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By:

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Unregulated Cocoa Production Behind Côte d'Ivoire Deforestation

According to *AllAfrica* and researchers from the Belgian university of Louvain, 45% of the forest destruction in Côte d'Ivoire between 2000 and 2019 was the result of unregulated cocoa production. Because of its mass production and lack of regulation, the tropical forest covering 2.5 million hectares was destroyed for cocoa plantations. In an aim to ameliorate the problem, the government of Côte d'Ivoire, and other major cocoa producers such as Ghana and Colombia implemented the Cocoa and Forests Initiative (CFI). It has already been signed by 35 chocolate and cocoa companies who commit to "working together to end deforestation and forest degradation in the cocoa supply chain."

African Energy Sector Faces Challenges

As demand for energy rises, current energy systems must grow rapidly to meet it. In response, the future of Africa's energy sector is getting increasing attention from policymakers and the private sector. Most of the international and media attention for Africa's energy systems has focused on simply pointing

out the size of the challenge, but the narrative recently changed. *AllAfrica* shares that with renewed investor interest in gas contracts and exploitation of solar, wind and hydrogen, the "hot topic" of energy transition appears to have touched down in Africa.

Energy access crucial for Africa's economic growth

Moise M. Bahati from *The New Times* writes that access to electricity is crucial in the economic growth of African countries. President of Rwanda Paul Kagame said, "it is very clear that for us to grow and realize middle-income or high-income status without electricity access is just not possible." Citing the Africa Continental Free Trade Area, Kagame added, "there is pressure on the side of energy and energy access, food, fuel, and financing for every activity on the continent, just like in different parts of the world. But Africa is getting together through integration." At the moment, about 44 percent of Rwanda's energy is renewable and is in the process of increasing investments for future renewable energy endeavors.

Tanzania and Burundi train link

The New Times reports that as Tanzania and Burundi look to tap into the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), and create the continent's second multinational electrified railway, the countries have opened the possibility for designing and constructing an electrified railway that will initially connect the two countries and pass through the Democratic Republic of Congo. The project will be implemented in a period of five years and the countries applied for funding with the African Development Bank.

Kenya only economy in East Africa with an upward economic growth review

Julians Amboko from *The Business Daily* shares that Kenya is the only economy in East Africa whose projected economic growth for 2023 has been revised upwards by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), giving Nairobi a major confidence boost as it fights an economic crisis. In the just-released World Economic Outlook, IMF now projects that Kenya will grow at a rate of 5.3 percent in 2023 from 5.1 percent forecasted in October 2022. Alternatively, the IMF has revised projections for Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi and the Democratic

Republic of Congo downwards.

China and US responsibility in Africa debt relief

Africa News shares that in response to accusations from the US, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman Wang Wenbin, “urged the United States to earnestly shoulder its responsibilities and make greater efforts to address debt issues in African countries.” Wang emphasized that the US could make greater efforts to promote the substantive participation of multilateral financial institutions and commercial creditors in addressing Africa's debt issue. He also emphasized that China is not the source of debt trap for African countries. In sum, the US needs to investigate its role in Africa’s debt relief.

Kenya-China trade gap grows despite diplomatic charm

According to Constant Munda from *The Business Daily,* the trade deficit between Kenya and China has widened for the second year in a row despite aggressive efforts by Nairobi to push Beijing to open up its markets in a refreshed export strategy in 2018. Official trade statistics show the deficit grew to the highest levels since 2017 before Kenya made China the top target destination under Integrated National Exports Development and Promotion Strategy in July 2018. Since then, Kenya signed a MOU with Beijing and then embarked on a diplomatic charm offensive in a bid to smoothen access and grow its market share for fruits, tea, coffee, cut flowers and vegetables in expansive China, the world’s second-largest economy.

Buhari approves free trade status for Ekiti Knowledge Zone

The Guardian reports President Muhammadu Buhari has approved the request of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Otunba Adeniyi Adebayo seeking a free zone status for the Ekiti Knowledge Zone. The Nigerian Export Processing Zones Authority (NEPZA) on the orders of the Minister, forwarded a request for approval early this year. The Ekiti zone is expected to expand the knowledge base that will focus on entrepreneurial skills that would create jobs and increase the gross domestic product (GDP) across the board.

EVENTS- 04.14.2023

"**Drafting of Effective Arbitration Clauses and the Legal Consequences of Defective (Pathological) Arbitration Clauses**." African Arbitration Association. *Lush Garden Hotel, Arusha*. 8-10 May, 2023.

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