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By:

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Is the future of cinema in Africa?

African cinema has had a transformative impact on global perceptions of Africa and has gained popularity with international recognition. However, the economic potential of the African film industry remains largely untapped due to challenges such as infrastructure deficiencies, socio-political issues, and economic instability. In other news, the Democratic Republic of Congo has partnered with the United Arab Emirates to launch Primera Gold, a joint venture aimed at curbing the illicit gold trade that has fueled armed groups in the region. Additionally, Africa's largest oil refinery, built by Aliko Dangote in Lagos, Nigeria, has the potential to revitalize the country's struggling oil industry and make it a net exporter of refined petroleum products, although concerns over oil theft and underutilized state-owned refineries persist.

Tech giants, startups and SMEs gather in Morocco

AfricaNews shares that Gitex Africa, the first edition of the technology and innovation exhibition, has launched in Marrakech with participation from 900 companies and 250 lecturers from 95 countries. The event aims to leverage

digital opportunities and foster the development of a digital economy in Africa, emphasizing the need for infrastructure development and skills investment. With a focus on digital infrastructure, creating value for government services, and supporting the ecosystem of skills and start-ups, Gitex Africa presents an important platform for international technology giants, startups, and SMEs to tap into Africa's growing digital economy.

Turkish Energy Firm Given Green Light to Operate in South Africa

According to *AllAfrica*, Karpowership, a Turkish power producing firm, has been providing floating gas power plants to countries since 2010. South Africa is considering contracting Karpowership to help alleviate its load shedding crisis, but concerns have been raised about the cost and lengthy contract terms, as well as the environmental impact. The government is discussing the possibility of reducing the contract term from 20 years to potentially five to ten years as an emergency measure. Karpowership has also faced criticism for its refusal of environmental authorization at the selected docking sites in South Africa. The deal aims to mitigate the impact of load shedding on the country's economy, particularly on small businesses that have been significantly affected by power cuts.

Artificial Intelligence to Aid Africa's Crops

AllAfrica shares on the Africa Agriculture Watch (AAgWa), which is a tool that uses satellite remote sensing and machine learning to predict crop yields in 47 African countries. It aims to address the challenges posed by climate change, conflicts, and pests to food production. AAgWa provides policy-makers with timely access to predictive analytics, focusing on staple crops like maize, cassava, and sorghum, which contribute to food security and livelihoods in rural communities. The tool's development involved intensive scientific review, satellite data collection, and a focus on ensuring accuracy. The tool has the potential to positively impact Africa by providing policy-makers with crucial data and insights to make informed decisions, leading to improved agricultural practices, increased crop yields, enhanced food security, and the resilience of African farming communities in the face of climate change and other challenges.

CIArb launches Rwanda branch

Robert Li from *African Law and Business* shares that the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CIArb) is set to launch its Rwanda branch, aiming to promote the use of arbitration in the country and raise Rwanda's profile as an international arbitral seat. The branch will work closely with the government, local and international stakeholders, and the Kigali International Arbitration Centre (KIAC) to enhance the administration of justice and increase capacity in the arbitration sector. Athanase Rutabingwa, a partner at MRB Attorneys, will serve as the chair of CIArb Rwanda, bringing extensive experience in commercial litigation and arbitration.

Closing the Gender gap in the IP and STEM professions

Chyreene Truluck from *African Law and Business* explains that gender equity in the intellectual property (IP) profession and STEM fields in South Africa still has a long way to go, despite increasing numbers of women attaining prominent roles in IP and joining law firms. The under-representation of women in STEM education and IP-related professions creates a gender disparity from the outset, highlighting the need for greater gender equality initiatives. However, there are programs in place, both by the South African government and the private sector, to promote gender diversity in STEM and IP, aiming to create a more inclusive and innovative workforce.

Stakeholders in Maritime industry decry foreign dominance of domestic shipping

The *Nigerian Ports Consultative Council* writes that stakeholders in the maritime industry at the Taiwo Afolabi Annual Maritime Conference expressed concern over the dominance of foreign interests in Nigeria's import and export shipments, leaving only a minimal share for indigenous operators. They highlighted the need for the government to support indigenous shipping firms through measures such as a Fleet Replacement Program, granting national carrier status to local companies, and enforcing Nigerian laws to protect indigenous operators. The Director General of NIMASA emphasized the importance of shipbuilding capacity, fiscal incentives, and training programs for seafarers in evaluating Nigeria's status as a maritime nation.

Export-import gap narrows first time since Covid-19

The *Business Daily* shares that in the first quarter of 2023, Kenya's goods trade deficit showed a slight reduction, marking the first narrowing since the pandemic. This improvement was primarily driven by reduced expenditure on capital goods and a slowdown in government investment in infrastructure projects. The trade gap decreased from Sh384.21 billion to Sh364.7 billion, a 5.11 percent or Sh19.64 billion reduction. The growth in imports remained flat, increasing only by 0.81 percent to Sh595.89 billion, while export earnings experienced a more significant rise of 11.81 percent to Sh231.32 billion. The slower import growth was mainly attributed to a decline in machine and transport goods due to infrastructure project closures, whereas exports were driven by tea and manufacturing sectors.

President Ruto reveals plan to extend railway to Uganda and Congo

Kenya is engaged in talks with Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and the Republic of the Congo to construct a modern railway connecting the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic. Each of the four countries aims to build a 621 mile line within its territory. This development comes as Tanzania is also pursuing a railway project to control cargo business into Africa's hinterland. The railway plans by Kenya and Tanzania are driven by the goal of competing for cargo trade under the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement, which seeks to remove trade barriers and create a single market of 1.4 billion people.

EVENTS- 06.01.2023

"Nairobi Arbitration Week." African Arbitration Association. *Nairobi, Kenya*. 18-22 September, 2023.

"Advancing Digital Infrastructure in Africa." Invest Africa. *London, England* . 6 July, 2023.

"Climate Change and its Effect on Agriculture." Invest Africa *Cape Town, South Africa.* 26 July, 2023.

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