Daniel Kaufmann and his colleagues in a series of working papers called Governance Matters showed that no matter how you measure development and no matter how you measure good governance, countries with higher levels of good governance are better off than countries that are affected by high levels of political instability, corruption, low regulatory quality and so on.

In the wake of Kaufmann’s work, several scholars have explored the dividends of good governance and/or the costs of corruption.

Corruption has been shown to scare off foreign direct investments, to misallocate resources, to misallocate talent, to slow down economic growth and to be an obstacle for socio-economic development.

The news from the Democratic Republic of Congo show another way in which corruption can hurt development. Because of corruption, the government loses 750 million US dollars in what should be its mining revenue, and with a smaller budget cannot launch those policy, initiatives and programs that could promote the development of the country.

This evidence represents one more reason why African countries - especially those that are resource rich - should say no to corruption. Corruption deprives a country of its underground, without generating a corresponding amount of wealth on the surface.

Riccardo Pelizzo
Macron, Africa and the civilizational problem

By Riccardo Pelizzo

For several years nobody spoke of civilization(s). Until, in the mid-1990s, Samuel Huntington in an effort to explain a possible evolution of the world order and international relations, argued that after the cold war and the bipolar order (west v communist), the new cleavage lines would be civilizational. Conflict would be civilizational. And Huntington’s book, to capture the civilizational roots of conflict, was titled ‘The clash of civilizations’.

The book was highly problematic. And, leaving the scholarly problems aside, it resurrected the word ‘civilization’, it gave ‘civilization’ some kind of analytic value, and relaunched the ‘civilizational discourse’ in the social sciences.

So while Francis Fukuyama was busy resurrecting Kojève’s notion of the end of history, Huntington brought back and adapted for the English-speaking world various notions that Spengler had presented, in the wake of WWI, to a German speaking audience.

The work of social scientists generally appeals to and is read by a small audience. This is not and was not Huntington’s case. He did revive the civilizational discourse to the point that policy makers and political leaders use it on a regular basis.

In discussing Africa’s problems, Macron said that they are civilizational in nature. Deep and nearly untractable.

The idea that Africa’s problems are civilizational amounts to assuming that Africa has been always and hopelessly underdeveloped. Yet, leaving aside that there is no Africa, that there is not one Africa as African countries differ considerably from one another, Africa has had its fair share of economic success and development in the course of its history.

Mansa Musa, Rex Melli, was possibly the richest man in human history, the Kingdom of Songhai was fairly developed, several African cities -in the middle ages- were as developed (if not more developed) than the most developed cities in Europe at that time.

So, the civilization explanation is by itself insufficient to explain why Africa, or rather African countries, have the problems that they have.

Slave trade and colonialism are two obvious ways in which the West exploited African people.

Macron now says that a lot of aid money has been given to Africa. True, but perhaps the way in which such money is given should be reconsidered because, as Macron himself acknowledges, the expenditure of aid money did not always lead to beneficial outcomes.

Sometime aid money is spent with deleterious effects. Some developmental projects, financed by the international community, have a devastating impact on the environment and on the lifestyle of traditional communities.

Africa has a lot of corruption, bad leaders and political instability. True. These are serious problems. True. But the root of each of the problem is not in Africa. Western countries, with the best of intentions (promoting democracy, …), sometimes contribute to the destabilization of the region.

So when Macron says that the problem is civilizational, one wonders whether the problematic civilization is the African or the Western one.

Map of Trans-Saharan routes
The contentious issue of electoral reforms, allegations of vote rigging and the existence of a systematically clandestine force within the national electoral commission and state apparatus, in avertedly and ever-more working towards the reversal of the wananchi’s will, is a tale as old to post independence Zimbabwe as the Zanu-PF regime itself. There can be no illusion that the electoral nor political playing field in Zimbabwe is an evenhanded one. Far from being sensationalized, the stories of abductions, incarcerations and torture of opposition political activists is as real as the unemployment (over 90 per cent), corruption (17th on the global corruption index) and poverty (96 per cent prevalence) engulfing the third world country (Chiumia, 2014: Transparency International, 2016). Prominent is therefore the bewilderment amongst all progressive circles in Zimbabwe, over how a nonagenarian and his oligarchical establishment, presiding over a cadaver of an economy in a vampire state, for close to four decades, can time and again in all national plebiscites since 1980, garner enough popular votes to retain power. In examination of this phenomenon and dispelling the many conspiracy theories that have, over the years, proliferated voter apathy, simultaneously propelling the public image of Zanu PF as an immortal political force, this paper examines the geo-political DNA of Zimbabwe. In doing so, this paper aspires to separate myth from fact in as far as electoral deceit is concerned and in the process reincarnate the long gone spirit of electorate participation amongst the politically fatigued Zimbabweans.

The aforesaid conspiracy theories that this paper examines, awash within the opposition camps, include but are not confined to electoral vote manipulation, ballot tempering as well as vote rigging. The vote rigging rhetoric which is now a defining feature of Zimbabwe’s opposition politics, has inadvertently done the opposition camp more of a disservice than actual benefit. The vote rigging rhetoric in Zimbabwe, as argued by this paper, has had the negative effect of adversely inculcating a prevalent voter apathy syndrome coupled with a notable political participation fatigue amongst the bulk of the opposition party supporters and sympathizers (Chirimunumimba, 2017). Voter apathy is a considerably serious problem in Zimbabwe as was evidenced by the 2013 electoral statistics where a dismal voter turnout was recorded i.e. only 3,1million voters in a country of close to 13million people (Zim Stats, 2017). This paper therefore argues that the opposition parties, through their doggedness in the vote rigging monotony, have inadvertently helped in exacerbating the proliferation of defeatist and lethargic dispositions amongst their supporters thus inadvertently reinforcing the myth of invincibility around which Zanu-PF, as a political party thrives.

The demographic trends in the bulk of African states reflect how third world populations are either predominantly youthful or young. Zimbabwe is no exception to this with 60 per cent of its total population (7, 3 million) falling below the age of 54 years (CIA, 2013). The 18-54 age group is therefore a very key or strategic, king making demographic group indispensable in the achievement of any political mileage. Howver this same population has been a largely disfranchised and politically inactive age group in Zimbabwe. In support of this, statistics on Zimbabwe show that amongst people aged 18-19 years, only 8.87 per cent are on the Zimbabwe electoral commission (ZEC) voters roll, while the voter registration rate amongst those aged 80 years and above stands at an impressive 219 per cent. Such an unrealistic statistic is supported by how due to foul play, twice as many registered voters were found on the voter’s register than the actual people resident in some areas (The Telegraph, 2013). According to Voice of America, due to the aforementioned apathetic syndrome in Zimbabwe, in 2013 a total of only 19 per cent of the youth in Bulawayo were registered to vote for the elections (Chifera, 2013). Opposition parties in Zimbabwe have resultantly been blamed for poor voter mobilization and failure to indoctrinate a culture of political participation amongst their sympathizers and support base. The same opposition parties, boasting of multitudes of sympathizers and topping all popularity polls, have nevertheless throughout the years, been unable to effectively convert such into tangible electoral votes.

As a sign of anomie, the astonishing emigration trends in Zimbabwe have also been influential in negatively swaying the political and electoral landscape. It is recorded that there are close to half a million Zimbabweans in the UK and between 2-3million in South Africa alone (Chiumia, 2013; Cross, 2015). This mass exodus of voters has constituted a marked disadvantage to the opposition parties who have failed over the years to lobby for the incorporation of the diaspora vote in Zimbabwe’s national plebiscites. According to Dendere (2016), an estimated minimum of 4million Zimbabwean citizens are living abroad with the bulk of this being domiciled between South Africa and the United Kingdom. The 18-54 age group naturally constitutes a greater percentage of this 4million as they are the ones most affected and fleeing the unemployment, structural rote and lack of opportunities bedeviling Zimbabwe. Furthermore, according to the World Bank (2010), 42 per cent of Zimbabwe is below 14years of age and thus not eligible to vote. Contrary to what many have been led to believe, worse than any vote rigging apparatus, the absenta of the 4 million potential voters (mostly in the 18-54 age group) from the national electoral proceedings, whom also happen to be the ruling parties fiercest critics, all points to a missing and crucial voting class.

Electoral fraud or voter apathy? Challenges to Zimbabwe’s democratic electoral processes

By Sikanyiso Masuku
Roves of Zimbabweans whom in their erstwhile, were legally legible for referenda and decision making back home, are now otherwise preoccupied and peppered all over the globe in search of jobs, social security, political freedom and opportunities. This has all cumulatively and inadvertently compromised the opposition parties’ capacity to dislodge the ruling party.

On the other hand, although a considerable portion of the reasons why Zanu PF has managed to retain power lies within the shortcomings of the opposition political party camps in Zimbabwe, there have been systematic manipulations of the electoral processes as well as a methodical capture of relevant institutions running such. The Zanu-PF party as a liberation movement has since independence systematically manipulated the geographical population distribution in the country. This has mostly been done through a calculative process known as gerrymandering. According to Chigora (2012), gerrymandering can be defined as a form of redistricting in which electoral districts or constituency boundaries are manipulated in order to disadvantage one party/candidate while advantaging the other (Chigora, 2012; p.47 cited in Dube & Makaye, 2013). In essence this pertains to how urban areas, as opposition party strongholds, have since 2000 been diluted by the rural vote through a systematic process of being lumped together with adjacent rural/peri-urban areas e.g. Chiwundura constituency which has been made to have sections of Gweru urban. This has adversely meant that the urban population whom are not only the most politically informed but also the most vulnerable social group, in the backdrop of the grand economic rot, unemployment, massive retrenchments and other symptoms of a failed economy, have had their electoral voice time and again being adulterated by the rural votes.

According to the 2013 national census, Zimbabwe has a modest population of around 13 million (Zim Stats, 2017). As an African country, the bulk of Zimbabwe’s population is in the rural areas with the last census revealing how this accounted for a sizeable 67 percent of the total national population. The remaining 33 percent, in the same census, was also found to be residing in the urban areas (Herald, December 2013; Dzairo, 2006). Correspondingly, Zanu-PF political strongholds also happen to be the aforementioned rural and peri urban areas. Such constituencies have been exceedingly pivotal in helping the political party dilute the urban vote throughout the years and in the process, secure all contended electoral campaigns since 1980. Robert Mugabe’s 2013 presidential election victory of an aggregate 2,110,434 votes, giving him 61% of the total votes and his challenger Morgan Tsvangirai 34% amid allegations of blatant vote rigging and tempering, could easily be both justified and understood along the grounds of how out of the 63 constituencies in Zimbabwe, the bulk of which naturally fall within the rural areas.

In cognizance of the above mentioned realities that have not been as prominent in the liberal private media circles nor within the opposition party camps, this paper suggests a paradigm shift in the approach, strategy and prioritization amongst the opposition party camps. Apart from the monotonous electoral vote manipulation, ballot tempering as well as vote rigging narrative that the opposition has become accustomed to reciting after every election, the aforementioned issues constitute just as much a problem and hindrance to the realization of democratic and fair electoral processes in Zimbabwe. In the face of the upcoming elections, issues of voter apathy need to be addressed through sensitizing the youth on the importance of casting their ballots, a right for which many (in pre-independence Zimbabwe) shed their lives for.

References


Measuring Corruption. Some quasi methodological reflections

By Riccardo Pelizzo

In discussing whether, how well and to what extent international corruption measures were able to properly assess the level of corruption in Kazakhstan, Omer Baris, Saltanat Janenova and I noted that in the Kazakhstani context the international measures of corruption generated puzzling results: they were highly unstable over time, which raised the question of whether they were reliable or not, and they inconsistent with one another as evidenced by the fact that the correlation between WGI and TI’s Corruption Perception Index yielded statistically insignificant result and no pattern emerged from the visual inspection of the scatterplot.

Was Kazakhstan exceptional?

To answer this question one has simply to take the Tanzanian data. By analyzing Tanzania’s data one immediately detects the same kind of instability, volatility, that Baris, Janenova and I detected in the Kazakhstani case. So Kazakhstan is not an exceptional case.

Does this mean that international measures of corruption are necessarily unreliable? Not really. If we inspect the data for Tanzania— but the inspection of Kazakhstani data would yield exactly the same results— we find that Tanzania’s (or Kazakhstan’s) score in the Corruption Perception Index after experiencing an increase (or a decrease) experiences a decrease (or an increase).

Tanzania’s score increased from 1999 to 2000 and declined in 2001, it increased in 2002 and decreased in 2003, it increased in 2007 and decreased in 2008, increased in 2012 and decreased a year later. Similarly, the decreases in 2001, 2003, 2009 were all followed by increases.

The pattern becomes even clearer once we use differenced series. That is, if we, instead of using the CPI scores for each year, we use the year-to-year difference in such scores.

In Kazakhstan CPI score from 2010 onward has alternated on a yearly basis improvements and deterioration. And such alternation can be detected in the entire period for which data are available.

What we thought could be a sign of unreliability, could instead be a pattern that we might have failed to recognize—a pattern that could easily explained by the fact that after a major change in either direction, the corruption score bounces back (possibly for the same reasons why Stanley Jevons believed that the price of coal could experience a rebound effect).

The next generation of corruption studies will have to explain this pattern by understanding why such scores, after a change in either direction, seem to bounce back.
Can free trade revive economic growth in Africa?

By Omer Baris

Sub-Saharan Africa is experiencing its slowest economic growth in more than two decades, according to the IMF. [1] This is bad news for the continent in many ways, especially after some form of hope on the back of continued growth for over a decade.

While the immediate suspect for the disappointing performance is the oil and commodity prices—and their impact on oil exporters, other non-resource intensive economies also suffered. A modest recovery to 2.6 per cent GDP annual growth is expected in 2017, from 1.6 per cent in 2016, but that’s far from satisfactory. The economic growth is expected mainly on the back of “recovery in oil production in Nigeria, higher public spending ahead of the elections in Angola, and the fading of drought effects in South Africa” the IMF reports. In short, a “cyclical” recovery in 2017.

According to the World Bank, the region suffers from adverse financing conditions and rising protectionist sentiment globally, and lack of reforms, increase in political stability domestically.[2]

The global protectionist sentiment certainly hits the poor economies harder. Nevertheless, there are “potentially promising” initiatives that can help for the region, such as the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA). As the development economists are more convinced now that long term sustainable growth is more likely if they are homegrown,[3] CFTA seeks to bring 55 African economies together under a pan-African free trade area.[4]

This is quite ambitious, as it will bring around 1.2 billion people together, especially at a time when trade with Africa is becoming more and more important and relevant. Increased trade with Africa and between African countries will not only increase the trade volume for each country, but also expected to improve political stability, diversify the sectoral composition of economic output, and create for small-scale producers and individuals better opportunities.

E se il governo fosse il problema?

Siamo o siamo diventati tutti animalisti. Ci scandalizziamo per le violenze fatte agli animali o per il fatto che alcune specie siano a rischio di estinzione.

Ciò nonostante la mattanza degli animali continua. Il numero di elefanti, leoni, leopardi è una frazione di quello che era qualche decennio fa.

I governi (africani) adottano o dicono di adottare misure per la protezione degli animali, ma nonostante i buoni propositi, nonostante regole e divieti, la caccia di frodo continua imperterrita.

I giornalisti, ad apertura del 2017, si sono rallegrati che nel 2016 in Sud Africa fossero stati uccisi 1054 rinoceronti, contro i 1175 dell’anno prima.

Analisi che non tiene conto che la popolazione dei rinoceronti nel 2017 fosse meno numerosa di quella dell’anno precedente, per cui ad un modesto calo in valori assoluti si era associata una crescita considerevole in termini percentuali.

Il rinoceronte è a rischio. La popolazione degli elefanti è stata dramaticamente ridotta, e i leoni non se la passano molto meglio.

Si stima che tra il 1993 e il 2014, anni in cui eravamo già tutti animalisti, il numero dei leoni sia calato del 42 per cento.

Gli analisti temono che il numero dei leoni in Africa centrale e in Africa occidentale possa calare di circa di una lutto 50 per cento nei prossimi due decenni.

Perché scompaiono gli animali? Per il bracconaggio, per il fatto che i governi adottano politiche sbagliate, perché adottano politiche giuste che però si astengono dall’implementare, perché non capiscono l’importanza di preservare le specie animali e, last but not least, perché permettono ai cacciatori di trofei di andare ad abbattere animali che andrebbero invece protetti. O perché permettono di abbattere, legalmente, animali che escono dalle aree in cui dovrebbero rimanere confinati.

Succede così che il figlio di Cecil – lo splendido leone adescato, drogato e ucciso (illegalmente) da un destista statunitense – sia stato a sua volta ucciso.

Vedendo come i governi proteggono le specie protette, uno finisce col chiedersi se nel continente africano i governi siano la soluzione o invece la causa dei problemi che affliggono il continente.

Riccardo Pelizzo
The Political Stalemate in Libya

By David Felsen

The continued outflow of migrants from Libya across the Mediterranean to Europe’s shores has created an ever more drastic humanitarian crisis in recent months, and has drawn the world’s attention towards Libya’s intractable political situation.

The absence of political unity and stability in Libya, and the presence of weakly functioning institutions, creates a vacuum that has permitted the growth of a human trafficking epidemic, provided terror organizations such as ISIS with a foothold in the country, and has been a boon for arms trafficking groups.

Over the past several years, the country has continued to be mired in political stalemate. The United Nations-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) led by Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj does not enjoy full control over Libya’s territory. Instead, it faces opposition from various groups, many of whom are supported by outside regional and international actors. A solution to the stalemate remains elusive.

A near complete breakdown in Libya’s political institutions came with the fall of the regime of the dictator Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, as the Middle East and North Africa experienced popular revolts across the region as part of the ‘Arab Spring’. The rebellion against Gaddafi and its aftermath came be known as the ‘First’ Libyan Civil War. Since then, Libya has been plagued by division, weak governance structures, and a state that has become unable to deliver basic services such as public security and education.

At the Libyan revolution’s outset, the National Transitional Council (NTC), around which the anti-Gaddafi opposition coalesced in 2011, had initially given way to a constituent assembly, the General National Congress (GNC) in July 2012. The GNC promulgated a new constitution for the country. However, this political success was short-lived. The July 2014 elections, the first formal elections of the post-Gaddafi era, fractured the country further.

Following the 2014 vote, the GNC was expected to cease operating as a legislative assembly, and to allow the newly elected House of Representatives (HOR) to replace it and to become the principal legislative assembly of the country. Although the HOR was recognized as the official Libyan legislative assembly, in August 2014 a sizeable group of GNC delegates refused to recognize the new HOR’s authority. These members convened a ‘new’ GNC (NGNC) assembly in Tripoli and established a new ‘National Salvation Government’ (NSG).

The newly elected HOR assembly was forced to move from Libya’s capital to Tobruk. The HOR became the legislative assembly of the ‘Tobruk’ government, which became the official Libyan government in the eyes of the international community. Libya’s most important military leader, Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar, was named commander of the Libyan National Army (LNA) by the HOR assembly and Haftar pledged his support to the ‘Tobruk’ government. This marked the beginning of the ‘Second’ Libyan Civil War.

After fighting ensued for over a year between the ‘Tripoli’ and ‘Tobruk’ governments, in December 2015 the United Nations helped broker a new ‘Libyan Political Agreement’ (LPA), also known as the Skhirat Agreement (signed in Skhirat, Morocco), to create a new ‘Government of National Accord’ (GNA).

The NGNC assembly in Tripoli and the HOR assembly in Tobruk at first supported the compromise agreement to create the GNA government. The HOR of Tobruk would become the legislative assembly of the country and the NGNC assembly would become an advisory council (the High Council of State). The new GNA selected Fayez al-Sarraj as prime minister. The government gained the support of the UN and the international community.

The al-Sarraj GNA government moved to Tripoli to assume control in March 2016. However, the Tobruk government withdrew its support for the GNA in the summer of 2016 with a formal vote against the Skhirat Agreement by the HOR assembly.

As a consequence, the GNA’s authority has remained truncated. Moreover, GNA’s territorial control is limited to only modest amounts of the northwest zones of the country. By contrast, the Tobruk government in the east controls the largest swathe of territory in Libya and its territorial control is increasing thanks to Field Marshal Haftar’s forces. The National Salvation Government and its NGNC assembly, now ousted from Tripoli, remain weakened, but still have pockets of strength within certain coastal cities.
Other groups and tribes control different parts of the fragmented country.

In addition, the Libyan crisis has drawn in other regional and international powers with different interests and objectives. The United Nations, which remains committed to the al-Sarraj government and the Skhirat agreement of December 2015, wants to quell the Libyan conflict and to address the humanitarian crisis. Italy wants to help end the political stalemate and to stem the flow of migrants to its country. France wants to stop not only human trafficking to Europe but also arms smuggling to Islamic militants in its former colonies of Mali and Chad. Russia and Egypt are both looking to shape the outcome of the Libyan conflict to suit their interests and have backed Field Marshal Haftar and his forces. Egypt wants border stability and Russia wants to increase its footprint in the region.

Currently, the key power brokers being brought to the negotiating table are Field Marshal Haftar on behalf of the Tobruk government and Prime Minister al-Sarraj who heads the UN-backed GNA government. French President Emmanuel Macron launched the latest negotiating effort in July 2017, hosting Haftar and al-Sarraj with the aim of paving the way towards elections in 2018. These meetings followed talks in Abu Dhabi in May 2017 between these Libyan leaders, the first such meeting in over a year.

Yet hopes for a near-term fix to the political stalemate remain clouded. The recent talks hosted by President Macron this month did provide some room for optimism, notably, a tentative agreement to a ceasefire and to the holding of elections, though in the end nothing was signed.

Furthermore, Haftar’s forces are consolidating their control over the country’s territory, which strengthens the Tobruk government’s negotiating position and weakens the bargaining position of the UN-backed GNA government of al-Sarraj. New military realities on the ground will likely influence future negotiations between the two sides.

All the while, the Libyan turmoil is impacting regional and global security by creating a political vacuum that is being exploited by criminal organizations. The international community will need to redouble its commitment to finding a diplomatic solution in order to move Libya past this political crisis and towards a viable political solution.

It’s now or never

By Riccardo Pelizzo

What drives growth and socio-economic development depends on the level of development. Mobilization of resources may drive development in underdeveloped settings, improvements in the economic efficiency may drive growth and developed in moderately developed countries, while innovation is what drives economic growth in advanced economies.

Hence, while African countries may still have to worry about improving governance, building infrastructures, mobilizing resources, and improving efficiency, they also need to develop their research skills because without research there is no innovation.

How do major East countries fare in terms of research?

The basic answer is that they are improving. The number of scientific and technical publications -the data are made available by the World Bank in the development database – nearly quadrupled in Uganda in the 2000-2013 period, it nearly tripled in Tanzania and it more than double in Kenya.

The number of scientific and technical journal articles in Uganda increased from 122.9 in 2000 to 473.9 in 2013, it increased from 140.4 to 378.9 in Tanzania and it increased from 350.3 to 871.6 in Kenya.

The data also show that Uganda is outperforming Tanzania. From 2009 onward Uganda has consistently produced more scientific and technical journal articles than Tanzania. In Uganda residents also generate more patent applications -another indicator of research and innovation- than in Tanzania. In 2015, to make an example, Tanzanian residents generated 1 patent application, Ugandan residents produced 9 patent applications.

A third finding is that Kenya is more innovative than Uganda and Tanzania combined. Except for 2010, 2011, and 2012 Kenya has produced more scientific and technical journal articles than Tanzania. In Uganda residents also generate more patent applications -another indicator of research and innovation- than in Tanzania. In 2015, to make an example, Tanzanian residents generated 1 patent application, Ugandan residents produced 9 patent applications.

A third finding is that Kenya is more innovative than Uganda and Tanzania combined. Except for 2010, 2011, and 2012 Kenya has produced more scientific and technical journal articles than Uganda and Tanzania. But the most significant difference between Kenya and the other two East African countries concerns the number of patent applications. In 2015, Uganda and Tanzania generated 10 such applications, Kenya produced 137 patent applications. Kenya has produced more than 10 patent applications in each year since 1993.

Uganda and Tanzania are on the right track, but they have a lot of catching up to do. And the time to start generating more and better research is now.
Why I support Kenyatta

By Riccardo Pelizzo

In June 2011 I went, with a group of African parliamentarians, to visit the Parliament of Kenya. After walking around for a while, we were told that we could take a seat and observe the session which, we were told, was going to be on the budget.

The budget, the budget bill, is for some the most important bill that a country, that a parliament, has to pass.

The budget bill is also the most boring, the most complicated, the most understandable, the most technical, the most uninspiring, bill that a parliament has to pass.

So as I sat down on in my seat, observing the parliamentarians taking their seats and the member of the government getting ready to speak, I was trying to prepare myself for a most tedious experience.

The government member started to speak. And immediately he grabbed my attention.

He made the budget come alive. He explained how each and every penny that the government was planning to disburse would be used to finance development projects, build waterways, bring water to every corner of the country in an effort to boost the agricultural sector, stimulate the economy, create employments, economic growth and the conditions for sustainable socio-economic development.

He made the budget come alive. He made sense. The speech was brilliantly delivered but, more importantly, it made all the important points that it should have made.

I was in awe. I was sitting next to a Canada-trained international bureaucrat and told him that I was pretty sure this guy would one day be the President. The bureaucrat said that this guy did not stand a chance to become Kenya’s next president and since this bureaucrat had a much deeper knowledge, better understanding of the African reality, I deferred to his authoritative opinion.

I asked though, ‘what’s this guy’s name?’

‘Kenyatta’ he said

Many years have gone by since I visited the Kenyan Parliament. Kenyatta became President and now is running for re-election. But I am still so impressed by the way he presented the budget that year, that I do not think that anybody would be a better President than Kenyatta. This is why I support Kenyatta, this is why I hope he is re-elected and this is why, if I were Kenyan, I’d not hesitate to vote for him.
Africa at EXPO 2017

By Kristina Bekenova

African Politics and Policy team had a great opportunity to visit EXPO 2017 that is hosted by Astana, Kazakhstan, from 10th June to 10th September, under the theme ‘Future Energy’. One of the most expected guests are Africans. Africa Plaza pavilion (#410) unites 21 Sub-Saharan African countries: 8 countries that have diplomatic relations with Kazakhstan – Republic of Congo, Ghana, Madagascar, Senegal, Kenya, Guinea, Uganda and South Africa, and 13 countries that have not yet established diplomatic relations with Kazakhstan: Benin, Burkina-Faso, Gabon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Liberia The Gambia Djibouti, Comoros Somalia, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia.

The Africa pavilion is designed to introduce the African continent, with its culture, traditions, wildlife and tourism opportunities, to a Kazakhstani audience who may not know much about Africa. Painted with colourful traditional ornaments the entrance of African Plaza offers its guests the opportunity to try on traditional dresses. And this experience of an impersonation generates great enthusiasm among people.

The Second room is devoted to the economic and political facts, to Africa’s development and its stance toward green economy, energy and resources.

From this room we end up straight to African safari where you can take pictures with graceful giraffes, lonely zebra, or with baby-elephant and rhino, and learn more about the wildlife from the videos. And after walking along this ‘street’ we finally arrive to first African pavilion.

Burkina Faso’s ‘Country of Upright People’ pavilion is decorated with traditional clothes and headwear, photographs of traditional architecture, Bani Grand Mosque and of stunning landscapes as well. Central African Republic, country with ‘Rare Natural Beauty’, has presented masterpieces of butterfly wings art.

In my opinion, the best pavilion is presented by DR Congo, as it is full of art: traditional masks (more than 13), sculptures, domestic utensils, etc. obviously distinguish it from other pavilions.

Slightly empty rooms of Gabon, Benin, Republic of Congo, Liberia, Uganda, Somalia, Senegal are focusing on the beauty of its people (traditional dresses, dances), wildlife, environment or on showcasing the country’s energy potential. Djibouti ‘Land of Exchange and Diversity’ and Comoros with its amazing pictures of their marine diversity are portrayed as spectacular diving destinations.

The Gambia is proud of its musical instruments, Lesotho of traditional garments, Kenya of diversity of its animals, Madagascar of its endemic species of lemurs, and Ethiopia of its coffee, thus, giving opportunity to admire a cup of coffee made with indigenous Ethiopian coffee beans.

South Africa, Ghana, Guinea by trying to fit the theme of EXPO have presented their countries’ innovations and technologies, off-grid electrification models, solar panels, etc.

After you finish to observe each pavilion, you enter African bazaar, with its crowd, noise, music, and bargaining. You can not just pass it without buying something: wooden and metal sculptures, paintings, colorful clothes, musical instruments, jewelry, domestic utensils, masks, etc. African Politics and Policy also used this great opportunity to enrich its collection with Congo Kifwebe round mask, Senegalese painting and Ugandan banana leaf artwork.

African Politics and Policy strongly recommends to visit African pavilions at EXPO as it offer unforgettable experience where finally Kazakhstan meets Africa.
Job Openings

REPOA, Tanzania's leading research institution, is looking forward to recruiting a researcher. Further details about the vacancy can be found here: http://www.repoa.or.tz/repoa/careers

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