



Dear All

That's Fwanya in the header. He is the proud father of a baby of 1 yr 3 months. He plods around the Mosi-oa-Tunya Game Park with his girlfriend, Inonge, and their baby.

I had been told by some visitors to the park that getting to see the rhinos was a problem. The rhinos are not found in the normal Game Park area, but wander around the park north of the road and to the west, the other side of Toka Leya Lodge. So, I thought I would take a drive myself and see if I could visit the rhino.

We took Riverside Drive seeing, actually, very little. There were a couple of trees over the road which meant going off-road to get around them. How long does it take to chop a tree? If it was in the town it would be down and burnt for firewood within hours.



We reached the far end of the park and found two scouts who offered to take us to see some rhinos – they were the other side of Toka Leya. One scout climbed into the back of the car and off we went. Arriving in the area we found more scouts on their 24-hour guarding mission and we were told that we had to get out of the car and walk. I was a bit confused because one of the guards said that we had paid for a driving safari and now we were on a walking safari and that it was different. I just said that I had paid Park Entrance and the rhinos were part of the park experience. The Scout left it at that and off we went for a few yards, finding a large grey lump barging through the mopane bush. Then mum rhino arrived followed shortly by baby. Fwanya was in the rear, taking his time.



I have to say that it was magic to be so close to the rhinos. Fwanya is quite a monster.

The rhinos, of course, are so habituated to people and they didn't bother about us at all. We stood and watched them for several minutes as they passed close by. The baby was quite curious but the others just got on with the job of eating and bumbling through the scrub.



We returned to the main section of the park and deposited our Game Scout back to his spot. So, as far as I can make out, anyone is entitled to see the rhinos even though they are not in the main Game Park section. The scouts are posted at the end of Riverside Drive for security and for assisting visitors to the park.

The toilets at the end of the park are being renovated. No more those awful long drops. Now we will be the proud owners of flush toilets!



We took a slow drive back to the main gate taking some of the loop roads on the way. Here are some photos:

Two hornbill were picking about in the dry grass looking for insects.



A hamerkop was sitting by his enormous nest overhanging the river. Can you imagine the work for that bird to make a nest that size???

Some European bee-eaters were having a dust bath on the road.



And, my favourite in the park, a monitor lizard crossed the road!



We didn't see much of the animals – a few impala, baboon and monkeys. But it was a nice few hours.

I just find it sad that the park is not used more. Knowing that the park was originally set up as a small 'safari park' for families to learn about their natural heritage, I find it sad that more children do not get the chance to visit. I have written about it before – the park needs an educational centre. Maybe with this new management of ZAWA we will see some changes.

Nsongwe has power

During the week I went up to Nsongwe Village to join in the celebrations for electricity connection to the village which has wired up the school and clinic. It's a long hike from Mukuni Village from where the electric cable came. But the village now has more than twinkling stars to light up their nights. The children can read in the school and do their homework and the sick can be treated other than by torchlight.

The electricity connection was expensive and relied on donations of many kinds from many people. The whole project, though, was



pushed through by Bridget and Bob Meyer. Bridget was born in Nsongwe and wanted to help her family and friends. Living near to Nsongwe on a farm, Bridget has lots more plans ...



Meanwhile, now that they had power, the people of the village celebrated with an electric band.

Southern Tourism, Agriculture and Commercial Show – 18-21 July

The Annual Show at the Showgrounds is becoming increasingly popular. Now they are getting ready for the next one in July. If you want a stand at the show, the prices range from K300 – K1,000. Contact Banwell Mwila on mwilabanwell@yahoo.com or Mercy B Mwamulima (0977 434523), Ziwa M Ziwa (0977 857624) for more details. Stands must be booked and paid for by 30 June.

Street Vendors Moved

On Friday, Sylvia Masebo, the Minister of Tourism, moved the street vendors from the main road through Livingstone in preparation for the UNWTO.

This, of course, is and will continue to be, a contentious issue. Michael Sata, the President of Zambia, made an announcement not long after coming to power in 2011 that, because there were few jobs on offer, traders could move onto the pavements with their wares.

Shop-owners looked on in horror as their pavements became home to men and women selling tomatoes and cellphone chargers; cooking mealies; playing guitars and generally taking over the whole space. There was no room for pedestrians; litter swamped the drains; normal shoppers no longer wanted to visit the shops because of the mess. Some shop-owners took the initiative to put their own products on the pavements for sale. Some constantly washed their pavements to keep them wet so that the traders were inconvenienced and moved off.

Shop-owners pay rates and taxes. It did not seem fair that street vendors with no financial liability or outlay could plonk themselves down on the pavement to earn a living. On the other hand, of course, the government wanted to give the traders the best chance to earn an income to feed their families.

Not long ago, another UNWTO initiative happened and the Town Centre Market was demolished to make way for a new one, leaving even more traders without a place to operate. Where will all the traders go? We can only wait and see developments in the coming weeks.

Our Forests

At the beginning of May, Government lifted the ban on export of timber, stating that existing licence-holders could continue.

Lands, Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Minister, Wylbur Simuusa:

All illegal logging, overcutting and other similar breaches will be dealt with severely. The second line of attack would be the charcoal burners. We need to be brave and bold and address the issue. The next two months are charcoal months. There will be a national indaba on charcoal so that we deal with this issue of deforestation.

In an email from a Livingstonian:

We are having huge problems with charcoal burners, some of them our own people but also outsiders. This week we have found over 25 charcoal pits PLUS TONS OF BEAUTIFUL WOOD READY CHOPPED. We have collected most of it but no one is interested in helping not forestry not the police not the chiefs.



In January there was a big fanfare by government which started a mass tree planting campaign to plant 25 million trees. The trees to be planted are exotics (I

assume Eucalyptus and Pine). The problem we face in Zambia is that timber merchants are cutting down our teak and rosewood and exporting it mainly to South Africa; and our charcoal burners also use indigenous woods.

Some Elephant Pictures

The elephants are on their way back to the Zambezi River. The hinterland is drying up and the elephants need water ... lots of it.

I found one herd by the Maramba Bridge which is one of their favourite spots for entertaining Livingstonians and visitors. I was really pleased to see that all the cars and bicycles stopped and enjoyed the spectacle. Even the police at the road block seemed happy to see them.

When I first came to Livingstone there were no elephants. Then, any which crossed the river were persecuted – either shot or sent back to Zimbabwe. How things have changed ... We now have hundreds of elephants in and around Livingstone. And, mostly, we love them.



The domino effect of the increase in fuel prices

From the Zambia Weekly

Last week's hike of over 21% in fuel prices began to ripple through society this week.

First, bus operators in Lusaka declared that they would increase their fares, initially by KR1, but later, after protracted arguments with the Road Transport and Safety Agency (RTSA) about whether or not they could increase their fares with or without RTSA's permission, the parties allegedly settled on KRO.60 on all routes. Hitherto fares have ranged from KR3 to KR5.

In the meantime, government decided to deride transporters for attempting to "tarnish government's image": "When did we ever see an increase of KR1 in bus fares? This is totally unacceptable," Transport, Works, Supply and Communications Deputy Minister Mwimba Malama told the Daily Mail – ignoring the fact that the increase in fuel prices is one of the highest ever seen in Zambia.

Long-distance operators applied for an increase in fares of KR30, and were apparently allowed to increase their fares by 15%, according to the Zambian Watchdog, although RTSA denied this. Marine taxis between Mongu and Kalabo increased their fares by KR10. Then the millers got involved, demanding a 23% price hike, from KR55 to KR67.50 per 25 kg bag of breakfast meal, according to the Daily Nation, while prices reportedly were increased for a whole range of other items as well, ranging from sugar to cement.

ZIMBABWE

Visas under scrutiny

Walter Mzembe has announced that he wants Zimbabwe to rethink its visa regime so that the country can earn from tourism. In a rather odd statement, Walter Mzembe blamed colonialists for the visa regime which he said was put in place to divide African countries.

(This reminds me of a story told to me ages ago when the government propagated the story that the commercial farmers were hogging all the water in the dams. This, government stated, was one of the main reasons why the farms had to be taken over. The lady who was told this story did not realise that dams were man-made.)

The visa statement came about during a conference on Intelligence and Security Services of Africa in Victoria Falls last week.

He brought up the fact that Europeans do not need visas to travel within the European Union and this has led to an increase in jobs and income for those countries.

Sprayview

Sprayview is undergoing renovations. This 1968 motel with 65 rooms will have a new lease of life in time for the UNWTO. All the rooms are being gutted and the main area is to be updated and lightened up. The work is



being carried out by The Kiggens, the family responsible for the construction of the David Livingstone Safari Lodge in Livingstone.

The Sprayview used to be extremely popular with Zimbabwean travellers who flocked to the Victoria Falls in times gone by. Now that the bottom has fallen out of the domestic tourism industry, there was a need to rethink the strategy. Having lived in the doldrums for the past 10 years the facelift, it is hoped, will give it a new life.

Sprayview will also be managed under the Cresta banner.



NAMIBIA

The Blue Crane

The Blue Crane is the national bird of South Africa. 90% of blue cranes live there with a few isolated populations found in Namibia, around Etosha Pan.

In a report this week in The Namibian:

The latest annual combined aerial/ground crane census for the wet season at Etosha National Park and northwards yielded a maximum total of only 13-15 adult Blue Cranes and one young fledgling (all within the park) – a further decrease in adult numbers for the wet season from 32 in April 2010, 24 in April 2011 and 18 in March 2012.

Overall, numbers have declined steadily since the totals of 60 (54 adults and six chicks/fledglings) in April 2006 and 1994 (49 adults and eleven chicks/fledglings), and 80 in 1992. Only four pairs of Blue Cranes were recorded breeding this year, producing at least six chicks although only one (17%) survived to fledging.



The Namibian Crane Working Group is concerned about the reduction in blue crane numbers. They are monitoring them with the use of ringing and satellite to find out more information.

Meteorite Hits Oshika

During the week a small meteorite fell in the village of Oshika – northwest of Etosha. The villagers were all frightened, not knowing what it was.

One of the villagers: *Maybe those people who came here with so many aircraft are responsible for this. Maybe that object is poisonous, we are scared. We won't even want to get close to it. If it is not taken away, we will not cultivate near it.*

The meteorite landed at around 4am and was seen brightly as it came through the atmosphere and the noise and tremor were felt 200 km away, according to the report.

Another villager: *The light came from the east to the west and it looked so bright, like the light of day and it was accompanied by a sizzling sound. The roof of my room was vibrating and I heard a loud bang that felt like a bomb exploding. When I came to work, people from faraway places, including Angola, were asking what had happened in Namibia.*

BOTSWANA

After Hunting ...

One of the best hunting blocks, according to hunting websites for Botswana, is Concession NG35. This block circles Shorobe, lying south of Moremi Game Reserve. Now that hunting will end in Botswana this year, the government is keen to provide work for the people and, of course, to earn an income for itself.

In the reviewed Maun Development Plan, part of NG35 is set aside as a Maun Eco-Tourism Park. The park will include a wildlife orphanage, a research institute and accommodation facilities.

The park will mean the re-alignment of the Buffalo Fence, taking it south, one assumes, to allow wildlife to move into the area. It is this that is causing problems for the local communities living in and around NG35.



Several homesteads will have to be moved out of the area - 78 households with 900 cattle, 627 goats and 221 donkeys. As we know, the people of Botswana love their cattle and the farmers are also concerned about Foot and Mouth spreading to their herds once the buffalo are allowed to move.

Development for all African countries is a tough one with the city-dwellers being able to see the benefits for the people and the economy, but the villagers, mostly older and still in their traditions ways, not understanding and wanting to continue as they always have done.

The debate will rage on for some time, it seems, and there will have to be compromises on both sides.

President Ian Khama and the Cheetah

Most of us noticed the report about President Khama being scratched by a cheetah while visiting the Botswana Defence Force Animal Awareness Park. A young cheetah in an excited state jumped up and scratched the President's face which required two stitches. The story was on all the international news and one of the most popular articles to read on the internet with over 2 million hits!

The President likes to go and visit the Awareness Park, situated near Gaborone. It was he who set it up when he was Commander of the Botswana Defence Force in 1989. He started the facility so that members of the Defence Force could learn about Botswana's wildlife because he needed them to help with anti-poaching activities in the country. Poaching then was at a high and the Wildlife Scouts were unable to cope.

The park is home to Nile Crocodiles, Black Mamba, African Rock Python, Puff Adder, Boom Slang, Spitting Cobra, Egyptian Cobra, Lions, Spotted Hyena, Wild Dog, Cheetah, Leopard, Vervet Monkey, Chacma Baboon, Zebra, Warthog.

Botswana has an army of 13,000 strong (Zambia has 22,000). The soldiers are sent to the Awareness Park to familiarise themselves with Botswana's wildlife and to lose their fear of walking through the bush and meeting wildlife face to face. They are also taught to handle snakes and what to do if bitten. Many of the animals were brought to the park because they were either a problem or orphaned.

With poaching again at an all-time high, this ability of the Botswana government to send its army, trained in wildlife, to patrol the parks and help in anti-poaching is one which neighbouring countries can only be envious of.

Red Tape

The president of the Botswana Confederation of Commerce, Industry and Manpower (BOCCIM), Alex Monchusi, has called on the government to remove bureaucratic red tape and simplify its regulatory climate. Alex Mochusi was speaking at the opening of the Annual HATAB Conference in Kasane last week. Alex Mochusi: *Frequent visits to government offices, with their ubiquitous queues, eat up the most scarce resource of the business community – which is time!*

In a report from the Ngami Times:

Monchusi said the strive for positive global competitiveness can be achieved by harnessing the fruits of technology such as its extensive use in the processing and payment of all business transactions that include trade and tourism licences, payments for bed levy, training levy, tax returns, tax payment and vehicle licenses.

He also appealed to government to make the issuing of work and residence permits to expatriates stable and predictable as "tourism and other sectors of the economy still require the importation of skills".

He emphasised the fact that "firms need to move employees to their subsidiaries across the globe including Botswana. We can't become competitive if we make those companies less competitive". Monchusi also deplored the certification of documents which he feels weighs down on the business community - "Every year tour operators have to compile the same set of information and move from one government office to the other, 'certifying' it all over again in the name of compliance. This is expensive and raises the costs of doing business especially for business based in remote areas".

SOUTH AFRICA

Moving Rhinos

Ages ago I put in a story about rhinos being slung upside down by ropes and transported by helicopter. This week there was an article about how this method of moving rhino was researched.

Ezemvelo KwaZulu Natal Wildlife Game Capture Unit has recently airlifted 30 white rhino from iMfolozi Wilderness Area using this method.

From the report:

In this instance, the need for the removal of white rhino from deep inside the Wilderness area to an area where conventional loading could take place required the use of a helicopter. Owing to the tremendous weights involved, the team needed to come up with the most efficient way of slinging the animals in order to maximise on the lift capabilities of the helicopter.

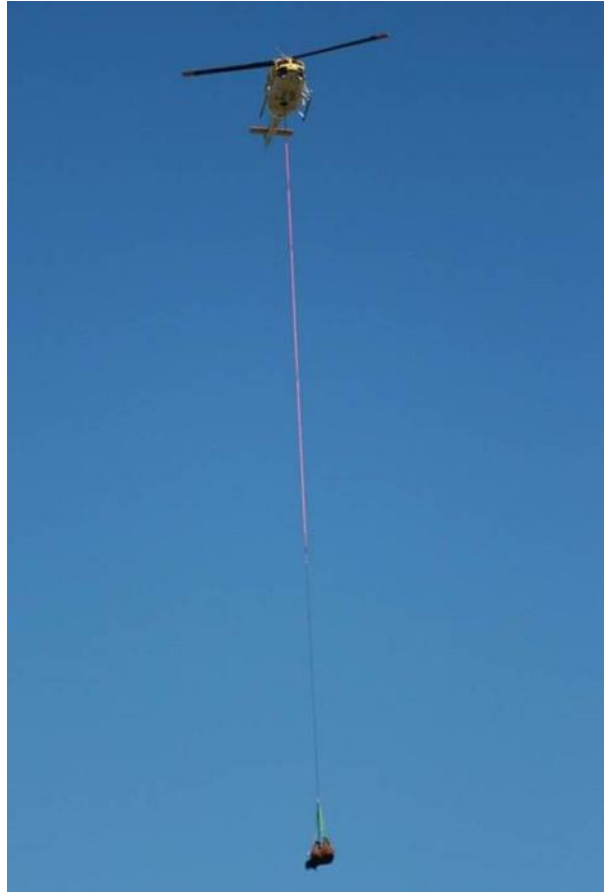


In years gone by the Bell 205 helicopter was not considered a suitable machine for the airlifting of white rhino but now with this new slinging method it has become feasible to lift most age classes. By using a smaller helicopter it has significantly reduced operating costs, too.



While this slinging method has been employed before with the smaller and lighter black rhino, white rhino presented a number of challenges, largely because of their size and different physiology.

“The fundamentals are the same but white rhinos are a lot more sensitive to the immobilizing drug. We had to ascertain whether being hung upside down would suit their general physiology and at the same time gauge their response to being



anaesthetised in this position,” said Jeff Cooke, Manager of Ezemvelo’s Game Capture Unit.

The unit conducted a number of physiological tests prior to the operation to determine these unknowns. A few rhino were then immobilized and hung under a crane in a controlled environment in order to simulate the slinging operation.

“These tests were invaluable. They provided us with concrete data but also allowed us to make some modifications to the equipment. These included increasing the length of the leg strops to relieve pressure on the abdominal cavity as well as introducing a head strop in order to keep the animals head in a natural position to maximize airflow,” said ‘Ezemvelo’s vet Dave Cooper.

“This was so rewarding. A lot of work went into this and to see it carried out successfully reinforced our staff’s allegiance to our Game Capture history. We are all driven by our unit’s reputation for saving the last remaining white rhino back in the 1960’s and this constantly incentivises us to pursue novel ways of dealing with the new challenges of the 21st century,” said Cooke.

This sentiment was echoed by the helicopter pilot Tosh Ross whose Bell 205 undertook the slinging operation: “...it’s so damn good to be involved in something that might make a real difference in helping save this species”.

Footage of the airlift can be seen on Ezemvelo’s Website on www.kznwildlife.com follow the prompts.

RHINO WAR NEWS SPECIAL FEATURE

Mozambique's role in the poaching crisis (RhiNEWS)

South Africa is currently experiencing a catastrophic rhino poaching crisis, with 668 rhinos lost during 2012. (Already 300 plus in 2013) It is now evident that Mozambique has played a key role in this illegal killing.

In Mozambique, there are no strict penalties for rhino poaching or possession of rhino horn and poaching is simply considered a misdemeanor offence. Mozambique is one of the poorest countries in the world, and there are many individuals willing to risk their lives to earn money through poaching. The country suffers from high corruption and even Mozambican field rangers have been arrested for rhino poaching. Recent reports claim that settlements have sprung up along the Mozambican border, with towns thriving on the money received from the illegal sale of rhino horn to criminal gangs. International criminal syndicates have been quick to recruit willing poachers, where lack of law enforcement means gangs are easily able to export the rhino horn Eastern Asian markets.

There was once a fence separating the Kruger National Park from Mozambique. However in December 2002, the presidents of South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe signed an international treaty to establish the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park. The treaty resulted several areas of fence being dropped along the South Africa / Mozambique border to increase the habitat for wildlife and encourage animals to roam between the countries' nature reserves.

There are now fresh calls for the fence to resurrected in a bid to reduce the current poaching onslaught. South Africa, at a ministerial level, is currently involved in ongoing discussions with Mozambique regarding the re-erection of the fence along the border. In the longer term, the huge problems South Africa is experiencing has implications for the wider issue of trans-frontier parks; what happens to wildlife when one country does not enforce security or wildlife crime laws

TANZANIA

Tanzania to Deploy Army, Drones in Anti-Poaching Campaign

By Deodatus Balile, Sabahi

Dar es Salaam — Tanzania is taking steps to combat the rise in elephant and rhinoceros poaching by deploying army personnel and camera-equipped drones to engage in anti-poaching operations. According to the Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute, poaching has drastically reduced the elephant population to fewer than 70,000 in 2012 from about 109,000 in 2009.

Amid outcries from lawmakers about the increase in poaching, Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism Khamis Sued Kagasheki told parliament on Thursday (May 2nd) that President Jakaya Kikwete has authorised the deployment of army units for anti-poaching operations.

"The president has issued the order," Kagasheki told parliament. "I have talked to Minister of Defence and National Service [Shamsi Vuai Nahodha] and we are at the final stages. I do not say when, but we are going to do something that will be remembered by generations to come."

This is the second time the military has aided against poaching. In 1989, "Operation Uhai" helped the elephant population rebound after it reached a low of about 30,000, when it had been about 110,000 in 1976. ...

Opposition lawmaker Peter Msigwa said he supports the president's decision to send in troops to ward off poachers, but said the government should have taken this action five years ago.

"In 2008, the poaching problem was as big as it is now," he told Sabahi. "The public outcry to deploy the army was high, but the government did not want to listen to us."

Countries should unite to stop the worldwide trade in "dirty tusks", he said, as this fast-growing illicit trade comes at the expense of Tanzania's natural resources. ...

Tanzania News

THE ADVANCE OF THE CORRIDOR OF DESTRUCTION DISPLACES MWAMBANI RESIDENTS

'These evictions are illegal but legalities have never stopped this government from doing something. Land acquisition procedures under the current law, the Land Act of 1999, have been ignored because no ESIA has been conducted. It is also illegal because the value government has put on the land and buildings is completely unrealistic and a small fraction of the true value. The compensation forced on these people who are now going to be evicted, and we are talking at least 600 homesteads, will not allow them to rebuild a life elsewhere. They will become destitute, fall into poverty and instead of being productive self-sustaining members of our society will become a burden on society' said a source from Tanzania yesterday when discussing the unfolding events near the planned Mwambani port area. Human rights activists in Tanzania, as well as the affected residents, have denounced the attempts to remove them from their ancestral land and vowed to fight back using all avenues open to them to pursue the matter in competent courts, while not leaving voluntarily and resisting peacefully any forced evictions the government may have planned for them.

Executing the paperwork for the evictions, in what has been called an evil scheme of government sanctioned land grabbing, is according to the source the Reli Assets Holding Company, which has handed cheques worth 1 million Tanzania Shillings to owners of 'shambas', aka small holdings farms, and up to 3 million Tanzania Shillings for land with homesteads on it. A previous similar exercise of eviction happened nearby at Ndumi some time ago, with evicted residents indeed having been turned from self sustaining fishermen and farmers to the proverbial basket case beggars.

To make matters worse, the cheques reportedly have a validity until 19th May only, after which they will lapse and as a result people may be forced off their ancestral land without any compensation at all, as has previously been alleged from the Ndumi evictions.

A conservation source in regular contact from Arusha, who is also involved in the ongoing court case to permanently stop the Tanzanian government from constructing a road across the migration routes of the great herds of wildebeest and zebras in the Serengeti, added his own voice when he wrote: ***'We have gone to court with our grievance. All attempts by the Tanzanian government to stop the case from proceeding have been thrown out and in fact the East African Court of Justice registrar has made very public comments that they welcome any similar cases to be brought to them. What has happened is that our domestic legal system has failed us, so we went to the East African level. Our case is directly linked with Mwambani. As you wrote in your article, that corridor comes from Tanga / Mwambani to Musoma at Lake Victoria and the most direct route is through the Serengeti. The big mining interests need these highways and railways to export ore and soda ash. They need it to export timber from the forests of the Eastern Arc mountains and other forest systems along this route. Poaching of timber is even worse than poaching of elephant now. We know that law offices at the coast have been leaned on to reject taking the cases of those evicted. Besides, these villagers are poor and unable to afford good legal representation, that is another reason they have not been able to take matters to court. It is worth considering going straight to the EACJ for their case. You need to highlight the connection between the Serengeti highway and the railway link from Tanga to Musoma and how it impacts on conservation and biodiversity hotspots. Impacts on the Serengeti, the Lake Natron ecosystem and the Coelacanth Marine Park near Tanga. How can anyone seriously want to build a port in that marine park. Besides being too shallow, all the experts talk of better options to improve the Tanga port and not waste a lot of money to build a port in Mwambani just a few miles away. The number of berths I have found out, will make that harbour incapable to expand a lot but Tanga could be expanded more easily. There is a lot of corruption and external influence going on. When they hear billions of dollars, the sharks come out from the deep and a few hundred or thousand villagers are no obstacle for our government. This has to be stopped'***.

The East African Community has only recently endorsed the transport corridor between Tanga and Musoma, ostensibly following intense lobbying by the Ugandan and Tanzanian delegations at the EAC in Arusha, but in the face of railway experts which doubt the viability of too many railway routes from the Indian Ocean to Lake Victoria and beyond. While in Kenya the LAPSET project is due to connect a new

deep sea port to be built in Lamu with South Sudan and Ethiopia, by railway, highway and pipeline – the latter to export South Sudan's oil – the present route from Mombasa via Nairobi to the Ugandan border is due to be upgraded to the international standard gauge format, as the current narrow gauge format limits both speed and weight carried.

Considering there are only these two main rail routes in Kenya – one existing and one planned – and Kenya being a much larger economy for that matter at present, it has been suggested for Tanzania to concentrate on rehabilitating the TAZARA line which connects Dar es Salaam to Zambia, and to speedily upgrade the two main rail lines connecting Dar es Salaam with the current lake port city of Mwanza and the central line up to Isaka, from where Rwanda intends to establish a rail link to Kigali and beyond. Establishing a third main line, as suggested from Tanga to Musoma, where incidentally no sufficient port facilities exist at present and which would require a new harbour to be built at considerable cost, is therefore seen by many as one too many, and international lenders will be reluctant to help finance all the proposed new routes. Government sources in periodic contact with this correspondent have however dismissed these fears and pointed to the planned establishment of a BRICS development bank, to be set up by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, aimed to rival in scope and size the World Bank and International Finance Corporation. ***'If World Bank does not finance our projects, the BRICS bank will when it is launched. After all, it will be Chinese firms building the railways and harbours and highways and Brazil's Odebrecht will build a new mega power plant at Stiegler's Gorge, financed by the BRICS development bank too. And Russia wants our Uranium, so they will be willing to finance whatever roads and rail is needed to get to the mining sites.*** [sic: over 200 sq km's located inside the Selous Game Reserve but due to be degazetted to permit for mining to commence] ***We expect the conditions attached to the BRICS loans to be much more in favour of our needs and with no political strings to them like we are getting from the West'***, comments made under condition of anonymity and signaling a new strategy how to pursue highly controversial projects without years of arguments 'inflicted on them' by the Western conservation and green lobbies. These and related issues have previously been discussed in widely read articles, the links of which are inserted here for ease of access, resulting at the time in outraged protests of government mouthpieces and sycophants, but which have stood the test of time as ongoing developments only strengthen the case made two years ago, when publishing <http://wolfganghthome.wordpress.com/2011/05/01/tanzania-conservation-breaking-news-the-corridor-of-destruction-from-the-coast-to-the-lake/>

Additional articles then followed in January 2012 via

<http://wolfganghthome.wordpress.com/2012/07/03/tanzanias-corridor-of-destruction-set-to-extend-into-uganda-too/> and in July 2012 via <http://wolfganghthome.wordpress.com/2012/07/03/tanzanias-corridor-of-destruction-set-to-extend-into-uganda-too/>

For more information on this complex and complicated issue readers can also access the following websites and contributions by others.

http://www.tnrf.org/files/E_INFO_MWAMBANI_DOSSIER_November.pdf

<http://www.tnrf.org/node/7066> "Does Tanga need a new port?"

<http://www.tnrf.org/node/10390> SWARA article

OTHER STUFF

The Happiness Index

All of us have read the oft-quoted phrase: The people live on less than a dollar a day. 'The West' always measures everything in terms of money. Many governments/institutions note that capitalism is not the most perfect way to run a country, but it is as good as it gets at the moment.

For us in Africa we know that many people live on a dollar a day or less, but does that mean that they are unhappy, hungry or homeless? Probably not.

So when I read this article about Bhutan, it made me smile. Can we find another way of living apart from measuring how much money we have? Let's hope so:

Tiny Bhutan redefines “progress”

David Suzuki

My parents lived through the Great Depression of the 1930s and were profoundly affected by it. They taught us to work hard to earn a living, live within our means, save for tomorrow, share and not be greedy and help our neighbours because one day we might need their help. Those homilies and teachings seem quaint in today's world of credit cards, hyper-consumption and massive debt.

Society has undergone huge changes since the Second World War. Our lives have been transformed by jet travel, oral contraceptives, plastics, satellites, television, cellphones, computers and digital technology. We seem endlessly adaptable as we adjust to the impacts of these new technologies, products and ideas. We only become aware of how dependant on them we are when they malfunction (work comes to a standstill when the network goes down) or don't exist (when we visit a “developing country”). Most of the time, we can't even imagine a way of living beyond being endlessly occupied with making money to get more stuff to make our lives “easier”.

But some people have had the benefit of directly comparing a simpler way with the accelerated societies we've created. In the mid-20th century, the tiny Kingdom of Bhutan, hidden deep in the Himalayas between China and India, emerged from three hundred years of isolation. In 1961, the third king of Bhutan started sending students to schools in India. From there, some went on to Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard and other universities. The first of their nation to encounter Western society after three centuries of separation, those young people clearly saw the contrast in values. Upon returning to Bhutan, they expressed shock that, in the West, “development” and “progress” were measured in terms of money and material possessions.

At a 1972 international conference in India, a reporter asked Bhutan's king about his country's gross national product – a measure of economic activity. His response was semi-facetious: He said Bhutan's priority was not the GNP but GNH – gross national happiness. Bhutan's government has since taken the concept of GNH seriously and galvanized thinking around the world with the notion that the economy should serve people, not the other way around.

In 2004, Crown Prince Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, who became king in late 2006, said, “There cannot be enduring peace, prosperity, equality and brotherhood in this world if our aims are so separate and divergent – if we do not accept that in the end we are people, all alike, sharing the earth among ourselves and also with other sentient beings.”

In July 2011, Bhutan introduced the only resolution it has ever presented at the United Nations. Resolution 65/309 was called “Happiness: towards a holistic approach to development.” The country's position was “that the pursuit of happiness is a fundamental human goal” and “that the gross domestic product...does not adequately reflect the happiness and well-being of people.” The General Assembly passed the resolution unanimously. It was “intended as a landmark step towards adoption of a new global sustainability-based economic paradigm for human happiness and well-being of all life forms to replace the current dysfunctional system that is based on the unsustainable premise of limitless growth on a finite planet.”

That empowered Bhutan to convene a high-level meeting. I was delighted when its leaders asked me to serve on a working group charged with defining happiness and well-being, and developing ways to measure these states and strategies. Prime Minister Jigmi Thinley even cited the David Suzuki Foundation's “Declaration of Interdependence” as an inspiration for the proposal.

The Bhutanese understand that well-being and happiness depend on a healthy environment. They vow to protect 60 per cent of forest cover in their country, are already carbon-neutral (they generate electricity from hydro) and have vowed to make their entire agriculture sector organic. They have snow leopards,

elephants, rhinos, tigers and valleys of tree-sized rhododendrons – and know their happiness depends on protecting them.

The people of this tiny nation see that money and hyper-consumption aren't what contribute to happiness and well-being. I'm proud to be part of the important initiative they've embarked upon, and look forward to the work leading up to a presentation to the UN by 2015.

THE SMILE



Have a good week

Gill