LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

There is a taste in the air these days: it is the general feeling that we have been punched in our allegorical economic stomachs and are now viewing the aftermaths of our previous financial feasts laid out on the global round table - and the sight is very unpleasant indeed.

Understanding the need to address the effects of the worldwide economic crisis on African nations, IDAYA Magazine has decided to have this issue’s theme be “The Scramble for Africa part 2: Examining the effects of the economic crisis on African nations”. Global Recession, credit crisis, falling oil prices and rising unemployment, these terms have become the bread and butter of international news, and understandably so, given the current economic climate. And yet as we await the final diagnosis on the illness which seems to have gripped the world’s financial markets (mere indigestion or gastroenteritis, only time and a handful of economists at the World Bank will tell), it is important to remember that there are also good things happening in the world: Rwanda is forecasted to achieve growth rates of about 10% in the coming year, Ghana might soon be reaping the benefits of an oil boom in its nation, Botswana saved thousands of lives as a pioneer in the provision of antiretroviral HIV/AIDS drugs to its citizens, Tunisia has managed to improve its economy and is forecasted to achieve growth rates of about 5.5% despite the present economic situation and, if we recall, there is that half-Kenyan individual who is now the President-elect of the United States, Barack Obama.

So while it’s definitely been an eventful year, let’s take a moment to appreciate the good things that have happened to us this year - the second launch of our magazine for example - never giving in to hopelessness and always remembering that, as the Hausa say, “Da yeyefi kwogi kan chikka”.

Sincerely,

IDAYA
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An interview between Professor Yaw Nyarko and Belinda Archibong. Professor Yaw Nyarko is an Economics professor at New York University. Phrases in bold indicate when Belinda is speaking:

Okay, so generally can you tell us what's happening—what are the impacts of the American recession in Africa? Let's say a specific instance would be how is it affecting aid to African nations?

Well first of all I think the more important question is how is it affecting Africa. I think the tie-in with the question of aid is a little bit too western focused. And there's a big debate as to whether aid is a good thing or a bad thing for Africa anyway. I just think leading the question off with aid is sort of what I'm always afraid of—do you see what I mean? All of us in the United States and the western world, our first approach to talking about Africa is usually through the prism of aid. There are big debates about whether aid is the right thing anyway, and within Africa, very few people on the street are actually talking about aid, and that's about where the action is. With that said, it's always important to realize that there are two crises going on: there's a financial crisis and there's an economic crisis, and the impacts are different. Down the road there's going to be a political or humanitarian crisis as well possibly.

So could you tell me about looking at it from both sides, the financial crisis and the economic crisis?

The financial crisis is what happened a few months ago. It's a liquidity dry out. A bunch of financial institutions made bets, the bets didn't fall through, and essentially there was a run on liquidity. A lot of these banks needed money to pay people who they owed money to. As if everybody thought money's going to be in short supply, everybody stopped lending out money. And it's that sort of contagion effect that lead to a lot of financial firms folding out, which in turn led to economic crisis which is that people who couldn't get money from mortgages had to default. A lot of firms stopped hiring more people—some of the firms went bust and the level of economic activity also went down. They're two different things.
So that's the financial crisis, that's a liquidity trap. So the economic crisis is an entirely different thing, is that what you're saying?

You should view them as differently. For example, if somebody's asking what is the impact of the financial crisis on Africa the initial reaction is that it may be very small because African financial markets are tied very weakly to the US financial markets or the western financial markets. There are some countries where the stock markets, for example, have a lot of foreign participation and those markets have declined in their stock prices. But many of the others are doing just fine -do you see what I mean? So there is an impact in terms of monies that would have normally have come to Africa are drying up and people who are looking for new loans who are trying to do new businesses may feel that impact. But generally it is thought of as being (at this time) not major. That's one aspect of it. The economic crisis probably is harsher, although it has a flip side.

“Scramble for Africa Part 2”: An Interview with Professor Yaw Nyarko - Transcribed by Lishan Amde

So you said the economic crisis is harsher. How so?

It's potentially harsher. So there's a whole issue of commodity prices, right? And so that can work two ways. All the countries who are exporting commodities: metals, foodstuffs, etc, their prices have fallen so their export revenues have declined. On the other hand, the price of oil has also declined so those countries that are importers of oil on balance are actually seeing things a bit more favorable. Where are you from, what country are you from?

I'm from Nigeria.

Nigeria, OK. So you're on the other side of things, you'd like it if oil prices were high because the crisis would probably affect Nigeria more because of reduction in the price of oil. But Ghana for example, which produces currently very little oil is probably on net probably going to do better.

That makes sense. So for instance we've been hearing a lot about China and its relationship with Africa right now. So
what would be the effect of China forming a relationship with, for instance Nigeria, be on the economies of these nations?

Again, it's not quite the same; you can look at China in two different ways. One is just as a country which consumes raw materials. So to the extent that they are doing well they will boost up prices, and that's good for Nigeria in terms of oil and good for Nigeria in perhaps also in terms of any other raw materials. China also is very important in terms of investment. They do a lot of direct investments in countries, so they will invest in Nigerian infrastructure, they will invest in Nigerian power plants to provide local and domestic energy, electricity, for example. But to the extent that their economy is suffering, they may decide to pull back on some of those direct investments.

How have the different African stock markets been affected by the recession? Like the Nigerian, South African stock markets been affected?

As a general rule, all of them are sort of becoming a little bit softer, some more so than others. I don't have the exact data on me, but Kenya is one; Nigeria is one. Almost all of the stock markets are getting softer.

There's been this notion that African nations have been relatively unaffected by the financial crisis that's going on in the west right now. So are people investing more in African nation now in this recession because it's cheaper?

From what I can see from the data that's not happened yet. I'm not seeing people rushing to Africa just because things are cheaper there. It's just like in the United States although stock prices are at an all time low, people are not rushing to buy. It's exactly the same thing. People are sort of worried about what's going to happen in the future and so they're hedging a little bit by keeping their reserves and their cash close to their pockets.

How are countries looking at Africa as resources in this time? I guess this is related to the last question: resource-wise, is there a greater need to look toward African nations?

There's been a steady trend where there are
more of those that are looking to Africa for more opportunities. So there's a lot of investment in petroleum, especially petroleum exploration especially when its prices were very high. So that's continuing. I don't think the financial crisis in and of itself is going to move things one way or another that much. Only to the extent that there's a financial crisis and so many firms are short on cash. That effect, which is sort of putting the brakes on things, that's happening across the world.

This is a very general question, but would it be possible to elaborate on the different regional problems faced economically in the different areas of the continent?

It's a little bit hard because even within let's say the West Africa region; Nigeria is completely different from Ghana, which is completely different from Sierra Leone and Liberia. They're all at different stages of growth, and that's the same across Africa. So Nigeria is slowly plodding along. I think it's going to get its act together completely. The recent problems with Jos as you know, and the lingering political issues with Yar’adua. So those are the issues there. Ghana is going through an election December 7th and whether that's peaceful or not will determine the outcome of that country. I think the economic crisis in and of itself is sort of in the background, but it's not the major drive of what's going to happen in these countries. Sierra Leone and Liberia are post conflict nations; they're building up their infrastructure and as is Côte d’Ivoire so a lot in their case depends on peace outcome. And so, it's the same across continent. South Africa is probably the most directly affected by the financial crisis because of the economy which is the most intertwined with the world economy. The rand had a big fall. They too have political issues which are just sort of simmering: what's going to happen to Jacob Zuma at the elections in April? Is he going to be acquitted of his pending criminal trial? Those are the issues that are sort of more important in South Africa at this time.

Can you give a general diagnosis of what you feel like the economies of African nations will be looking like maybe in the next 5 to 10 years? Because I know in
the US there's been a lot of panic about recession. Do you think we have a more hopeful outlook? I know this is more of your opinion.

My own thought is that if the leaders in Africa pay attention to what's going on in the world- As I said, there are a number of crises they have to be careful about the financial crisis, economic crisis, and I forgot to mention that beyond economic crisis there are issues of remittances. People like you I presume that send money back to Nigeria, and that's a huge foreign exchange resource for many African nations, and that's going to decline. So long as they have good leaders who are watching what's going on and in some cases taking advantage of what's going on, because there are some bright spots-price of oil is falling, that's a good thing. China might be slowing down and so Africa might be looking at some of China's market. With the right leaders I think Africa could do very well. I'm very confident about Nigeria. Ghana, Liberia's doing very well. So I'm very confident, but it takes leaders to really keep their eyes open, otherwise it could really lead to disaster.

Okay well thank you very much Professor Nyarko, this was very helpful.

Perfect, thanks so much.
Recognized as one of the most dynamic musicians of all time, Miriam Makeba passed away this year on November 10 at the age of 76 years. She was born in Johannesburg during an era where apartheid was law and fought throughout her life against it in South Africa. Due to her outspoken anti-apartheid views, she was exiled from South Africa in 1963 and only returned at the invitation of Nelson Mandela in 1990.

Two of her most famous songs are “Pata Pata” and “The Click Song” and through these songs she was able to address issues of culture, and the diversity and range of the human experience in- the seemingly light hearted manner that is so emblematic of Miriam Makeba. In fact, halfway through the performance of “The Click Song”, she once stopped and explained to the crowd the differences evident in the Xhosa language which the click song is about (and alternatively sung in). It is with great sadness that the world marks the passing of its few musical geniuses- the legend known as Mama Afrika, Miriam Makeba, may she have a well deserved rest in peace.
The “Daughters of Glorious Jesus” is a Ghanaian gospel band that has enjoyed much success within the Ghanaian religious musical sphere. The group is comprised of three mutual friends, Cynthia Appiadu (the lead singer), Edna Sarpong, and Monica Owusu Ansah. Cynthia, the youngest, writes and composes most of the songs for the group. The three women began their musical career as members of the Resurrection Power and Living Bread ministries in Ghana. Later, they congregated to form their own independent group and released their first album Anwanwa Do (Wonderful love) in 1990. Since then the group has garnered numerous gospel awards and accolades through a number of albums and hit songs. Their recent album is called Aseda (Thanksgiving) which was released in 2003 and which recounts the group’s trials, tribulations along with their deliverance from death in a car accident a few years earlier.

The commercial Ghanaian music industry is mainly divided into the secular, hip-life music genre which is most similar to American hip-hop, the religious, Christian gospel music genre, and the traditional, cultural music genre. Most Ghanaians however mainly listen to the secular, “hip-hop” music and the religious, gospel music and these are mostly the songs that one would hear on the radio. The gospel music industry is particularly strong in Ghana and comprises hundreds of Ghanaian gospel singers and bands who attract many fans within the country. “Daughters of Glorious Jesus” is a unique gospel group however in the sense that it still remains very strong and popular despite the long duration of its existence and it boasts a dedicated, robust group of fans (including me) who eagerly await every single, soul-inspiring album that the group produces. If you are a Christian, religiously-oriented or simply intrigued by African music and specifically, Ghanaian gospel music, the numerous great albums and songs that this band has produced are certainly for you. The group mostly sings in Akan, which is the most widely spoken native language in Ghana so the non-Ghanaian may not necessarily understand the song lyrics. But the upbeat music, instrumentals and vocals will communicate the religious passion and fervor present within the songs to the listener and in the end, the listener just might find him/herself dancing and shaking the body a little bit, which is quite an appropriate and expected response to the vivacious chords of Ghanaian gospel music.

**SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:**

- Highlife is a musical genre that originated in Ghana in the 1920’s
- “Sweet Mother” by Prince Nico Mbarga, a highlife musician is one of the most popular African songs of all time
Nigerian Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka proves his title as a literary genius once again in his novel, “Ake: The Years of Childhood” chronicling his early childhood growing up in Abeokuta, Nigeria. “Ake” is poetic in its skillful combination of vivid descriptions, evocative language and the nostalgic imagery of eba, egungun and Yoruba folklore wrapped up in one small volume. It’s a great read- and a feat only Soyinka could pull off- after all, if you can combine talk of eating eba with musings on the nature of Nigerian nationalism in a coherent, entertaining piece, you either have to be very good or immensely lucky (though I suspect that for Soyinka, the latter had nothing to do with it).

“No Longer at Ease” by Chinua Achebe is the sequel to the worldwide bestselling novel “Things Fall Apart”- enough said.

Nigeria- Karen King-Abrisala won this year’s Commonwealth writer’s prize for the best book “The Hangman’s Game”
It has become a usual experience for one to be walking through the streets of Maseru (Lesotho’s capital of about a quarter million people) and somewhere in the distance, or in a passing vehicle, be greeted by the sounds of a powerful bass accompanied by deep thumps and loud snares of a hip hop beat with KRS-One’s blaring voice rapping over the music. Hip hop has taken southern Africa by storm and South Africa is the melting pot of this rapidly emerging genre in southern African music realms. Lesotho, being completely surrounded by South Africa, is in no way able to resist the influence. However, what baffles me and many other people is that the hip hop that is taking over not only southern Africa but the rest of Africa as well is not the current, high-selling commercial rap that is making the charts in the United States (the birthplace of hip hop). It is the hip hop of the 80’s and the 90’s that is most predominant here both in terms of listeners and in practice. The youth of Maseru that live in the city and have had their culture influenced so much by American television shows that everything from dress to language to behavior seems less and less Sotho, less and less African, and more American. But among these youth are ones that are actually active in the art of hip hop. They are involved in everything from rapping, making instrumentals, graffiti, and break dancing. This is the group that shifts the scale a little and makes this issue of cultural erosion due to television and radio more complicated. This group listens to, looks up to, imitates, and basically lives American hip hop culture but not the one being shown on TV or playing on the radio; they live America hip hop culture in the 80’s and 90’s. In the Circles of these people
you will make more friends if you listen to Rakim, Big L, Wu Tang Clan, old Redman and Methodman, old Nas, old Jay-Z, and the list goes on. This is the group of people that believe that modern day hip hop culture is not true representative of authentic and original hip hop. This view is held by many even in the United States. What makes me ponder is how these people who in the 80’s and early 90’s were not exposed to American hip hop culture in anyway and only were exposed to it when it was what it is now are able to turn contemporary hip hop down and worship something in the past when contemporary hip hop is thriving. It is an interesting dynamic to watch and to be a part of hip hop in Africa is in its Golden Era. The art form is practiced, created, and treated as a way of life. Here, it retains its original function of being a form of expression and sharing experience which it has lost in the United States due to abuse by commercial corporations which turned it into just another avenue to make record label owners wealthy in any way possible, even if it means straying so far from the art as it has already. It makes one wonder how long it will take before hip hop even in this part of the world falls into the direction it already has in the United States. Some recent albums from local artists in both Lesotho and South Africa have show a slight shift to the more commercial style of hip hop though that shift I predict will take a long time considering the level of loyalty that hip hop ‘Headz’ seem to have in Lesotho to the art.

“if you listen to Rakim, Big L, Wu Tang Clan, old Redman and Methodman, old Nas, old Jay-Z, and the list goes on”
Dreams from a Kenyan father, reality from an American mother, and the fantasy made substance that is Barack Obama. Kenyan, 20-something years old with a suitcase, a passport and a desire for the American dream—getting on an airport in goodness knows where to a destination only they know. He can feel the thunder of the plane in his stomach, tearing and shaking, till last morning’s breakfast—chapattis and Kenyan tea travel upwards, then down, up then down in steady rhythm with the rumbling in his chest, the bile in his throat and the unsettled motion of the 10,000kg metal casing known colloquially as KLM airlines. It is heaven, it is torture—a dream and a nightmare, and so began the journey of the ‘senator from Illinois’. This was the first Barack Obama.

And Barack Obama, the senator from Illinois, probably never forgot the dreams or the nightmares of his father. Not after the discrimination he faced as the mixed black-white offspring of an absentee immigrant father and a white American mother or the identity crisis he experienced growing up in a society that was just as privileged as it was prejudiced. He must have asked the question many times—what does it mean to be Kenyan, what does it mean to be European American, what does it mean to be African, who am I, what am I, why am I… and been puzzled over the answer, so insidious in its simplicity— you are black. And a puzzling answer it was. How is it possible to have one answer to a myriad of entirely
continue to watch him- that man, those men- the ones called Barrack Obama- our leader, our brother, our friend, our fellow African/European/North American country as the Democratic party nominee. Barack Obama, we ask you, are you still dreaming? If so, let us dream with you and together we can make your dream into a reality as tangible as warm Milo on a cold Harmattan day with chapattis and a hint of Kenyan tea.

- congratulations to President-elect Barack Obama! Looks like the dream became a reality!

unrelated questions? Was that logically feasible to be told that ‘you are black’ is the all encompassing response to what it means to be European, and American, African and Kenyan? This was the second Barack Obama.

There is intensity to his message, intensity so passionate, it feels like a cup of warm Milo on a cold Harmattan day. It is so warm, so very warm that it becomes difficult to keep from shouting out- ‘yes Obama, I believe in your vision, please, please let me dream with you!’ We have watched him and we can. Even as he struggled with Hilary Clinton, even as he won South Carolina and Iowa in a surprisingly overwhelming victory and now, especially now as he takes one step closer towards becoming the first African president of a North American country as the Democratic party nominee. Barack Obama, we ask you, are you still dreaming? If so, let us dream with you and together we can make your dream into a reality as tangible as warm Milo on a cold Harmattan day with chapattis and a hint of Kenyan tea.

**SPOTLIGHT**

- **Full name:** The Republic of Kenya
- **Capital:** Nairobi
- **Major Languages:** Swahili, English
- **Major Religion:** Christianity
- **Population:** 34.3 million
Anthills of the Savannah is an amazing literary piece that has seamlessly been woven together by Chinua Achebe, the indubitable master of African literature. Although Achebe is often given numerous accolades for the Western favorite Things Fall Apart, I firmly believe that it is in his novel, Anthills of the Savannah, that Achebe’s literary genius is fully evidenced and expressed. I first read Anthills of the Savannah during my early schooling in Ghana, and this book was certainly a turning point for me in my views towards the West, Africa, politics and the frequent entanglement of these three entities. The novel does a superb job of depicting the conflicts and the tensions that are faced by newly independent African states. The book itself is set in the fictional country of Kanga- a literary place which can easily be re-

placed with any existing African country thereby allowing for the practical application and universality of Achebe’s message.

In the novel, Sam, a young college graduate, becomes the dictator of the newly independent nation of Kanga through a coup d’état, and assigns his college friend, Chris as the minister for information, and another college friend Ikem as the editor of the National Gazette which is the country’s main newspaper soon after his ascendancy to the presidency. Achebe chooses to narrate the events in the story through the narrative voice of the witty Beatrice, the revolutionary Ikem, and the intellectual Chris. Chris, Ikem and Sam were close friends at the college they attended in Britain, but circumstances quickly transformed between them as they took over the political leadership of Kanga and the future began to lead them on varying, conflicting paths.

The main tension in the novel arises from Ikem’s empathy for the Kangan people and his subsequent criticism of President Sam’s leadership which also brings him into direct conflict with Chris, the man-
ager and overseer of press censorship within the country. Another interesting conflict within the novel is the contrast that is drawn between the British educated Beatrice and her house girl Elewa, who was born and raised in Kanga. Elewa peppers the tale with her hilarious colloquial Pidgin English and despite the humorous nature of her character, it is through her that the reader is ultimately able to understand the complex nature of contemporary African politics, and she is the character that embodies the spirit of hope within the novel.

My love and admiration for Anthropology stems from the story’s fearless willingness in tackling extremely complex themes which impact numerous African states and societies. Some of these themes include but are not limited to be-

inan independence political corruption and the pre-independence ideals for which independence was initially fought, dictatorship in Africa, African sexuality etc. This book should delight any fan of Chinua Achebe along with anyone who is interested in post-independence African politics or who desires to have his/her preconceptions about African politics completely transformed.

My love and admiration for Anthills of the Savannah stems from the story’s fearless willingness in tackling extremely complex themes which impact numerous African states and societies. Some of these themes include but are not limited to be-

"the problems caused by neocolonialism, the tensions existing between post-independence..."
We are not alone. It is the 21st century and we have not been alone for at least the past 100 years. There have been telegrams and telephones, PCs and laptops, regular phones and camera phones, internet phones, camera/internet/video phones and everything and anything in between. We are not alone. Communication is Panadol to the ache for contact that inflames the heads and worries the hearts of human beings; and in this self-styled new era, information flows like carbonated Coca cola, spilling out to anyone who desires a taste. And yet, despite this apparent overflow of knowledge, there is still an appallingly gross misrepresentation of the African continent in the Western Media. A search for news concerning the African continent in European and North American networks reveals a dismal array of negativity typified by a vocabulary of violence from poverty and starvation to tribalism, political instability, civil war, savagery and disease (etc.). The half starved children, with bulging bellies and fly covered eyes are a familiar image in the Western media. The almost crazed looking, khaki clad, Ak-47 toting soldiers are another media favorite. And of course, it is impossible to ignore the most famous image of them all in the portrayal of the African continent by Western media—the animals—svelte giraffes, tawny lions, and a safari that is the preferred vacation spot of the world’s wealthiest 10% residing no doubt in the continents of Europe and North America. In its simplest version, Africa’s misrepresentation in Western media is a spectre that assumes 5 forms. They are as follows: Famine Africa, AIDS Africa, Lack of History Africa, Savage Africa and Economically incompetent Africa otherwise known as the FALSE Africa. Famine Africa is self-explanatory. The pictures, the misguided idea that all Africans are hopeless starving individuals desperately seeking the food aid provided very generously and altruistically by the benevolent Westerners. AIDS Africa reflects the conception portrayed by the Western media that Africa is an AIDS ridden place and this as a result of the sexually deviant and irresponsi-
have an exciting encounter with a lion, or maybe a giraffe- and if you are extremely lucky, a hippopotamus. The idea of savage Africa can also be adapted to incorporate the view that Africans (not just the animals) are an extremely “savage,” “violent” people. They start baseless wars- especially among themselves, overthrow institutions on a regular basis, have no concept of law, order and civilization and in fact revel in their own violent natures- otherwise they would stop their senseless wars, right? And lastly is the most recent addition to the Western media’s portrayal of the African continent- the view of Africa as an economically incompetent environment. The idea here is simple enough- Africa is poverty ridden because its countries are economically incompetent either as a result of its corrupt institutions or frankly, the stupidity and ignorance of its manifold population.

Together, these 5 depictions create a FALSE Africa, shown repeatedly by the Western media. But is this really all there is to the African continent?

The short answer to the above question is a resounding NO. First, in considering the images promulgated by the Western media concerning the African continent, it is useful to note that about 80% of international news comes from 4 major news agencies-
arrive at the conclusion that there is a distinct imbalance in the distribution of ideas in the media industry - with two areas, the United States and Europe controlling and filtering most of the world’s news - Africa being no exception. Viewing these facts, one could easily make the assumption that international news reporting is somehow inherently biased - but of course since the Western media prides itself in fair and unbiased media reporting that couldn’t possibly be the case, right? In terms of the actual negative news content that is constantly disseminated by the Western media, it might be fair to note that many African countries, like many European or Asian countries, do indeed have problems relating to health, government and the economy. However, for as many negative reports that can be found on these countries, it is possible to find a thousand more positive ones on innovations that are occurring in these places. For example, in its report on Kenya during the Kenyan election scandal of December 2007, numerous Western media networks focused solely on a Kenyan history of violence and tribalism - painting the incident as a primarily internal, uniquely Kenyan, uniquely African experience. But what was given limited recognition in these reports is the fact that Kenya has 74.5 million dollars per annum in horticultural earnings with the European market and that 25% of Europe’s cut flowers come from Kenya and that in fact much of the world’s flowers come from Kenya, making the country a key, indispensable player in the world’s horticultural economy. But perhaps this was simply much less interesting in a citation of the coun-

"only about 20% of coverage is devoted to developing nations which accounts for almost 75% of the world’s population"
gians in inciting these tensions during their colonialist stint from the 19th to the early 20th century. Or the fact, that France was a key instigator of the violence in its training and arming of the Hutu army during the genocide.

The positive innovations of Africans are also repeatedly ignored in the sinkholes of Western media negativity towards the continent. Constantly, it is stated that Africa is a technologically backward continent, and yet when Zinox industries, a Nigerian originated electronics company with branches in Ghana and Gambia released its latest versions of sleek, impressive looking laptops, there were virtually no mentions of it in the Western media networks. All these things culminate in the fact that for far too long, the Western media has concentrated on reporting a FALSE Africa to the world and in this they are not alone. In this age, where information flows through people faster than ever, it is up to Africans to create a positive and accurate view of ourselves, our countries and continent to the world. As we have seen over the past 2 centuries, if we don’t do it someone else will - and not necessarily to our benefit.
From Thursday November 20th 2008 till Sunday the 24th, Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria will be ablaze with the fullness of all the culture and talent that her 36 states have to offer. It will host the nation’s fourth annual Abuja Carnival which is a celebration of the vast hospitality and entertainment tradition and values which the country holds dear. Entertainment will range from theatre, music, dance, poetry, cuisine, and oral tradition. This event was initiated in 2005 by the Federal Ministry of Culture, Tourism and National Orientation as a tool to spark up the cultural renaissance of the country. It is designed to foster unity among the people and to encourage the preservation of the country’s cultural wealth. It promises to be a spectacular event and I encourage anyone interested in cultural diversity to attend future carnivals.

**On Poetry: Millennium Challenge**

_Agnes Amondyi Alando- Hoffer_

_Africa! - Lend me Your Eyes _
to examine the course of history.

_Good people, look East, look West,_
at experiences now legendary.

_Harnessing and Directing Development_
will not fall down from the skies
floating like delicious pizza and pies
or temperate showers of blessings
to fulfill the Millennium Promises
by the by, as destiny announces.

_African Governments! - Lend Me Your Eyes_
to read loudly, between the lines,
a fresh report from Transparency International.

_The Millennium Challenge is at hand:_
to dispose of propaganda that so easily entangles,
to educate that the power of the voter’s card,
is much more eloquent than guns,
or ethnicity, nepotism, and clientelism.

_Instead of political mandarins’ handouts_
may there be free distribution to schools and villages,
of some chef-d’oeuvres by African Thinkers:

_“Not Yet Uhuru,” “The Challenge of Nationhood” _
and of course, “The Trouble With Nigeria.”

_Yes Africa, much is progressing_
yet at times positive images seem to be drowning
in floods and the constant cacophony:
Mass hunger, Mass disease, and Mass poverty,
Three huge, broken pieces inside of Africa,
which as her ancestors would attest,
are in grim reality,
a technical problem - purely and simply!

_They, the owners of Millen-nia Heritage Skills_
who rose to the three challenges over the ages
day by day, with courageous steps,
if they lived today, one wonders
how the wise Council of Elders
would go about the Development Dilemma
and rise to the Millennium Challenge?
The first time I stepped into Calabar Imports, I realized that its unassuming external appearance had given me no warning about the astounding collection of unique and beautiful things I was about to behold, making them even more remarkable.

The shop owners, Atim Oton and her mum Heloise Oton, have an impeccable taste for exquisite decorative items, ethnic clothing and accessories. The store is representative of their rich backgrounds and is built on values that they hold dear.

In this interview, Atim shares her personal view on being multi-ethnic. She tells us how and why she decided that after a Masters degree in architecture, she wasn’t going to practice design the way she had learnt it in school. Her journey is very encouraging, especially for anyone about to leave academia for the real world of careers.

I: Hello Atim. To start the interview, briefly tell us about where you’re from.

A: I was born in Calabar, a city in Nigeria. My father was from Akwa Ibom State, my mother is American born, but has Trinidadian and Jamaican roots. My parents met here in the US, got married and went back to Nigeria to live. My four brothers and I all finished high school in Nigeria and came to the US for college hoping to go back once we were done. However, in the late ‘80s as the economy of Nigeria changed, we all began to reassess whether and how we were going to return.

I: Do you think you will ever go back?

A: I call myself a bi-Atlantic child. I look at myself holistically as a beautiful blend of the different parts of the world that I’m from. I am American by parentage on one side and I’m also African from my father’s side. I take the benefits of both.

Will I ever go back? I think we all go back in different ways. My way of going back will be to develop the business that I currently have there and to continue to expand op-
ful that you’ve tried to incorporate all your roots. Some people have a hard time figuring out which one they should associate with and which one they should leave out. Have you ever felt like you were one and not the other?

A: I think that comes from my mother’s experience as a Caribbean child growing up in America. She was born an American, but she was raised as a Caribbean child. I see it in the food I eat. I eat fish on Fridays, that’s an African thing but also a Caribbean thing. I also eat rice and peas—very Caribbean. I look at it from my mother’s perspective.

My mother made us take the best of our mixed cultures. I know my roots and I understand all of it. I have cousins in all the different parts of my family. I think one should appreciate all their roots and not question any of it because your different roots make you who you are and they strengthen you. I think those people who choose one side have a bigger battle to face because you are denying a part of you and I think that that denial hurts you more than it can help you.

It’s not really about picking sides. It’s about the possibilities of all the pieces of you and if you reflect on how that forms you, it actually bonds you with more people. I remember going to school and sitting...
around with all kinds of people because of the environment I had grown up in. I don’t struggle with my identity and I am happy about all the complexities of it all.

I: So why and when did you start this business?

A: Where I’ve come from and where I’ve been is probably part of it. My childhood and the beginning of my adulthood all revolved around travelling from Nigeria to the rest of the world periodically. My grandparents on my mum’s side lived in Florida, so the question was: How many different routes can we take to Florida? My mum was a great influence because she would make us pass through different countries on our way there. My business is also reminiscent of my African roots because on my father’s side, there are farmers who go to trade their produce.

This business began about 5 years ago. My mother and I started the business as an initiative to open a store in Nigeria. We had a friend who had a store in Lagos (Nigeria) who we started giving merchandise to sell, but eventually my mother and I thought we’d see how goods sold here, so we decided to have a street sale. We started off with very African/Asian aesthetics from around March 2004 to November 2004.

Sometime in August, we participated in the Washington Avenue festival and that’s how I happened on my present store location. I had lived in the neighborhood, so I knew the kinds of people that shopped here. There’s a strong African-American base here overlaid with both a Latino and Caribbean base. There is also a new group which I call the ex-Manhattanites (laughs). We wanted to create a store that was based on an affordable principle and price range that would cater to the diverse neighborhood.

I: From your educational background, this doesn’t seem to have been your original plan when you went to college. What made you change your mind?

A: Yes, I had really
wanted to be an architect since I was nine. I went to school to become an architect. In 1991, I came out of school to an economic disaster. I immediately started to look for graduate school but not in the United States, so I went to London. I learnt to be a better architect from going to City College because it gave me practical skills. It gave me the ability to basically do anything I wanted to do. Graduate school gave me the ability to talk intellectually about Architecture.

When I finished graduate school, I decided to come back to the US and I worked in the field for six years. What I discovered though, was that architecture in this country was not what I had dreamed of as a child. I thought I could do everything, but in New York there are rules and legislations that restrict you. For example: you can only do design and you cannot do construction. For me, that separation was not something I was very thrilled with and I did not feel the need to move to a different state just to do the opposite.

Towards 1999, I and a group of friends decided to enter a competition to design the interpretive center for the African burial ground. I felt that the best way to practice architecture was to do competitions and to do a job that had meaning or that had some symbolism or some particular way of looking at history. In February of 2000, we won the competition, but within two years we lost it because the construction company we had decided to use went out of business. I don’t look at it as a loss but rather, as part of a learning process. The end of it for me was that I don’t have to become an architect. I can explore design in a different way. That was when a friend of mine emailed me about a teaching position at Parsons School of Design. I spontaneously decided to apply and I got the job. My interviewer told me that he found it striking that I strongly felt that design had no boundaries, which is true because I had found that architecture was too
all that I had learnt: my African roots, my travels, and my experiences.

I: What were your greatest challenges switching from the world of architecture to the world of business?

A: Well, to me they are really not that different. Architecture just had a longer timeline. To get an architectural project, you have to have a client. The client generates the project and you respond to it based on your business skills i.e. your architectural drawings. Then you choose a contractor and make sure your client is satisfied with the way the plan works out. It is a daily process of buying and selling things to clients and making sure the client is happy. I guess what the challenge eventually boils down to is that you have this physical space filled with your products and how do you bring in enough people to consume the products as fast as you want to replenish them? You also have to ensure that you can earn a living from your business and therefore you need to be prepared for a financial crisis like the one we are facing now. At times like this, I have to boost my relationship with my clients by calling them and finding out how they are doing and how I can cater to them better.

I: So would you encourage people to follow your path? That is, switch from an
Some people say: oh I’ve had this great education and I’m not using it, but to me, I think it’s just being applied differently. I don’t think my generation and the ones to come are going to be the profession-driven type. The world has more to offer. It makes us a little reckless, but it definitely gives us options. All my siblings are a lot happier with their choices. I never stayed long enough to hate my job. I just couldn’t imagine doing that to myself. And when it was getting to the point where I realized I was heading in that direction, I left. But you have to make yourself qualified enough so that you have the ability to leave.

I: How far do you hope to take this business? Is it one you expect to stick with for a while? Would you like to expand it even further than Nigeria eventually?

A: I originally thought about franchising it, but I found that I did not like that model. I’m exploring the idea of licensing. This would give people the ability to buy the use of the name, the portfolio of products that we sell, or the idea and you can place it anywhere across the country.
The plan for this business has been to look at the future of the world and I think the future of the world is Africa. The US is my base, but I would like to expand my business there more than I would here. I think so because the United States model is the acquisition of debt. It is not the acquisition of money. In the Nigerian model, if it’s smart enough, it will try and keep its debt acquisition to the minimum. I don’t have a problem with someone walking into my store in Nigeria and spending $100, but I have a problem with someone spending $100 in the US because it is most probably on credit and that person is going to end up paying about $200 on the item they bought from me. I think the future of this model is compromised. The Nigerian model is more stable. The middle class in Nigeria is a $42,000/year person who owns a house and a car. The American $75,000 middle class doesn’t really own their house, they pay mortgage, which in most cases can change very easily. I feel Africa will serve as a better expansion platform for my business.

I: Why do you believe in low prices? And did you have the economy of African in mind when you decided to start your business.

A: I’m not a shopper. My mother is the shopper. But what was clear to me was context and value. Why would I pay $200 dollars for product x when it could be $35 and I know there are a lot more people out there on the $35 budget than there are on the $200 budget. Most of the people I know that own boutiques tell me that they are working on the $200 customer. Well that’s definitely a wonderful customer but they are definitely a lot fewer than the $35 customers. That was what the concept of the business was from its inception. If I can buy earrings at $7 and I charge $35 for the earrings, how long will it take me to sell the $35 earring compared to the $7 earring? The retail industry believes that it takes almost the same amount of time, but I’m sure that I have a
“CALABAR IMPORTS”
- BY ULOMA ABI

repeat customer with the $7 earrings. I may not have that with the $35 customer. It’s about volume. I’ve also considered the internet as a reflector of where I am. What I offer are things that people outside of New York City do not have access to. If I can keep my costs low and get them to pay the shipping costs, then I have a customer. That’s all my goal is.

I did consider my impact on the African economy. The goal was to set up a business in Africa. One of the biggest advantages of having the store in Nigeria is that I am shopping as a wholesaler.

**I: Where do you buy your products from?**

A: We started buying from our travels but now we do that less because we need to run the business. We buy online and occasionally from sellers who just show up at our door. We buy locally from manufacturers, but the challenge is to get them to make their items for less so that we can maintain our low prices.

**I: How many countries do you import from?**

A: Our last count was 48. It depends on what it is that we are focusing on. I have to do a lot of trend-analysis. Sometimes it’s affected by what countries my mother and I are interested in. That’s our way of personalizing our business. Our customers also have an influence on what we get. For instance when we had just African clothing, some customers told us that they liked the clothing, but that they couldn’t wear it past September, so we decided to expand our purchases to Peruvian sweaters. Our customers don’t just fit one mold and with that in my mind, the goal is to make our clothing more ethnic but still keep them authentic.

“**The goal was to set up a business in Africa**”
I am sleeping…and I am hearing mosquitoes on my ears, and I am remembering that Poki doesn’t go to our church. But I am remembering that one day when we were still in class one, she was coming to church with me and Da and Auntie Becky. I am not remembering why. But Poki was coming with us, and I was very happy that she was coming but I was so laughing and laughing - not so big that she’ll see- but I was laughing in my head all the way to church and when we were walking to Sunday school because she was in this big yellow dress that was so much bigger than her and was making her look like a long sunflower and I was knowing that she didn’t like it. I was knowing that her Ma was telling her to wear it and that is why she was wearing it.

After Sunday school, I was having some money and we were buying food - so that we could go and buy chips and Fanta and eat. But then Poki was just standing there in her big yellow dress and she was looking at me when I was giving her the money and she wasn’t taking it. I was wanting to run fast and get the chips before the chips lady would be leaving because everyone from Sunday school was running to get the chips and Fanta. And so I was saying very loud to Poki because I was getting angry that she was just standing there, “Poki, take the money and let’s go! Everyone will be getting all the chips!” But she was still just looking and looking and not saying anything and not taking the money. Then I was going to run and leave her but then she was saying to me very soft, “Kofi, if you’re having more money…if your Da is giving you money- then can you give me all of this money for the chips and Fanta, Kofi, so… so I can go buy a new dress- like the one my new doll is wearing? So that I won’t look like this, Kofi. And I will be paying you back Kofi. I swear! You know I will be paying you back! I’m going to sell a lot of ice water and I will be paying you back.”

I didn’t know what to say so I wasn’t saying anything. Her eyes were getting big and big when she was talking, and I was standing there and wanting to
cry because I was not knowing what to do. Poki had never been saying this to me before, and I was not wanting to be giving her all of my money so that she could be buying a new dress and then I wouldn’t be getting any chips and Fanta! But I didn’t want to tell Poki that because I was feeling bad that I was laughing at her before because of her big dress. So, I didn’t know what to do.

I remember I was just standing there and holding the money and looking at the floor because I didn’t want to be giving Poki all of my money and I knew she was looking at me with her eyes all big and sad. Then Auntie Becky was calling my name and telling me to come so we could leave and go home. So, I was running to her and I didn’t even look at Poki.

And when Da was driving us back home, I was just looking out the window at the trees and all honking on his bicycle very loud, pawpaw-pawww, and everyone was in front of him to buy the yogurt. So, when we got out of the car, Da was looking at me and he asked me if I was wanting yogurt, and I said, yes. And then I was looking at Poki and I said, “Poki, do you want some yogurt?” And she said yes too. So, Da took us and bought me and Poki some yogurt, and then me and Poki were just standing in front of my house and eating very slow so that the yogurt will not be finished, but it got finished very fast. Then Poki was wanting to leave, so I took the money for the chips and Fanta out of my pocket and I gave it to her and I said, “Here Poki. Take it. I don’t want it anymore,” because I was not needing the money and if I was wanting any more money I could be asking Da. But I was knowing that Poki was still wanting to buy her dress and she was needing the money.

When she saw all the money, Poki was just standing there and her eyes were getting big again and I was seeing that she was getting sad and that she was going to be crying. I was not knowing what to do and I was wanting to go home now. So, I put the money in her hand, and I said, “Bye Poki!” And then I was running back home. I didn’t see Poki’s new dress that she was buying with my money because she
didn’t come to church with us anymore.

After the school bus took me to school, I was sleeping the whole day in the school nurse’s office and I did not even go to class or see anyone that day. I was sleeping so much, and all I was seeing was the nurse’s big white dress and all these mosquitoes crying and crying around my face, and I was seeing Poki and Ma’s faces too, and then it was three, and when Mrs. Nurse was coming to wake me up, I was thinking how I was going to go home and that I didn’t want to be going on the bus anymore with the bus driver and everyone else. I was not knowing that Da will be coming to take me home. But he was there. He was wearing his big black shirt and long trousers that he is always wearing to work, and he was sweating so much because it was very hot outside and it was so hot in the school nurse’s office too even though she was putting big fans around to blow and blow air with their big heads turning and turning. When Da came into the office, I was looking at the fan next to me which was turning its big head around and around and blowing the air. And I was thinking if its head was paining so much because it was turning and turning…because my head was starting to pain from just looking at the fan turn and turn so much. But I could not stop thinking about Poki and that time that I was giving her money for her dress, and if she was getting home from leaving the bus… So my head was paining so much but I was so happy to be seeing Da. When he was coming, I got up and I hugged him and my whole body was paining so, but I didn’t want him to leave and I was just hugging and hugging him. He picked me up and he was looking into my face and asking me if I was being very sick and touching my neck and my head. The nurse was telling Da that I have been vomiting very much and that I have a big fever so I should be going to hospital and not be coming to school tomorrow. Da was just shaking and shaking his head and looking into my face and still touching my head. Then, he looked into his pocket and gave some money to the nurse and said thank you and then he was putting me down and telling me to go get my school bag. Then we were leaving school. I like sitting in Da’s car when it is just me
and him and no one, except maybe, Poki or Nadoma…or my Ma. But I don’t like anyone else in Da’s car because then I can sit in the front next to Da and I can open and close the big black boxes in the front, and I can open and close the window and look outside and put my head and hand out and feel the air slapping and slapping my face. Da is just telling me to be careful but he doesn’t say anything else. But Auntie Becky will be shouting at me when she sees me doing this and telling me to sit quietly and not do anything and so I don’t like it when she is in the car.

We were driving on a big road back to our house, and it was raining outside so much so that there was no one on the road selling food or ice water or anything. Everything is looking like rain and mud. I was seeing two girls who were looking long like Poki and they were running away from the rain into the trees with their ice waters which they were selling. They were looking so wet and I was looking at them running and their feet beating and beating the water- pa pa pa pa pa.

Then I was not seeing anyone. Just rain and it was getting more and more dark outside, and then there was a big thunder sound and I was getting a little afraid. So I closed the window and I was just sitting straight and looking in front of me at the two long sticks that were moving up and moving down like they were dancing and putting all the water in front of the car away. I wanted to be talking to Da and telling him everything I was thinking, but he was not talking to me and he was listening to the man on the radio who was talking and talking so much and I wasn’t understanding anything that he was saying because he was talking so fast. The only thing I was understanding was that he was saying and saying again and again that the President is in America…he is in America, today…“Ghanaians, President Rawlings is in America today! He will be staying there for a week-long visit in which…” “Ghanafuo, oman panyin Rawlings ewo America ene. Obedi honom nnawotie mmiensa ansa na wasan aba…” “Oman panyin Rawlings ewo America…” “The President is in America…America…AME-RIII--CAAA…”

I was sleeping. And then someone was pushing me very soft and so I woke up very fast. It was Da. I was looking around at first because I was not re-
membering where I was and then I was remembering that we were in the car and it was not raining anymore so everything was so quiet except the song on the radio. “We will be getting home soon,” Da was saying. “Are you ok? Wo ho ato wo kakra?” I said yes, and that I was feeling better and I was not sick anymore. And then he was smiling at me and he was putting his hand on my head again to be touching it. And he was saying, “You are feeling better. Your fever is gone.” “But am I going to school tomorrow Da?” I started to say. “Da, I don’t want.” I stopped saying what I was going to say because I started becoming afraid that Da was going to be getting angry if I was telling him that I didn’t want to be going to school. But Da was knowing what I was wanting to say and he said, “You don’t have to go to school tomorrow if you don’t want to, ok?” I said “Yes,” and “Thank you, Da!” And he was just looking and looking at me and smiling even though he was still driving and I was looking at him too and being very happy. And then he was opening his mouth like he was going to tell me something, but he didn’t say anything and he was not looking at me anymore. And I wanted to be saying something so I just said it even though I was being a little afraid.

I said, “Da, why does Ma have to go to America? Why doesn’t Ma have to go to America? Why doesn’t she just stay here with us? Da, what is Ma doing in America? Can I go to America too? Can Poki go to America? And Auntie Becky, can she go to America? And Nadoma, can she go? And…” “Kofi.”

I stopped talking. I was not saying anything more because I was afraid now that Da was angry at me because I was asking so many questions and now he was not going to be looking and smiling at me anymore. He was just looking straight and straight and driving and driving and not saying anything- and soon we were getting in front of our house and he was stopping the car. I was just sitting quietly and being afraid when the car was stopped and he was taking out the keys. But he was not getting out of the car.
and was not doing anything but was just sitting there and looking at me very hard with his small eyes like my eyes and Poki’s eyes when she is not sad and crying. I was not knowing what to do, so I was looking at my hands in front of me and counting my fingers in my head and not knowing why Da was looking at me so much like that. Was he thinking about beating me when we were getting to the house because of the many things I was saying? I was becoming so afraid now and I was wanting to be leaving and urinate now. But Da was just looking and looking at me and then he started laughing so big—“Ha-ha-a-a—a—HAA-HA-HA-HA—HA-HA-HA— Oh God…Oh Kofi…Oh Kofi…” And then he was stopping laughing and he was looking at me and telling me to come and sit on his legs. So I was moving and I went and I was sitting on his legs, and he was putting his hands around my waist like he will be doing when I was little and putting his chin on my head and being very quiet and not saying anything.

We were sitting just like that and it was feeling like so long because Da was having the windows open and we were hearing the crickets crying and crying in the dark, and this man talking and talking so big down the street, and this baby who was crying so big like Nadoma is crying when she is wanting food. And I was smelling kelewele and peanut soup coming into the car and then I was becoming so hungry because I was not eating at all the whole day and my stomach was beginning to cry now. And then, I was seeing the mosquitoes coming into the car and flying around me and Da and sitting on the chair and going in front of us and moving around and around like a circle. And I was waiting to see if Da will be killing the mosquitoes like he is always doing with his hands. But he was not doing this and I was thinking if he was sleeping because he was not moving or doing anything. Then, he was saying to me: “Kofi, I was not laughing at you, ok?” I was just sitting and I was listening to the baby crying and the man talking down the street and now, my Da, who was talking to me and
not laughing like he was doing before. “I was just laughing at what you were saying about all of us going to America— you, me, Poki, Nadoma, Auntie Becky…” Da was saying now, and I was telling that he was wanting to laugh again but he didn’t laugh. “Kofi, look at me,” he was saying. I was turning around now on his legs, and I was looking at him and he was smiling so big at me and I was thinking that he was very happy seeing me and looking at me and he was not going to beat me after all. Then he was saying, “Kofi, I want to tell you this so that you will feel better, and not feel sad about your Ma and so that, you will also know because I know that you want to know, and you should know.” I was listening so hard and not saying anything. “You were asking why your Ma has to go to America,” Da started telling me. “She has to go to America Kofi so that she can help me and Auntie Becky….” Da was saying now, and I was telling that she was wanting to laugh again but he didn’t laugh. “And yes, Kofi. One day, you and Poki and me and Auntie Becky and Nadoma and everybody, we will all go to America and see your Ma and we will be staying with your Ma and she will be very happy to see all of us, don’t you think? And you will be happy to see to her too, won’t you?” “Yes, Da, I will.” I was saying very loud and moving my head. And then Da was opening the car door and getting out and picking me up and putting me on his waist and carrying me to the house even though I was so big now and it was so funny that he was carrying me like this. But he was just carrying me and we were walking through the gates and we were going past the flowers and the grass and my bicycle which was sitting on the grass, and then we were going up the stairs and into the veranda. And Da was telling me, “That is why I was laughing so hard like that, Kofi. Because I was thinking of all of us going to America someday and being with your Ma.
And so, I just wanted to laugh like I was doing. I was not making you afraid, Kofi, was I?” And I was shaking my head no very hard and telling Da that I was not being afraid at all when he was laughing and all that time that he was doing that, I was seeing why he was laughing so hard and I was going to laugh too.

Then Da was opening the door to our living room and we were walking inside when we stopped walking all of a sudden because we were seeing Poki sitting down on one of the living room chairs next to her Ma and her Da and she was having cry all over her face and she was looking down at her hands and not looking at anyone else. And Auntie Becky was standing next to her and holding Nadoma and touching Poki’s head and trying to tell her not to cry anymore but Poki was not even looking at her. And Poki’s two little broth-

ers, Akwasi and Kwame, who are so bigger than me even though I am being older than them because they are always eating so much, were sitting in front of our TV and fighting over the remote and hitting each other and their Da was moving over to them and shouting at them and holding a belt. And Poki’s dog was running and barking after Jupiter who was so happy to be seeing me and Da because she was running so hard and hiding behind us when she was seeing us. And me and Da were standing in front of the door and just looking and looking and I was getting a little afraid when I was seeing Poki crying and crying like that and me and Da were not knowing what to do.
Early this summer, a few students in the Engineers without Borders Uganda program completed a site-assessment trip to Soroti, Uganda. They were able to install a preheater on a Lister engine, which now runs on straight vegetable oil. The electric generator head that was also installed on the engine now provides backup power to a school run by the indigenous non-governmental organization, Pilgrim. A miller/grinder was attached to the engine and now processes raw crops such as cassava or grain. The team also conducted about 160 extensive household surveys in 6 different communities, which provided data about water resources, energy usage, agricultural outputs, health issues and services, and general information. Qualitative data from a diverse selection of water sources in different sub-counties was collected for water reconnaissance.

**Some Facts About Uganda...**

**Full name:** Republic of Uganda  
**Population:** 30.9 million (UN, 2007)  
**Capital:** Kampala  
**Area:** 241,038 sq km (93,072 sq miles)  
**Major languages:** English (official), Swahili (official), Luganda, various Bantu languages  
**Major religions:** Christianity, Islam  
**Main exports:** Coffee, fish and fish products, tea; tobacco, cotton, corn, beans, sesame  
**GNI per capita:** US $340 (World Bank, 2007)  
**Monetary unit:** 1 Ugandan shilling = 100 cents
2nd half: the scoreboard says 1 to 1, the player runs, the clock counts down and the player darts towards the goal. You can see the sweat flowing from his forehead, down first to his eyes, then his nose, his neck and finally down his chest in thick streams of salt and fluid. His jersey is soaked, the white and green letters clinging to his back so that the dark green of the numbers 23 look like 2 palms and a prayer, a prayer that the ball will pierce through the heavy set goalie. He swings one black cleat back and connects with the ball. The stadium falls silent for 2 seconds as the crowd heaves its collective chest and an intake of breath races through the field. He shoots, he scores- it’s a GOOAAAAL! And suddenly, the floodgates of sound are opened and the commentator is shrieking, the crowd is ululating and the players are pounding the back of the lucky scorer. The excitement is thick, warm, and sweet like pap topped with Peak milk and sugar- thick enough to drown in, but sweet, the victory is oh so sweet.

From Morocco to South Africa, football is undoubtedly the most ardently followed sport on the African continent. Thus, recognizing this fact, the FIFA World Cup, as the most important football tournament in the known world to everyone except the United States, is one of the most anticipated events of the football world. The next FIFA World Cup will be the 19th tournament so far and has brought Africans around the world increased levels of excitement and anticipation since it will be held for the first time in history in a country on the African continent.

The 2010 South Africa World Cup is scheduled to take place between June and July of 2010 and has brought not just excitement, but in some cases, also tensions and controversy around the world. There had earlier been misgivings by the FIFA federation about the decision to host the tournament on the African continent. Some of these misgivings arose from the fact that Africa had originally been chosen as the host continent for the 2010 World Cup as part of a new policy of rotating the games between foot-
ball federations, a policy which was subsequently canceled in October 2007. After a series of votes and debates, South Africa was chosen as the host for 2010’s FIFA World Cup out of the five African nations–Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco and South Africa- which placed bids to host the 2010 World Cup.

South Africans are immensely thrilled to have the opportunity to host the 2010 World Cup, and from all reports, the rest of the continent is content to be thrilled alongside them. Thus far, there have been numerous positive reports on the progress of the World Cup preparations in South Africa. In a recent address, the Minister in Presidency of the Republic of South Africa, Dr. Essop Pahad assured onlookers that South Africa was well on its way to hosting a successful FIFA World Cup. The government of South Africa is reportedly spending over 1 billion US dollars in construction and other costs towards ensuring that the World Cup is indeed a success. An even more encouraging piece of information concerning the progress of the event is a recent report released by the Local Organising Volunteer Programme of South Africa that over 20,000 South Africans have applied to volunteer during the forerunner of the 2010 World Cup, the 2009 FIFA Confederate Cup, a figure which bodes well for volunteer turn out during the actual World Cup.

So far, plans for the venues and organization of the South African World Cup appear to be proceeding flawlessly. Among the provisional list of venues released by FIFA are Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town, Pretoria, Port Elizabeth, Bloemfontein, Nelspruit, Polokwane and Rustenburg. In addition to a renovation of the 5 existing stadiums, 5 new stadiums are expected to be built for the tournament. The South African government is also devoting a considerable amount of its resources into strengthening security and upgrading transportation in preparation for the event.

Among the questions raised concerning the 2010 South Africa World Cup is the one broached by the publication *Le Monde Diplomatique* concerning why South Africa is
devoting so many resources into construction for the World Cup when there are the “poor who live in shanty towns without proper water, sanitation or electricity.” In response to these concerns, the South African government has mentioned that this is not simply a South African World Cup but an “African World Cup.” In the words of South African President Thabo Mbeki, the South African bid for the hosting of the World Cup was “a resolve to ensure that the 21st century unfolds as a century of growth and development in Africa,” continuing on to make the statement that “We want to ensure that one day, historians will reflect upon the 2010 World Cup as a moment when Africa stood tall and resolutely turned the tide on centuries of poverty and conflict. We want to show that Africa’s time has come.” And for many, the statement that “Africa’s time has come” rings truer now, in the anticipation of the 2010 World Cup, than it has for a very long time.

It is in an attempt to make Mbeki’s statement a palpable reality that the African Legacy Programme was formed in 2006 with the aim of leaving a legacy for the African continent that is very different from the legacy left by past host countries because of three primary reasons. These 3 reasons are as follows: the legacy benefits are not to be confined to the host country, the host country itself has undertaken the task of making the continent-wide legacy one of the central focus areas of the preparations for the event, and the African Union is actively involved in ensuring that the 2010 World Cup legacy agenda is owned by the entire continent. In light of these statements, there is no doubt that the 2010 South Africa World Cup will be an unforgettable historic event. However, the exact contours of that history are as yet, largely unknown. For now, we can only heave our collective chest and wait hopefully for the screams that will grant us a victory that is thick, warm and sweet.
that those abroad may acquire such a vast knowledge of the history and cultural significance of many aspects of their cultural heritage which may surpass that of a native who’s actually living within the home country. These schools do not attempt to counteract the natural assimilation that occurs (which would nearly be impossible) but merely seek to create a balance between the individual’s two identities. They inspire curiosity of the homeland studied, prevent the awkwardness of committing a cultural faux pas during visits, and allow one to confidently haggle in the native tongue and even enjoy the culturally sensitive jokes whispered by an inappropriate cousin. It fills in the gaps of knowledge that even parents seriously dedicated to the issue cannot properly perform alone.

Many studies have been performed on children who grow up between two cultures. It has been found that they share a similarity in their experiences and perceptions of life regardless of their differing national origins. They are often referred to by the name “Third Culture Kid” or “TCK.” While such children are known to have a heightened level of cultural sensitivity and perform better on IQ tests, they also have a higher tendency towards feelings of isolation. This is because they have had so many different and often contradictory cultural experiences that they can never truly feel as if they are completely understood by any one culture. Socializing with other children of similar backgrounds can no doubt make it easier however for a child to navigate the tensions between two differing cultures. Hopefully we can learn from the example of other immigrants to this country and make a concerted effort to give our children a well rounded foundation in the study of their native land so that they can properly appreciate the achievements and beauty of their two cultures. For the Ghanaian native it will hopefully give him the desire to return home and affectionately embrace Mama Africa with a warm “Atoo.”
Harsh economic times have motivated a large migration of Ghanaian sons and daughters to “Yankee,” “Lon-don,” or more popularly “aburokyire.” While it is a good thing that this mass exodus of talent has not gone unnoticed, the double edged sword that the brain drain uses to cut into Mama Africa continues to dig deeper as her wound festers. Not only is she robbed of her best nurtured and highly capable sons and daughters but she is also robbed of a connection with her grandchildren. Should they return to her many would not be able to communicate with her in her own tongue, or understand her perceptions on life, or her mannerisms, or be able to appreciate the wisdom she has to impart. Her grandchildren are robbed of their connection to their culture as they assimilate into their new culture abroad. However, before we hastily sigh and cast this aside as a necessary sacrifice in the pursuit of a more prosperous life we should take a look at other immigrants. One reason why the African experience abroad is so markedly different from other groups is due to the proliferation of language schools for children of European and Asian descent. For instance, the Israelis, Portuguese, and the Chinese (among many others) establish cultural schools so that their children may be imbied with their cultural heritage as they simultaneously grow up as integrated members of American society. In these schools, students learn the historical trajectory of their nation, learn how to speak and write in their major native languages, learn how to dance and sing cultural songs, tell folktales, as well as commune with other youths of similar ages who, like them, are divided between two cultures. The schools effectively serve to prevent a cultural knowledge gap between the native raised abroad and the native raised in the home country. In many cases the education provided by these language schools is so expansive and detailed
When I was asked to give a talk to the African Students Association (ASA) at Columbia on a topic related to my PhD research (which is climate forecasting and its value for the development of Africa), I quickly realized that the audience was more familiar with weather forecasting than climate forecasting. One way to define and differentiate between weather and climate is to think of weather as “what you get” and climate as “what you expect.” In other words, weather is the prediction of the behavior of the atmosphere in a given place and in a short time period (as seen on TV) while climate forecast is more probabilistic and is for a larger scale (several months and a big region encompassing national boundaries). A good example of source for climate forecasting is the so-called ENSO phenomenon which tends to occur every 2 to 7 years, persists for several months and ultimately has a huge impact on atmospheric circulation under the tropics. Weather and climate forecasts are becoming more and more accurate with the development of more powerful computers and improved understanding of physical processes in the climate system. Easy internet access makes forecast products from international centers (IRI, ECMWF, NCEP, UKMetOffice, Bracknell) instantaneously accessible to many African National Meteorological Services. Weather forecasts (5 to 10 days ahead) have high value for African societies in many sectors such as health, agriculture and hydrology. Climate forecasting (one to several months ahead), usually presented in a more probabilistic way, has an even higher value and many practical applications due to the seasonal character of the climate in Africa, and its long lead-time offer a better preparedness. We can give the example of forecasting in the short rainy season (June to October) in the Sahel region. The incorporation of weather and climate forecasts in decision-making can increase an African government’s efficiency in responding to many climate-related calamities (severe drought, flooding, disease outbreak, locust invasion, pollution) whose impacts are disastrous for African economies and society as a whole. I will present here a few examples on how weather and climate forecast can be used in Africa.

Climate forecasting for better farming:
Agriculture is one of the most important economic sectors in Africa due to its role in food security (rain-fed agriculture) and the mass of people involved in these activities (farmers and pastoralists). One of the crucial questions for many African climate-users in a seasonally varying climate is the timing of the start (onset) of the rainy seasonal and seasonal rainfall total. If the onset is well-predicted and the seasonal rainfall total is forecasted, many activities can be better planned and thus optimized. Weather forecasts can help to identify the rainfall onset and seasonal forecast of the total.

A ten-day weather forecast can help to plan for the planting date and farm preparation. Planting needs to be done when the soil is moist enough: the surface needs to have received some rainfall not followed by any long dry spell. If a long dry spell is predicted, the planting date can be delayed until the weather forecast indicates a long enough wet spell to sustain the young plant. In the semi-arid weather, Sahel farmers cannot afford many plantings due to the scarcity of financial resources to buy seeds, especially peanuts. Weather forecasts can be used to guide the farmer to plant at the optimum date in order to avoid false starts. Seasonal forecasts can, on the other hand, aid in the choice of crop variety by identifying the length of the season and availability of water. We can combine those two: the weather dictating the optimal planting date, and the seasonal forecast the variety of crops to plant.

Many planting diseases occur during specific weather conditions. Many plant diseases (pathogens) occur during specific weather conditions (for example, high temperatures during dry seasons). Weather forecasts can help to localize pest-prone areas in the country and plan the ordering and spreading of pesticides. Locust invasion occurs often in North Africa and can jeopardize the entire crop yield. Weather forecasts can help identify potential locust breeding sites and anticipate the proper action to be carried out before the invasion of the locusts. Once locust invasions occur, wind forecasts can be used to project the direction of spread of the locusts and issue early warnings. During harvesting, a dry period is needed for the crop to mature and also for fieldwork. Weather forecasting can help plan the best period to harvest and transport the crop. In West Africa, the crop...
is often left outdoors for a while before being transferred first into storage, and then to cities for transformation.

**Climate forecast for a better reservoir management:**
The same kind of bridging between weather and climate can be used to manage dams and reservoirs. West Africa has many large cross-border/country river basins and reservoirs (Niger, Senegal, Nile), for which meticulous management is needed to avoid conflicts during water allocation. A critical decision-making point is when the reservoir is filling (or emptying): do we release (or keep) water to avoid going beyond the maximum (or minimum) required capacity of the dam in case of more (or less) runoff coming along? Another issue is the conflict demand for electricity production, irrigation, and river navigation, each requiring a specific action with trade off. All these day-to-day decisions can be better managed using weather forecasts which indicate potential water runoff expected from rainfall. Similarly, we can combine weather and climate forecasts to improve long-term management of reservoirs.

**Climate forecast for better disease control:**
Many diseases in Africa are seasonal, such as meningitis during dry season and malaria during wet season. To fight these diseases, proactive preparedness is needed to move specialists, order drugs, call for international aid, etc. Vector-borne diseases like malaria and diarrhea are particularly sensitive to climate. The vector (anopheles for malaria) of the disease needs very specific environmental conditions to thrive. These conditions can be identified using weather forecasts (for rainfall, wind and temperature). A forecast for a protracted rainy period could identify the enhanced probability of outbreak of many vector-borne diseases. Forecast of a high probability of above normal (wet) rainfall can be used to prepare for an outbreak and take concrete action.

**Conclusions:**

In this article I have tried to give examples of how climate and weather, which we can now differentiate between, can be used in Climate Risk Management or as a tool to support decision making in Africa. Weather affects many day-to-day activities in Africa such as planting of...
crops, disease outbreaks, management of a water reservoir and other economic activities (outdoor local market planning, harvesting, road traffic) and climate forecasting allows for the future planning on many issues (calamities, selection of crop, start/end of the school year etc). Using climate and weather forecasts in Africa can be of huge societal value (saving lives and optimizing our decision-making system). Seasonal climate forecasts are regularly produced now in many parts of Africa during so-called African Climate Outlook Forum (COF - SARCOF in the southern African Region, PRESAO in West Africa, PRESAC in Central Africa and GHACOF in the Greater Horn region of eastern Africa).

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Climate and weather in (from top to bottom): Sierra Leone, Kenya and Lesotho
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THANK YOU TO OUR BOARD MEMBERS FOR THEIR HARDWORK AND DEDICATION TO THIS ISSUE AND TO ALL WHO SUBMITTED TO THIS ISSUE.

Oh and to find out the meaning of the Hausa Proverb in the Letter from the editor, “Da yeyefi kwogi kan chikka” – Take a look to the right:

“Da yeyefi kwogi kan chikka means Perseverance finishes work”