New Times (Rwanda)

20 November 2014 - On 20th November 1989, the world agreed that the rights of children needed to be protected in a more formal and systematic manner. The resulting Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most widely signed human rights treaty in history, and is the global community's promise to children everywhere.

The Convention changed the way children are viewed and treated – i.e., as human beings with a distinct set of rights instead of as passive objects of care and charity.

The unprecedented acceptance of the Convention clearly shows a wide global commitment to advancing children's rights. After all, children are the future of any community, society and nation.

This year marks 25 years since the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention, which Rwanda ratified shortly afterwards in 1990.

The Convention's 25th anniversary in Rwanda is combined with the 10th National Children's Summit and themed '20 Years and Beyond: Advancing Child Rights in Rwanda.'

The event presents an opportunity to look at what has been achieved in the 20 years after the liberation as well as ask what still needs to be done, by whom, and how to fast track results for children within the Sustainable Development Goals.

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The work of the One UN in Rwanda, particularly that of Unicef is central to answering these questions. We continue to provide collective support to the Government of Rwanda and dedicate our combined efforts to advancing the rights of all children in the country, especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Over the last twenty years, Rwanda's children have seen real improvements in their lives thanks to fruitful collaboration between the government, civil society, development partners and other stakeholders.

As we mark the 25th anniversary of the Convention there is much to celebrate, from declining infant mortality to rising school enrolment.

In fact, Rwanda is a leader with the highest improvement in child survival in East and Southern Africa with under-five mortality falling by two-thirds since 1990. Rwanda has the highest primary school enrolment rates in Africa.

For both boys and girls, it is on track to achieve universal access to primary education by 2015.

As Alex Murenzi, the president of the National Children's Forum says "For every country, children need to go to school. Education will help us to develop ourselves. Education gives us good leaders".

But despite these successes and the rapid economic growth registered by the country, much more needs to be done to reduce disparities and help children live in dignity, making choices about their futures and reaching their full potential. All to ensure no child is left behind.

My sincere vote of thanks goes to the Government of Rwanda and President Paul Kagame in particular, for the astute leadership and commitment to the children of Rwanda.

The Government has continued to invest in children by providing extensive services to the poorest families which enables children to access the basic services from their early stages in life. A case in point is the recently approved Justice for Children Policy – keeping children at the heart of the agenda.

Investing in children is fundamental to breaking the inter-generational cycle of poverty and giving all children a fair start in life. Reducing child poverty should become an explicit policy priority with well-defined targets and accountability.

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Investing in children must be at the crux of every public institution and NGO's growth strategy. Greater investment in social protection, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable children, is critical to improving equity.

Social protection, from early childhood through adolescence, not only reduces poverty but also has a knock-on effect on health, nutrition and education. Clear lines of accountability and effective monitoring are also critical, and where possible, civil society, children and adolescents themselves should help monitor progress. It is therefore comforting that the Government of Rwanda has placed all these principles at the heart of its medium and long-time development strategies.

As the One UN in Rwanda, we are united in our belief that everybody has an obligation and the potential to do more to realize the rights of every single child in the country.

Not only is this a moral imperative, but is an economic necessity. Our children, the future leaders of this country, hold the key to well-being and prosperity for future generations they depend on us.

In commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Convention and the 10th Anniversary of the Children's Summit, I call on each one of us to do more for the children and adolescents of Rwanda and to continue transforming the future of the country by prioritizing child rights and investing in the well-being of all children.

This historic milestone serves as an urgent reminder that, despite our tremendous progress along the path to realizing the rights of all children, more still remains to be done.

I believe that fulfilling children's rights equitably is crucial to the country's future and we are all responsible. Join us on this journey.

The writer is the UN Resident Coordinator for Rwanda

Rwanda: President Kagame Follows Tweeters for the First Time

By Kenneth Agutamba

20 November 2014 - With more than 700,000 Twitter followers, President Paul Kagame is the most followed African leader on the social media platform, followed by his Kenyan counterpart Uhuru Kenyatta - with over 630,000 followers.

Yet since joining Twitter in May 2009, President Kagame was until this week not following anyone's Twitter feed.

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However, things changed dramatically on the President's verified Twitter handle (@PaulKagame) on Wednesday as the account started to follow several tweeters.

By press time, the President was following 36 Twitter accounts, while he was being followed by 701,520 tweeps, having gained a staggering 1,320 new followers in just hours - from mid-day to 10p.m yesterday.

His first two 'follows' shows that indeed family comes first, both literally and figuratively; his children Ivan and Ange are the first accounts he's followed.

The next three are unsurprising but interesting: Imbuto Foundation, the charity organisation founded and headed by the First Lady, Jeannette Kagame; as well as his East African counterparts President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya.

He also follows President Macky Sall of Senegal, several high-profile friends of Rwanda around the world, among others.

As the number of Twitter accounts President Kagame follows continues to grow, it will probably give us insight into what catches the presidential eye.

Just taking a glance at the accounts Kagame follows gives us a glimpse into his personal interests. His interests obviously lie in the fields of economics, finance, philanthropy, health, ICT and diplomacy.

Kagame has previously said that even as he was not directly following account feeds he was able to follow what's happening on the social networking site thanks to his follower base.

An aide said the President manages his own Twitter account.

Le FMI met en garde le Congo (Brazzaville) contre les dépenses élevées

Source: AfricanManager

20 novembre 2014 - Les résultats macro-économiques de la République du Congo "ont été globalement satisfaisants jusqu'à présent", selon l'équipe du Fonds monétaire international (FMI) qui a achevé mardi une visite de neuf jours à Brazzaville.

L'équipe a cependant averti que les dépenses élevées du gouvernement supposent un écart par rapport à la règle budgétaire que les autorités ont introduite en 2013.

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" S'il est pleinement mis en œuvre, le budget va creuser sensiblement le déficit primaire non pétrolier et réduire l'épargne budgétaire en 2014 », a déclaré le chef de mission du FMI, Mme Dalia Hakura, notant que le niveau élevé de dépenses publiques est principalement attribuable à la préparation des Jeux africains.

Par ailleurs, la croissance du Congo est estimée à 6 pour cent en 2014, eu égard à un léger rebond de la production de pétrole.

L'inflation en glissement annuel du pays a poursuivi son ralentissement et le niveau général des prix au mois de juin 2014 était pratiquement inchangé par rapport à il y a un an, principalement en raison de la baisse des prix des denrées alimentaires.

«Vu la durée de vie résiduelle limitée des réserves de pétrole et de la baisse récente des prix internationaux du pétrole, il est important que les autorités reviennent à un sentier de rééquilibrage financier à partir de 2015, tout en améliorant l'efficacité des dépenses publiques», a souligné Mme Hakura dans un communiqué transmis à la PANA jeudi.

« À cet égard, l'adoption rapide d'une cible visant une réduction du déficit primaire hors pétrole limitant également la croissance des dépenses publiques dans une proportion supérieure à celle envisagée dans le budget de 2015, contribuerait à préserver les marges de manœuvre budgétaire et extérieure et à atténuer les risques pesant sur la stabilité macro-économique à moyen terme », a-t-elle suggéré.

Selon l'équipe du FMI, dans un contexte de hausse de la production mondiale de pétrole, la République du Congo est confrontée à un environnement extérieur incertain.

"Des risques pèsent sur les prix du pétrole en raison de l'affaiblissement des perspectives économiques mondiales notamment le ralentissement de la croissance en Chine", a déclaré le chef de la mission. "En ce qui concerne le budget 2015, les autorités devraient examiner la possibilité d'un ajustement budgétaire, tout en préservant les dépenses sociales et les dépenses d'investissement favorisant la croissance ciblée".

La mission a salué l'intention des autorités d'accorder la priorité à la réalisation de projets d'infrastructures de base, tout en prenant des mesures pour entamer le programme de transferts monétaires conditionnels.

Selon la déclaration de la mission, le FMI encourage les autorités congolaises à donner suite aux recommandations de la revue de la gestion des dépenses publiques et de la responsabilisation financière engagée par la Banque mondiale et d'autres partenaires au développement. "Cela devrait aider à identifier les actions de réforme nécessaires

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pour renforcer l'exécution du budget, les achats et les processus de décaissement", a-t-elle affirmé.

«Les autorités devraient poursuivre les réformes structurelles en cours pour soutenir la croissance inclusive dans le secteur non pétrolier. La mission salue l'attention particulière que les autorités accordent dans le court terme à assurer une fourniture en eau pour tous et elle les encourage à poursuivre leurs efforts d'amélioration du climat des affaires, lequel reste l'un des plus difficiles en Afrique subsaharienne. Ces réformes seront importantes pour libérer le potentiel du secteur privé de la République du Congo", a poursuivi la déclaration.

En outre, la mission prend note de la détermination continue des autorités à mener une politique prudente d'endettement. Compte tenu des récentes augmentations de la dette extérieure, qui représente désormais environ 30 % du Produit intérieur brut, le maintien du recours aux emprunts concessionnels contribuera à entretenir la viabilité de l'endettement à long terme et à préserver les acquis durement gagnés de l'allègement accordé en 2010 au titre de l'initiative en faveur des Pays pauvres très endettés (Ppte) et de l'Initiative d'allègement de la dette multilatérale (Iadm).

L'exécution de la politique macro-économique et du programme de réformes structurelles de la République du Congo gagnerait aussi à présenter une plus grande transparence, mais les longs retards dans la disponibilité de données nuisent à l'évaluation en temps opportun de l'orientation de la politique macro-économique.

À cet égard, la mission a salué les efforts déployés par les autorités pour renforcer l'Institut national de la statistique à travers le développement d'un plan national d'action statistique avec l'assistance technique du FMI.

Sudan beefs up military presence on S. Sudan border

Source: Sudan Tribune (Paris)

Juba, 20 November 2014 – The South Sudanese army (SPLA) says it has observed a huge military build-up at the border with neighbouring Sudan with which it has been unable to settle a number of post-secession differences.

“There has been unusual military activities in the border areas for the past days. Our forces in Sirmalaka have reported [the] movement of dozens of tanks and armoured trucks, artillery and other heavy weaponry around border areas in the past weeks,” Major General Manyok Barac, SPLA’s fifth division commander in Western Bahr el Ghazal, told Sudan Tribune on Wednesday.

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Although the general did not specify which group the forces belonged to, he said there was little doubt Sudan was behind the military build-up.

“There is no any other country we are sharing the border with apart from Sudan in the area where these unusual activities have been reported over the past weeks. What we do not know is the intention of these activities,” said Barac.

The comments come barely a week after officials from the border states of Upper Nile and Western Bahr el Ghazal and SPLA spokesperson Colonel Philip Aguer accused Sudan of bombing border areas inside South Sudanese territory.

Thirty-five people were killed and 18 wounded in Korshamam in Raja county.

Seven others were also reportedly injured in separate attacks on Maban county’s Kortumak and Yapta areas.

The incidents occurred in two different regions of Bahr el Ghazal and Upper Nile, fuelling fears of further violence in the border regions between the two countries.

The South Sudanese government has repeatedly accused Sudan of providing support to various armed opposition groups, including the faction allied to former vice-president Riek Machar.

Sudan says it is not convinced Juba has severed its ties with the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army-North (SPLM/A-N) and Darfur rebels, both of which are accused by pro-Machar rebels of fighting in support of government-allied forces.

However, it denies providing military support to South Sudanese opposition groups.

Fearing an imminent escalation in hostilities, South Sudanese president Salva Kiir flew to Khartoum earlier this month to assure his Sudanese counterpart of the commitment of his government to respecting the 2012 cooperation agreement it signed with Sudan.

UN in South Sudan to destroy confiscated weapons

Source: Radio Tamazuj

Juba, 21 November 2014 - The United Nations Mission in South Sudan will not allow anyone in military uniform into the protection of civilians sites across the country and destroys any weapons that people try to bring in, according to the mission's chief.

UNMISS head Ellen Margrethe Loej, responding to accusations from President Salva Kiir in an interview earlier this month, told Radio Miraya that there are obviously former

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combatants from both sides living in the camps, but they should all be disarmed and out of uniform.

“I have no doubt that in the protection of civilian sites there are many people who support the opposition or that there are many who are former soldiers, who defected from the army,” she said.

Kiir accused UNMISS of hosting people with guns in an interview earlier this month with Al Jazeera. He said some of the people living in the camps “fought physically” against his government.

Loej said UNMISS personnel do regular sweeps for weapons to “make sure that the civilian character of the camp is upheld. If people go out of the camp to join the fighting and we get to know about it, we will not readmit them.”

Kiir said he wanted the guns of any former soldiers who have defected from his forces and sought protection of the UN to be returned to him.

UN official deplures situation in S. Sudan's Lankien

Source: World Bulletin/News Desk

21 November 2014 - UN Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Kang Kyung-wha, currently visiting South Sudan, deplored the humanitarian situation in a rebel-held town in the northeast of the war-torn country.

"I came to see the situation of the people and how humanitarian assistance is going on. I have noticed that there is a problem," Kang told a group of internally displaced person (IDP) in a small speech during her visit to Lankien town in Upper Nile State on Thursday.

"We will do what we can to see that this situation is addressed," she added following a visit to the host communities in the town.

"But the most important thing is that access of humanitarian aid should be made available so that our aid workers can reach you people," Kang told the gathering.

Nearly 27,000 people of the Nuer tribe, from which rebel leader Riek Machar hails, have been displaced in the area which has not been easy for aid and other services to reach. The IDPs in the town have settled with either host communities or relatives.

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According to a factsheet of UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the majority of the people of Lankien and other counties in the country's northern belt are in crisis level of food security and partners are delivering food through airdrops.

Malnutrition is on the rise and access to safe water is also a challenge, according to the factsheet.

South Sudan, which became independent in 2011 after seceding from Sudan, descended into chaos and bloodshed late last year following an alleged coup attempt against President Salva Kiir by his sacked vice-president Machar.

Thousands of South Sudanese have since lost their lives in the conflict.

In recent months, the warring camps have held on-again, off-again peace talks in Addis Ababa sponsored by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, an East African regional block based in Djibouti.