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EDITOR, IT is indisputable that copper mining has dominated Zambia's economy going back to the colonial days of the Federation of Rhodesia, Nyasaland.

For the first 50 years of colonialism, mining was the main economic activity.

Today, after more than 50 years of independence, mining is still king.

I was, therefore, so happy to read the article about Zambia's High Commissioner to India Judith Kapijimpanga who was quoted as having said that Zambia was benchmarking from India on how to grow the country's horticulture and organic agricultural products.

UPND MPs walk-out stunts a shame

EDITOR, I AM not amused by the shenanigans currently taking place in Zambia. I am referring to the struggle for holier-than-thou supremacy which is taking place between the opposition UPND in Parliament and the ruling Patriotic Front executive.

This struggle will end up hurting ordinary Zambians in UPND-represented constituencies who are the real employers of these opposition politicians.

At the moment, the UPND lawmakers have continued with their protest of walking out of Parliament each time Housing and Infrastructure Development Minister Ronald Chitotela rises to respond to questions on grounds that he is facing corruption charges in court.

The opposition MPs on Tuesday afternoon walked out of the house seven times as Mr Chitotela had seven questions to respond to on the order paper related to his ministry as per the standing orders of Parliament.

I am not advocating the violation of the standing orders of Parliament because they are the supreme rules of the National Assembly.

However, those opposition UPND MPs should know that nationwide housing and infrastructure development does not belong to President Edgar Lungu, who is the appointing authority and his ministers, but to the people of Zambia.

If these UPND politicians do not want to face the wrath of the people come 2021, they should look for other ways of teaching the executive a lesson over Ronald Chitotela's corruption charges without messing around with people's lives in terms of housing and infrastructure development.

It is such a shame that the UPND Chief Whip Situmbeko Musokotwane vowed that the opposition MPs would not stop walking out as long as Ronald Chitotela remained Housing and Infrastructure Development Minister.

Meanwhile, Speaker of the National Assembly Patrick Matibini reserved ruling on the continued walk out by the opposition MPs - a daunting prospect to contemplate.

This was after nominated MP Edify Hamukale raised a point of order asking if the UPND MPs were in order to walk out of the House, when some of their fellow opposition MPs were similarly facing nefarious and venal charges.

Mind you, I haven't mentioned anything to do with double standards characterised by the opposition UPND MPs' continued walk-out stunts.

Concerned Zambian, LUSAKA

Bravo Kapijimpanga

encouraged the growing of non-traditional produce for export markets overseas.

As a result, the country witnessed the birth of the Zambia Export Grower's Association (ZEGA) which was formed in 1984 as a non-profit making association to promote the interests of all growers wishing to export fresh horticulture produce.

Thanks must go to Zambia's High Commissioner to India for highlighting this horticulture issue which has been overtaken by the FISP-dependent and rain-fed smallholder farmers.

Members of ZEGA formed an increasingly important link in the country's economy because they were permitted to retain 50 per cent of their foreign earnings in foreign currency at commercial bank accounts by the Bank of Zambia as an incentive for the export of non-traditional produce even though the country was at the time experiencing severe shortages of foreign currency.

Fresh fruits, flowers and vegetables were airlifted daily by the now-defunct Zambia Airways to their international markets.

The flowers included carnations, roses, statice, lilies, hypericum and alstromeria.

Horticultural products included chillies, mushrooms, aubergines, baby corn and fresh peas.

Mangoes, pineapples, avocados and passion fruit led the fresh fruits list.

A series of management blunders at ZEGA coupled with the liquidation of Zambia Airways in 1994, poor policies and lack of commitment by the successive MMD governments saw this once-thriving sector shrink.

Agriculture analysts say that the decline of horticultural production had seriously undermined foreign exchange reserves and this, in turn, had a huge impact on the economy as it was then one of the key contributors to Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The same woes that had affected fresh fruits, flowers and vegetable growing spilled over and brought down the once-thriving tea sector in Kawambwa, affecting thousands of out-grower farmers.

That begs the question: when will horticulture become Zambia's future backbone of the agribusiness?

Probably, after the re-launch of the Zambian national airline this year.

Mubanga Luchembe, LUSAKA



• KAPIJIMPANGA

UoA mulls skills push for economic success

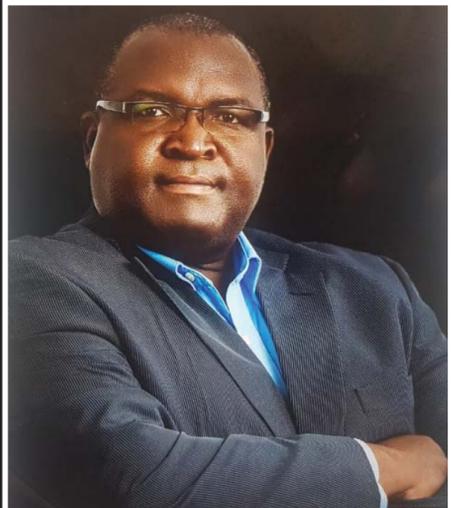
By DAVIS MULENGA

IT is necessary to swiftly develop new and relevant skills that will allow African nations to successfully drive sustained productivity-led growth and job creation, says University of Africa (UoA) Chancellor Ruth Mubanga.

Outlining a slew of new measures she described as "bold", Dr Mubanga says the key to economic success in Zambia and the rest of the African continent lies in the capacity to harness skills and their full utilisation to create unique and enlarge existing comparative advantages.

"It is necessary to quickly develop new and relevant skills that can be readily deployed to push the expansion of our economies to an unprecedented scale, and create the much needed jobs.

"Therefore, the measures we have taken give priority to strengthening our capacity to effectively mobilise and assimilate skills that will give us the necessary and enlarged comparative advantage for economic success," she says.



• NYASULU

The new measures by the Lusaka-based long distance tertiary learning institution were set against a backdrop of shortages of human resources, especially in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics as well as agriculture and health disciplines in Zambia and the rest of the African continent.

According to the World Bank, the current pattern of skills production in Africa does not match labor market demand or development needs. The recent trend in African higher education is the low percentage of graduates in areas of engineering, agriculture, health and science.

It also notes that while graduates of many African higher educational institutions go unemployed, substantial shortages of skilled labor persist. The challenge is to increase both the quantity and the quality of graduates through investments in laboratories and human resources for these disciplines, improve the link with employers to raise relevance and foster strong international collaboration to raise quality.

"These are far reaching measures that go to the core of addressing increased accessibility, affordability and quality of higher education to effectively fulfill the need for skills relevant to support sustained productivity-led growth," Dr Mubanga says.

She says the measures included creation of the board of directors to oversee business growth and governance. In addition, they aimed to strengthen the council and senate structures of the university.

Dr Mubanga also announced the departure of the incumbent Vice Chancellor, Christine Mushibwe. She said the university had appointed her in the interim to fill the vacant position left by Christine Mushibwe.

"The outgoing vice chancellor Dr Christine Mushibwe who had played a sterling role in growing the fortunes of the university, and we owe her a huge debt of gratitude," she says.

Victor Nyasulu, a Lusaka-based business management consultant was named board chairperson. Other board members were Roland Rohrs, Tom van der Zee and Dr Mubanga.

Recently, ADVTECH, South Africa's Johannesburg Stock Exchange-listed company which is Africa's leading provider of tertiary private education, acquired a 51 per cent stake in UoA, a development that bolstered the university's expansion plans.

Currently, the university, established in 2006 and accredited by the Higher Education Authority (HEA), had a student base of more than 2000 students across the African continent, including Zambia, Zimbabwe, Uganda, the Democratic Republic



• MUBANGA

of Congo (DRC) and Swaziland. It offers 22 Bachelors, eight Masters and a Doctoral degree.

Citing the growth path, citing, Nyasulu says the newly introduced measures would be fundamental in addressing the various challenges of higher education, putting UoA in a strong position to ramp up the growth it had registered in the last decade.

"An ideal outcome is UoA should positively be linked to solving major social economic, environmental challenges in Zambia and the rest of Africa in more tangible ways of bringing our motto of empowerment through education to life," he said.

'Lusaka Hustle' bounces back!

By SAM PHIRI

LAST week, this platform carried a clear headline 'Lusaka Hustle Off Air' in line with MultiChoice's decision to suspend the reality show on Zambezi Magic Dstv channel 160.

The suspension of the show was in line with guidance from the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) which wanted to review the programme material with MultiChoice before resumption of the show.

Today, it's a different story as the controversial show has been allowed back on the screen by the IBA.

This follows a multi-stakeholder forum that convened to assess the content of the show and the majority did not find the show offensive and neither did it contain elements likely to violate any Zambian law.

Lusaka Hustle has already been popularised through the controversial phase it underwent in the past few weeks.

Now this platform cannot wait to see what will come out of the 'allowed episodes' of the Lusaka Hustle.

The good thing is that many people will surely be looking forward to watching it of cause for various reasons, others for liking it but the majority for curiosity's sake.

Another group will just be interested to spot out faults from the show that brought out the controversy in the first place.



MultiChoice Zambia yesterday announced in a brief statement the bouncing back of the Lusaka Hustle on Zambezi Magic channel.

"MultiChoice Zambia is thankful to the IBA Board for convening a multi-stakeholder forum to assess concerns about the Lusaka Hustle show.

We are pleased to confirm the immediate lifting of the suspension and the (IBA) Board's confirmation that upcoming episodes contain no controversial elements that violate any Zambian law.

MultiChoice Zambia has engaged Zambezi Magic to resume the scheduling of the show on Thursday, 21 February 2019."

I took time to watch the episode on Thursday and from what I watched, there was less to analyse because there was less to talk about.

This column will continue watching the show with keen interest there will be other subjects of debate that might just come up after the lifting of the suspension.

The show received enough criticism especially via social media, thereby, attracting a reaction from the Government through the Minister in Charge of National Guidance and Religious Affairs and the IBA which regulates broadcasting in Zambia.

The concept behind Lusaka Hustle is brilliant and something that families can sit and watch together if revised and well planned.

This column last week mentioned that: "The good news, however, that is that the show has not been banned but merely suspended to see if it can be reviewed to settle the dust."

It is the opinion of this column that if the show has three female characters showing viewers what hustles they go through as Zambian celebrated women at home and work with another pair of men showing what men go through in their daily hustles, it would work.

However, from the Thursday's show, it is clear that the man who brought the congruency is still part of the show.

Kuni seemed to possess that feminine personality which seems to cause discomfort to many viewers as evident by



• KHUMALO

the buzz on social media which necessitated the show's suspension.

Now away from the hustles of Lusaka, we turn to the advertisement on Dstv announcing the return of Idols South Africa which apparently, is widely watched by millions of Zambians.

This column cannot wait to see who will take this year's Idols crown from the now 17-year old Yanga.

For the past three years, females have been winning the competition after a long dry spell of females failing to get the top slot.

The woman who seemed to have opened the floodgates for females was the mick but highly talented teacher - Noma Khumalo.

Then came the amazing 16-year old Paxton who motivated other teenagers to believe in themselves.

There was a repeat last year, what with another 16-year old female - Yanga - grabbing the crown.

The question now is, who will win this year's SA idols looking at how girls have been dominating for the past three seasons?

For today, we end here but please let's hear your views on this topic and especially on the most happening Zambezi Magic.

Next week, we will publish your numerous comments that we have found interesting especially on the new content on Zambezi Magic.

There are a number of shows that have emerged on this channel that people are enjoying and having different views about.

We will be able to bring out those interesting observations about the new content on Zambezi Magic.

This confirms to us that indeed, it is a Take Over as people seem to have literally moved to Zambezi Magic.

Congratulations MultiChoice. E-mailsamphiri77@gmail.com or call/text 0974372181.



• YANGA