Creatively Impacting Lives Globally

The Diaspora Times Global

SAT-FRI: July 25 - July 31, 2026 | No. G10027993 | diasporaglobalnews@yahoo.com / diasporaglobalnews@gmail.com | $1 USD | £1 | €1 | Diasporaglobal

To understand what Faye might bring to ECOWAS, it helps to recall how he arrived at the presidency of his own country in the first place

ECOWAS

A Handover in Freetown, and a Region on Edge :

Diomaye Faye's ECOWAS Moment:

Can Senegal's Young Reformer Steady a Region at War With Itself?

By: **Silas Mwaudasheni Nande**

The election of Senegal's Bassirou Diomaye Faye as Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority hands the bloc's most delicate assignment in a generation to its youngest and least conventional leader. Whether West Africa should feel hope now depends on whether Faye can convert his outsider credibility into the one currency the region actually needs: trust.

A Handover in Freetown, and a Region on Edge

On 19 July 2026, at the Julius Maada Bio International Conference Centre in Freetown, the leaders of the Economic Community of West African States did something they have done many times before and yet, this year, invested with unusual weight. They handed the rotating chairmanship of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government to a new occupant. Sierra Leone's President Julius Maada Bio, completing his mandatory one-year term, passed the mantle to Senegal's President Bassirou Diomaye Faye, calling him his "younger brother" and wishing him well as he takes on the task of steering the bloc through what Bio himself described as a defining period.

Senegal's Bassirou Diomaye Faye

Contd Page 10

"The Diaspora Times Global"

Court convicts Obado, Oyamo and Obiero of Sharon Otieno's murder

The High Court convicted former Migori Governor Okoth Obado, his former personal assistant Michael Oyamo and former Migori County Clerk Caspal Obiero on Thursday of the 2018 murder of Sharon Otieno, a university student who was seven months pregnant when she was abducted and killed, bringing to a close one of the most gripping and consequential criminal trials in Kenya's post-devolution history.
Justice Cecilia Githua, delivering judgment at the Milimani Criminal Division in Nairobi, ruled that the prosecution had proved its case beyond reasonable doubt and that all three accused had acted with common intention to murder Otieno. "It is therefore my finding that the prosecution has proved this case against the first accused, the second and the third accused persons beyond reasonable doubt," Githua ruled. "I consequently find each accused person guilty of the offence of murder contrary to Section 203 of the Penal Code as charged in Count One.

Contd Page 14

Navigating the shift: How smart technology manages real-time construction amendments

By: **David Nyaga**
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

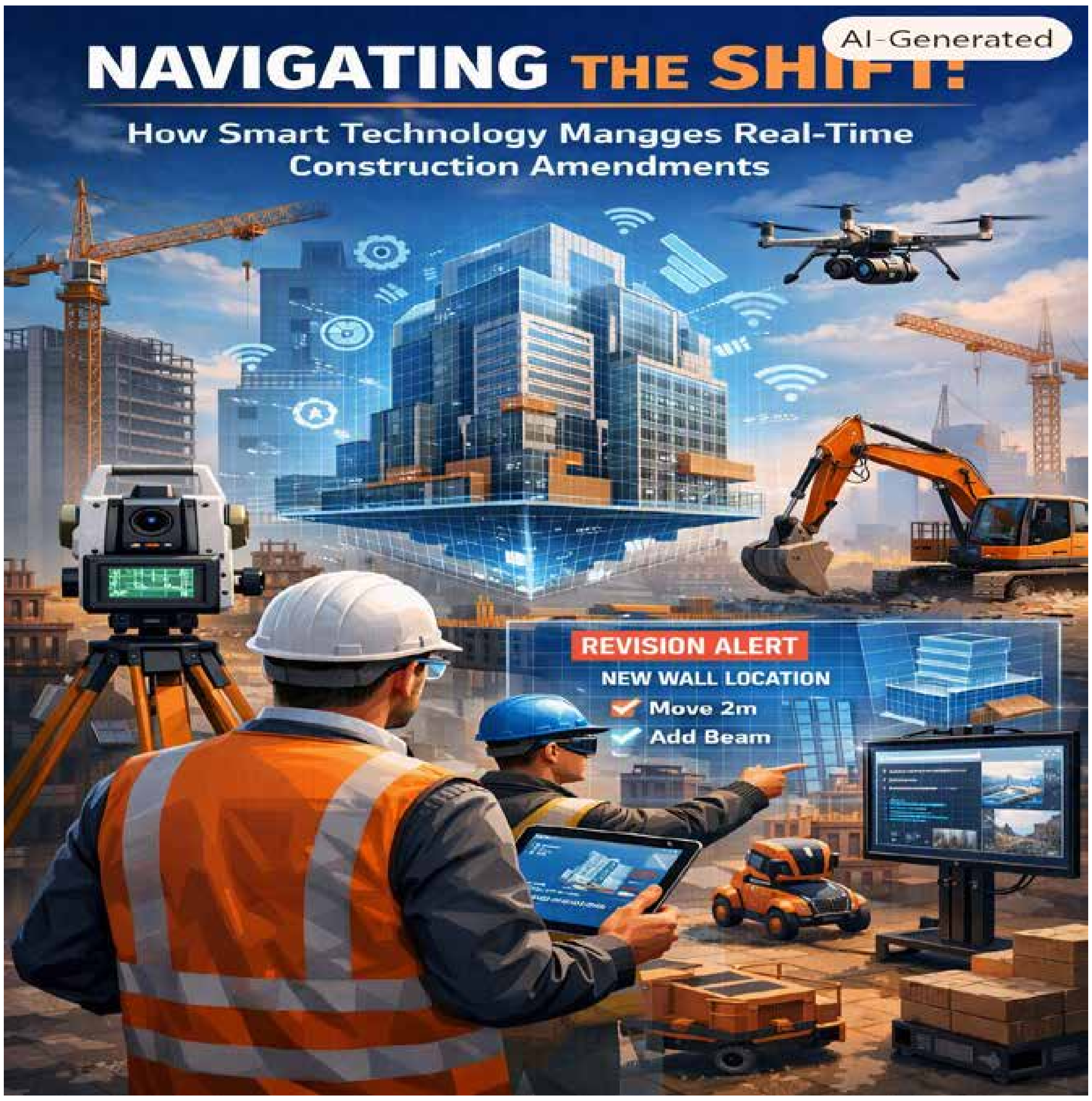
Worth Noting:

- **Today, the construction sector is undergoing a profound digital transformation. The frontline of building is now driven by spatial data and smart technologies capable of managing real-time changes with a precision that was, until recently, unimaginable.**
- **At the heart of this shift is Building Information Modelling (BIM). Rather than static, two-dimensional blueprints, modern civil and structural engineers collaborate within a dynamic, three-dimensional digital twin of the entire project. When a site amendment is proposed, the change is no longer a physical swap made on instinct — it is a data-driven calculation.**

Any experienced contractor or site manager knows a fundamental truth about physical infrastructure: plans change. Whether erecting an industrial plant or breaking ground on a public housing development, the ground beneath your feet is rarely as forgiving as the drawing board.

Unforeseen soil conditions can force a sudden shift in foundational measurements. Supply chain disruptions frequently demand last-minute substitutions of specified building materials. Historically, such amendments — moving a load-bearing wall by a few hundred millimetres or swapping one grade of structural steel for another — were a logistical nightmare. Progress halted. Oversized physical drawings were unrolled on dusty site desks, dimensions struck through in red ink, and project managers were left hoping the ripple effect would not compromise structural integrity or blow the budget.

Today, the construction sector is undergoing a profound digital transformation. The frontline of building is now driven by spatial data and smart technologies capable of managing real-time changes with a precision that was, until recently, unimaginable.



At the heart of this shift is Building Information Modelling (BIM). Rather than static, two-dimensional blueprints, modern civil and structural engineers collaborate within a dynamic, three-dimensional digital twin of the entire project. When a site amendment is proposed, the change is no longer a physical swap made on instinct — it is a data-driven calculation.

If a roofing material becomes unavailable and must be replaced with a heavier alternative, the new specifications are entered directly into the software. The system then automatically calculates the implications: does the increased load require the underlying structural supports to be reinforced? Project teams can visualise, test and troubleshoot a physical amendment in virtual space long before a single shilling is committed to materials or labour.

Managing the ripple effect of altered measurements is equally critical to keeping a project on schedule. The historic danger of spatial amendments has always been the physical clash — the moment a widened corridor or adjusted ceiling height places a concrete structural element squarely in the path of planned mechanical, electrical or plumbing routes.

Smart construction technology addresses this through automated clash detection. The moment a measurement is amended in the master digital file, the software instantly alerts engineers if the new dimensions intersect with other critical infrastructure. Subcontractors no longer arrive on site to discover their installation paths are blocked by newly erected physical barriers. Problems are solved before concrete is poured.

The documentation demands of major infrastructure are equally uncompromising. Regulatory bodies and future facility managers have no interest in what a building was supposed to look like at the design stage — they require an exact schematic of how it was actually built. As material substitutions, measurement adjustments and drawing revisions accumulate across months of construction, the digital model absorbs them all in real time. By the time a project reaches completion, the software has generated a precise set of as-built drawings — an invaluable asset for the structure's entire lifecycle, guiding future engineers through any renovation, maintenance or expansion work with confidence.

The broader lesson is cultural as much as technological. Site amendments should no longer be read as symptoms of poor planning. They are the natural consequence of translating theoretical engineering into physical structures within a constantly shifting environment. The industry has stopped fighting the inevitability of change. Engineers, architects and project managers are instead harnessing digital tools to ensure that when materials swap or measurements shift, the final project remains as solid, safe and efficient as the day it was first conceived.

In the modern era of construction, adaptability is not merely a necessity — it is a measurable science.

Reach Editorial Team on:
diasporaglobalnews@yahoo.com / diasporaglobalnews@gmail.com

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Diaspora Times Global

Editor's Desk

Group Executive Chairman
M. Danson
Shashi Court, Ring Rd, Westlands
P.O Box 101 675-00101 Nairobi, Kenya.
Tel/WhatsApp: +254720 918 828
Email: dan@mtkenyatimes.co.ke
Adverts: ads@mountkenyatimes.co.ke

Associate Publisher & Senior Editor UK & G. Britain
Shamlal Puri, London
E: media@adlinkinternational.com
(advertising inquiries only)
shamlalpuri4@gmail.com
(editorial)
Phone 0044 330 606 1438.
WhatsApp 00447432220184

Senior Editor Botswana & S. Africa Plot 15215, Tshikinyega, Mahalapye, Botswana
Paula.O.M Otukile
P.O Box 20392 Mahalapye, Botswana
Tel/WhatsApp:
+267 77 458 029
Email: paula200500293@gmail.com

Senior Editor India & Asia
Sakshi Agrawal
10, Balughat Main Road,
Near Shubham Poultry Farm,
Muzaffarpur, Bihar, India. Pin Code: 842001
Tel/WhatsApp: +91 74882 30902
Email: agrawalsakshi684@gmail.com

Senior Editor India & Asia
Nilanjana sarkar
Red Carpet Vogue
Tel/WhatsApp:
+91 95936 49888
Email: thequidditchink@gmail.com

NEXT GENERATION CLASSIFY

"ONE-STOP NATIONAL BUSINESS DIRECTORY"

ngLASSIFY

"ALL BUSINESSES
ONE PLATFORM"

FREE
REGISTRATION

SCAN TO REGISTER

Contact Us:

+254 720 918 828 / +254 713 318 438
+254 706 237 040 / +254 724 613 401

business@exponentialinternational.com

Business

Stanbic Kenya Foundation opens digital learning centre at Embu school

By: Diaspora Times Team
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Worth Noting:

- Mercy Githanji, head of the Stanbic Kenya Foundation, used the occasion to frame the investment in terms that went beyond a single school or county. "Digital literacy is no longer an option, but a fundamental prerequisite for success in the 21st century," Githanji told those gathered. "By equipping this school with computers, we are not only enriching the classroom experience for 200 students and supporting their teachers, but also opening a gateway of opportunity for the entire community."
- The foundation's intervention addresses a gap that school leadership has long felt acutely. Joseph Mwaniki, principal of ACK Kiamuringa School, acknowledged that students previously had limited exposure to practical computer lessons — a constraint that placed them at a disadvantage in a curriculum that increasingly demands digital competence.

A rural school in Embu County took a significant step into the digital age on Thursday when the Stanbic Kenya Foundation officially launched a fully equipped ICT laboratory at ACK Kiamuringa School, donating 30 computers to establish what is the institution's first dedicated digital learning facility.

The handover ceremony marked the culmination of an initiative designed not only to serve the school's 200 students and 23 teachers during the academic day, but to function as a shared community resource outside school hours — offering local youth and residents access to digital skills training, online learning platforms, and preparation for employment in Kenya's growing digital economy.

Mercy Githanji, head of the Stanbic Kenya Foundation, used the occasion to frame the investment in terms that went beyond a single school or county. "Digital literacy is no longer an option, but a fundamental prerequisite for success in the 21st century," Githanji told those gathered. "By equipping this school with computers, we are not only enriching the classroom experience for 200 students and supporting their teachers, but also opening a gateway of opportunity for the entire community."

The foundation's intervention addresses a gap that school leadership has long felt acutely. Joseph Mwaniki, principal of ACK Kiamuringa School, acknowledged that students previously had limited exposure to practical computer lessons — a constraint that placed them at a disadvantage in a curriculum that increasingly demands digital competence.

"This new ICT laboratory changes everything," Mwaniki said. "It elevates our capacity to teach STEM subjects, prepares our candidates for a digital world, and gives our dedicated teachers modern instructional tools. By opening this facility to local youth, ACK Kiamuringa School becomes a centre of hope and economic empowerment for the wider Kiamuringa community."

The Embu launch forms part of Stanbic Bank Kenya's broader corporate social investment strategy, anchored in the institution's stated national purpose: Kenya is our home, we drive her growth. Since 2021, the Stanbic Kenya Foundation has worked with partners to equip women, youth and micro, small and medium enterprises with 21st-century digital skills through its Future ni Digital platform. The foundation says more than 250,000 Kenyans have accessed training across basic, intermediate and advanced digital competencies since 2019.

Thursday's launch also signals the foundation's alignment with the Government of Kenya's national digital masterplan, which targets expanded digital literacy and the establishment of community-driven technology hubs as drivers of local job creation and innovation. By delivering hardware directly to grassroots institutions, the foundation is working to close a gap between national digital ambitions and the infrastructure realities facing schools in rural and peri-urban Kenya. For the students of ACK Kiamuringa, the significance was immediate and tangible. For a community that has long watched the digital economy grow at a distance, the new laboratory represents something rarer than hardware — it represents access.

Staff of the Stanbic Kenya Foundation during the handover; The Head of Stanbic Foundation, Mercy Githanji addresses students of ACK Kiamuringa School in Embu County

Staff of the Stanbic Kenya Foundation during the handover; The Head of Stanbic Foundation, Mercy Githanji addresses students of ACK Kiamuringa School in Embu County


SKYVIEW
Smart Solutions
Digital
MARKETING
EXPERTS.
Grow your business
with us
OUR SERVICES:
Digital Marketing
SEO Campiagn Strategies
Web Design & Development
Brand Build Business Strategies
Call us on
+91 811 576 6421 +966 53 879 2285
Visit our website
www.skyviewads.com

Business

Kenya's KSh995.7 billion borrowing plan risks squeezing credit for small bus

As the government turns to domestic markets to plug a trillion-shilling deficit, analysts warn banks may tilt toward safer government paper and away from riskier small-business lending

By: Diaspora Times Team
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Worth Noting:

- **The concern, as EBC Financial Group frames it, is not that domestic borrowing is inherently damaging, but that it introduces a set of incentives that may not favour the businesses that need credit most. Government securities offer banks a predictable, low-maintenance return without the due diligence burden — credit checks, cash flow assessments, collateral valuations — that a business loan demands. When government paper is abundant, banks may simply choose the easier option.**
- **David Precious, senior market analyst at EBC Financial Group, put it plainly. "Treasury bills and bonds can offer banks a more predictable return without the same level of company checks required for a business loan," he said. "Smaller businesses could face stricter terms even while total private-sector credit grows."**

Kenya's plan to raise KSh995.7 billion from domestic investors in the 2026/27 fiscal year could make it harder for smaller businesses to access affordable credit, according to an analysis by EBC Financial Group, even as headline lending figures show an economy recovering from a bruising credit drought.

The National Treasury's budget summary for the current fiscal year puts Kenya's deficit at KSh1.112 trillion — equivalent to 5.3 percent of gross domestic product. With net external financing covering only KSh116.2 billion of that gap, the burden of funding the remainder falls squarely on local investors, primarily through Treasury bills and bonds.

The concern, as EBC Financial Group frames it, is not that domestic borrowing is inherently damaging, but that it introduces a set of incentives that may not favour the businesses that need credit most. Government securities offer banks a predictable, low-maintenance return without the due diligence burden — credit checks, cash flow assessments, collateral valuations — that a business loan demands. When government paper is abundant, banks may simply choose the easier option.

David Precious, senior market analyst at EBC Financial Group, put it plainly. "Treasury bills and bonds can offer banks a more predictable return without the same level of company checks required for a business loan," he said. "Smaller businesses could face stricter terms even while total private-sector credit grows."

The numbers underlying that concern are striking. Commercial banks already held approximately KSh2.2 trillion in government securities in March 2026 — roughly 27 percent of total banking-sector assets, according to the World Bank's July 2026 Kenya Economic Update. More than a quarter of the sector's balance sheet was therefore already parked in government debt before the new borrowing programme began. The World Bank warned directly that heavier domestic borrowing risks crowding out private-sector credit and dragging on investment and economic demand.

For micro, small and medium enterprises, the practical consequences could be immediate. The Central Bank of Kenya's 2024 survey on MSME access to bank credit found that term loans and overdrafts account for more than 85 percent of small-business lending, and that collateral remains the single largest barrier to formal credit. Micro-enterprise loans already carry shorter repayment periods because lenders consider these borrowers riskier. A manufacturer weighing a machinery purchase may walk away if the loan on offer is too small or must be repaid faster than the investment can generate returns. A distributor may cut stock orders if its overdraft facility is trimmed.

The headline credit data presents a more optimistic picture, but analysts caution against reading it too broadly. The Central Bank's Monetary Policy Committee reported annual private-sector credit growth of 8.1 percent in March, a sharp reversal from the negative growth recorded in early 2025, while average lending rates had declined to 14.7 percent. The bank's December 2025 monetary policy statement projected credit growth reaching 10.6 percent by December 2026.

Growth in aggregate lending, however, does not reveal where that credit is flowing. Lower average rates offer little to a business that cannot meet collateral requirements or secure sufficient funding in the first place.

Banks face an additional headwind. Gross non-performing loans stood at 15.6 percent of total lending in March, down from 17.4 percent a year earlier but still high enough for the World Bank to describe the condition of bank loan books as a key vulnerability. A sector carrying that level of bad debt has strong institutional reasons to be cautious — to demand more collateral, apply tighter lending criteria, and favour borrowers with demonstrable repayment capacity.

Looming capital requirements add another layer of pressure. Under the Banking Act, minimum core capital requirements are set to rise from KSh1 billion in 2024 to KSh10 billion by the end of 2029. The Treasury's current budget statement proposes extending that deadline to December 2032 and removing annual milestones — a concession that gives smaller lenders more room to manoeuvre, but does not alter the destination. Banks building toward a KSh10 billion capital floor may be reluctant to extend loans that carry meaningful default risk.

EBC Financial Group's analysis is careful not to predict catastrophe. Government borrowing and business lending can, in principle, grow simultaneously. The critical question is whether that growth is distributed evenly or concentrated among large companies and well-collateralised borrowers who would have accessed credit regardless.

The answer, analysts suggest, will not be found in the headline figures. If private-sector credit expands while MSME lending stagnates, the crowding-out concern will have moved from theoretical risk to measurable reality — and Kenya's 7.4 million small enterprises will be the ones left counting the cost.

David Precious, Senior Market Analyst at EBC Financial Group

Motivation

The Journey of a 16-Year-Old Researcher: Overcoming Challenges and Shaping the Future of STEM in Uzbekistan

By: **Durdona Shafqatullayeva**
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Worth Noting:

- **Undeterred by these obstacles, Durdona spent years (2016–2024) establishing a flawless foundation during her Primary and Secondary Education at Shahrisabz District School No. 38, eventually graduating with an Excellent Graduation Certificate (Red School Certificate) in 2025. Her academic breakthroughs began in earnest in 2024 when she transitioned to "Renesans 7" Private School, expanding her horizons into scientific writing.**
- **Durdona chose to dedicate her research to the complex mechanisms of human anatomy. Without institutional laboratory backing, she conducted thorough qualitative, text-based data syntheses by intensely studying global medical authorities. Her hard work culminated in three major international publications in early 2026. In March 2026, her research paper titled "The Human Skeletal System: General Overview of Bones" was published in the international journal Synchronized Chaos.**

Durdona Shafqatullayeva's journey into the world of science and social leadership is a testament to resilience, relentless curiosity, and an unwavering desire to make a difference. Born on October 2, 2009, in Kashkadarya, Uzbekistan, Durdona discovered her profound passion for Medical, Chemical, and Biological sciences at a very young age. However, pursuing deep scientific research as a school student in a regional town brought significant challenges—ranging from limited access to advanced laboratory equipment to the steep learning curve of masterfully analyzing complex academic literature in foreign languages.

Undeterred by these obstacles, Durdona spent years (2016–2024) establishing a flawless foundation during her Primary and Secondary Education at Shahrisabz District School No. 38, eventually graduating with an Excellent Graduation Certificate (Red School Certificate) in 2025. Her academic breakthroughs began in earnest in 2024 when she transitioned to "Renesans 7" Private School, expanding her horizons into scientific writing.

Durdona chose to dedicate her research to the complex mechanisms of human anatomy. Without institutional laboratory backing, she conducted thorough qualitative, text-based data syntheses by intensely studying global medical authorities. Her hard work culminated in three major international publications in early 2026. In March 2026, her research paper titled "The Human Skeletal System: General Overview of Bones" was published in the international journal Synchronized Chaos. This was swiftly followed in April 2026 by a Turkish-language comprehensive study, "İnsan İskelet Sistemi: Kemikler Hakkında Genel Bir Bakış," featured in Tomris'in Kızları. By May 2026, she extended her academic reach into muscular anatomy with "General Overview of Human Muscles," published in The Voice of Uzbek Women International.

The pinnacle of her scientific recognition came in mid-2026. Her innovative approach to text-based biological synthesis was formally recognized by the expert committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), officially accepting her paper into the prestigious "Innovator Researcher of the Year" competition, with top honors slated for August 2026.

Parallel to her scientific endeavors, Durdona recognized the need to fight academic stagnation among her peers. Facing the challenge of building social projects from scratch with zero initial funding, she utilized social design and leadership strategies to launch groundbreaking initiatives. In March 2026, she created and directed "Intizom Marafoni," a one-month personal development project that helped over 100 participants build healthy routines. In April 2026, she launched "Zakovat Kids" to elevate children's intellectual capacity through interactive learning. Soon after, in June 2026, she established the "Study Battle Challenge" in collaboration with the Oltin Qanot Volunteer Organization to promote effective, modern learning habits.

Her altruism shone brightest through her dedicated volunteer work. Serving as an active coordinator and volunteer for the Uzbekistan Volunteers Association, the Youth Affairs Agency, and the Youth Front Office, she launched numerous community health and lifestyle campaigns. In 2026, her immense contribution to social activism was formally recognized under the highest national auspices, earning her a Certificate of Appreciation for "25 Volunteer Good Deeds Projects" issued by the National Social Protection Agency under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Today, as a high school student continuously striving for excellence, Durdona possesses advanced soft skills in project management and event coordination, alongside hard skills in medical research and social marketing (SMM).

Fluent in Uzbek and actively improving her English, Durdona Shafqatullayeva stands as a powerful beacon of hope for young girls in Central Asia, proving that age is never a barrier to scientific excellence and societal transformation.

Durdona Shafqatullayeva

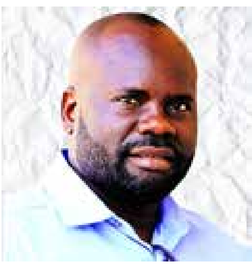
Durdona Shafqatullayeva


DO YOU WANT TO GET PUBLISHED?
ARE YOU A WRITER OR CORPORATE?
Let Professional Editors and Authors turn your story into a Dream Book.
THRILLERS - FICTION - FACTION - BIOGRAPHIES - TRAVELOGUES - HUMOUR- COFFEE TABLE - BROCHURES
London-based contract Publishers for independent and self-publish authors.
We offer one-stop top notch Editing, Expert Design, Proof Reading, Book Covers, Artwork, Digital, Litho Printing, E-Books, Corporate Brochures and UK ISBN number. Reasonable costs.
We print and deliver books. Authors retain 100% sales profits.
AFRICAN WOMEN IN EUROPE
BIBI PIPI NA MAUA WARIDI
Corona Cermak
THAT'S LIFE!
MICHAEL MATATU AT LARGE
SHAMLAL PURI
Footprints
NAMOSAL 64-74 REUNION
SELECTED PORTFOLIO
DUBAI DREAMS
SHAMLAL PURI
DUBAI DREAMS
The Rough Road to Riches
SHAMLAL PURI
BEST SELLER NOVELS
Dubai On Wheels
Shamlal Puri
AXIS OF EVIL
BLOOD MONEY
SHAMLAL PURI
THE ILLEGALS
SHAMLAL PURI
DENIED
TRIANGLE OF TERROR
Axis of Evil
Shamlal Puri
The Cosmopolitan Nomad
Karim
G R Ladak
MY LITTLE BOOK OF Christian Poems
The Crownbird Publishers logo and imprint owned by Adlink International (1989) Media Group London
Copies of some books available for sale: hard copy/ digital. Contact us:
media@adlinkinternational.com
Email Subject: Crownbird Books
Crownbird Publishers
ADLINK INTERNATIONAL (1989) MEDIA GROUP BOOKS IMPRINT
INTERNATIONAL BOOKS & MAGAZINES PUBLISHERS
ADLINK INTERNATIONAL (1989) MEDIA GROUP
Books Division
16 Upper Woburn Place, London WC1H 0AF (UK)
Tel: 44 330 606 1438
Email: media@adlinkinternational.com
www.adlinkinternational.com

African News

Diomaye Faye's ECOWAS Moment:

Can Senegal's Young Reformer Steady a Region at War With Itself?



By: Silas Mwaudasheni Nande
@themtkenyatimes

Contd from Page 1

At 46, Faye becomes one of the youngest leaders ever to chair the 15-member bloc, and arguably the most improbable. Two years ago he was a little-known former tax inspector who had spent time in prison on charges widely seen as politically motivated, released only ten days before an election he then won in a first-round landslide. Today he sits atop an institution founded in 1975 to knit together the economies of West Africa, an institution now fighting for its own relevance after the departure of three of its founding members and the steady creep of jihadist violence from the Sahelian interior toward the Atlantic coast.

The symbolism of the handover was not lost on delegates in Freetown. Alongside Faye's elevation, Senegal also secured the presidency of the ECOWAS Commission, with General Birame Diop, a former army chief of staff and United Nations military adviser, taking over from the Gambian technocrat Omar Alieu Touray from September. For the first time in years, one country holds both the Authority's rotating chair and the Commission's permanent leadership at once, concentrating unusual influence in Dakar and inviting a natural question: what, precisely, does Bassirou Diomaye Faye now propose to do with it?

Senegal's Bassirou Diomaye Faye

The Man From Sédhiou: Who Is Bassirou Diomaye Faye?

To understand what Faye might bring to ECOWAS, it helps to recall how he arrived at the presidency of his own country in the first place. Trained as a tax and property inspector, Faye was a middle-ranking civil servant and trade unionist who rose through the ranks of Ousmane Sonko's Pastef party as its former leader was progressively barred from contesting elections by Senegal's courts. When Sonko himself was disqualified from the March 2024 presidential race, Pastef turned to Faye, its little-known secretary-general, as a stand-in candidate. He campaigned from a prison cell under the slogan "Diomaye is Sonko," was freed by presidential amnesty days before the vote, and won outright in the first round — an extraordinary rebuke of Senegal's political establishment and, indirectly, of the wider model of managed democracy that had characterised much of West African governance for a generation.

That biography matters for ECOWAS in ways that go beyond sentiment. Faye is the first ECOWAS chairman in years who owes his position not to decades inside a ruling party machine but to a genuine anti-establishment insurgency conducted through the ballot box rather than the barracks. In a region where military juntas in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger justify their seizure of power partly by pointing to the failures and perceived foreign capture of civilian elites, Faye is one of the few sitting heads of state who can plausibly claim to have defeated that same establishment without firing a shot. He has, moreover, positioned himself rhetorically as a sovereigntist in the Pan-Africanist mould — talking of renegotiating extractive contracts with foreign companies, reviewing military cooperation agreements with France, and asserting Senegalese control over natural resources — while remaining, unlike the Sahelian juntas, inside constitutional order and within ECOWAS itself.

This dual identity is precisely why many in the region see him as a plausible bridge to the breakaway Alliance of Sahel States. Indeed, Faye has already played this role once. During the tense December 2024 ECOWAS summit in Abuja, when the bloc granted Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger a six-month grace period before their withdrawal took final effect, Faye was present as an informal mediator between the Sahelian juntas and the wider bloc, one of relatively few civilian leaders the military governments in Bamako, Ouagadougou and Niamey still receive with a measure of trust. He speaks the language of sovereignty that resonates with juntas suspicious of a bloc they regard as historically pliant to Paris and Washington, even as he remains committed, at least formally, to constitutional rule and regional integration.

There is also the matter of generational symbolism. Faye is younger than many of the university students and unemployed graduates whose frustration has fuelled coups and protest movements across the region over the past six years. His rise, alongside that of his mentor and former prime minister Ousmane Sonko, was read across West Africa as evidence that peaceful, electoral change of an entrenched order was still possible — an implicit counter-argument to the juntas' claim that only the army can deliver a clean break with the past. Whether that counter-argument still holds after eighteen months of turbulent governance in Dakar is one of the questions this chairmanship will test in public.

What Faye Inherits: An Organisation in Retreat

It would be difficult to overstate how much ECOWAS has been diminished institutionally in the two and a half years since the July 2023 coup in Niger set off the chain of events now defining the bloc's crisis. What began as a punitive response to that coup — sanctions, a threatened military intervention, and diplomatic isolation of Niamey — produced precisely the opposite of its intended effect. Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, all under military rule following coups between 2020 and 2023, drew together in mutual defence, formed the Alliance of Sahel States in September 2023, and announced their intention to leave ECOWAS altogether in January 2024. After a series of failed mediation efforts and a six-month grace period extended at the December 2024 Abuja summit, their withdrawal became formally effective on 29 January 2025.

The three departing states then went further than simple secession. In July 2024 they signed a treaty in Niamey upgrading their mutual defence pact into a full confederation, complete with a five-thousand-strong joint force, ambitions for a common currency to replace the CFA franc, and a coordinated diplomatic posture aimed squarely at reducing Western, and particularly French, influence in the Sahel.

Through 2026 the AES has been consolidating rather than reconsidering: foreign ministers from the three countries met in Bamako in June to harmonise positions ahead of engagement with ECOWAS and the United Nations, while technical experts gathered in Ouagadougou to draft a common negotiating framework. The picture that emerges is not of three isolated, struggling juntas awaiting rescue by their former bloc, but of an increasingly institutionalised rival organisation settling in for a long stay outside the ECOWAS tent, with five-year transition timelines now running to 2030.

The practical consequences for ECOWAS are severe. The bloc loses roughly half its landmass and a substantial share of its population along with three states that sit at the geographic and security heart of the Sahel. Free movement of people and goods, the single most

Contd Page 11

Worth Noting:

- **That biography matters for ECOWAS in ways that go beyond sentiment. Faye is the first ECOWAS chairman in years who owes his position not to decades inside a ruling party machine but to a genuine anti-establishment insurgency conducted through the ballot box rather than the barracks.**
- **In a region where military juntas in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger justify their seizure of power partly by pointing to the failures and perceived foreign capture of civilian elites, Faye is one of the few sitting heads of state who can plausibly claim to have defeated that same establishment without firing a shot.**
- **He has, moreover, positioned himself rhetorically as a sovereigntist in the Pan-Africanist mould — talking of renegotiating extractive contracts with foreign companies, reviewing military cooperation agreements with France, and asserting Senegalese control over natural resources — while remaining, unlike the Sahelian juntas, inside constitutional order and within ECOWAS itself.**

African News

Diomaye Faye's ECOWAS Moment:
Can Senegal's Young Reformer Steady a Region at War With Itself?

Contd from Page 10
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Worth Noting:

- This dual identity is precisely why many in the region see him as a plausible bridge to the breakaway Alliance of Sahel States. Indeed, Faye has already played this role once.
- During the tense December 2024 ECOWAS summit in Abuja, when the bloc granted Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger a six-month grace period before their withdrawal took final effect, Faye was present as an informal mediator between the Sahelian juntas and the wider bloc, one of relatively few civilian leaders the military governments in Bamako, Ouagadougou and Niamey still receive with a measure of trust.
- He speaks the language of sovereignty that resonates with juntas suspicious of a bloc they regard as historically pliant to Paris and Washington, even as he remains committed, at least formally, to constitutional rule and regional integration.

tangible achievement of West African integration for ordinary citizens over five decades, is now legally uncertain across those borders, even though the AES states have unilaterally pledged to keep their territories visa-free for ECOWAS citizens. Coordination on counter-terrorism, always imperfect, has become genuinely fractured: ECOWAS and the AES have held periodic contact — including talks in Bamako in 2025 aimed at agreeing modalities for cooperation against terrorism — but a state of mutual suspicion has periodically flared into direct confrontation, including an April 2025 incident in which Algeria, a neighbour rather than an ECOWAS member, shot down a Malian drone near their shared border, prompting the AES states to place their air defences on maximum alert and threaten to down any aircraft violating what they now call confederal airspace. Relations between ECOWAS member Benin and Niger's junta leader have been openly hostile, driven in part by Benin's continued security ties with France, illustrating how the AES rupture bleeds into bilateral tensions well beyond the four countries most directly involved.

Faye assumes the chairmanship, then, not of a bloc quietly managing a manageable disagreement with three wayward members, but of an organisation whose founding logic — that West African states are stronger pooling sovereignty than guarding it jealously — is being actively and publicly contested by a rival confederation next door. He does so at a moment when even ECOWAS's remaining members are not fully aligned: coastal states increasingly fear the security fallout of the Sahel crisis more than they fear the AES's political defection, while the bloc's traditional heavyweight, Nigeria, is absorbed by its own internal insurgencies and economic strain and has ceded some of the diplomatic initiative it once took for granted.

The Wars and Fractures Behind the Communiqué

Any honest accounting of what Faye now confronts must go beyond the diplomatic rupture with the AES and into the human cost of insecurity that rupture has helped entrench. The central Sahel — Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger — remains among the deadliest conflict zones on earth relative to its population, with two rival jihadist networks, Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM, linked to al-Qaeda) and the Islamic State Sahel Province, competing for territory, tax revenue from smuggling and gold mining, and the loyalty of communities abandoned by weakened state security forces. Analysts at the Global Terrorism Index and independent monitors have tracked a westward and southward migration of this violence for several years now, and 2026 assessments confirm the trend has not reversed: the western Sahel remains the epicentre of militant Islamist violence in Africa, responsible for the overwhelming majority of such attacks on the continent.

What is new, and what should concern an incoming ECOWAS chairman more than almost anything else, is how far that violence has now travelled south of the old Sahelian battle lines. Benin has absorbed the sharpest escalation of any coastal state, with attacks rising from a handful in 2021 to well over a hundred a year by the middle of the decade, concentrated around the W-Arly-Pendjari park complex that straddles Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger and now functions as a logistical rear base for militant groups moving south. Togo's northern Savanes region has suffered a similar, smaller-scale trajectory since JNIM claimed its first attack there in 2022. Northern Côte d'Ivoire and the border areas of Ghana, Guinea, Senegal and Mauritania are all registering greater strain, even where no major attack has yet landed. American and French security officials have used the word "metastasizing" to describe the spread of JNIM, the Islamic State's West Africa and Sahel provinces, and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb toward the Gulf of Guinea, and JNIM's own leadership has publicly confirmed ambitions to expand into Ghana, Togo and Benin.

Son Excellence M. Bassirou Diomaye Diakhar FAYE
Président de la République du Sénégal

This is not merely a security statistic; it is a governance stress test for exactly the coastal, still-democratic states that ECOWAS depends on for legitimacy and cohesion. The pattern in the Sahel was that jihadist violence, intercommunal tension and state neglect of peripheral regions combined to produce coups; Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger all fell to militaries that promised, and largely failed, to deliver security their civilian predecessors could not provide either. Analysts now warn openly that Benin, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana risk repeating that cycle if their governments cannot contain the violence in their northern hinterlands. A second wave of coups along the coast, on top of the Sahelian trio already gone, would not just weaken ECOWAS further; it could functionally dissolve it.

Beyond the Sahel and its coastal spillover, ECOWAS's chairman must also hold in view a wider basket of regional fragility: Nigeria's long, grinding contest with Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province in its north-east, now compounded by banditry and kidnapping-for-ransom across its north-west; recurring political turbulence in Guinea-Bissau, a country whose recent history of coups and attempted coups makes it a perennial stress point for the bloc's mediation machinery; the delicate, still-incomplete restoration of civilian rule in Guinea following its own 2021 coup; and simmering questions about third-term ambitions and constitutional manipulation in several member states that echo the very grievances the Sahelian juntas invoked to justify their own actions. ECOWAS's credibility as a guarantor of "constitutional order" is only as strong as its willingness to apply that standard evenly — a point its critics, including the AES governments, have made forcefully and not without justification.

It is against this backdrop — a rival confederation consolidating next door, jihadist violence pressing on the coast, and older fault lines still unhealed — that Faye's chairmanship must be judged. The temptation for any incoming chair is to treat the position largely as ceremonial, a year of hosting summits and issuing communiqués before handing on to the next head of state in the rotation. The scale of what ECOWAS now faces makes that approach a luxury the region cannot afford.

What Faye Brings to the Table

Faye's own account of his priorities, delivered in his acceptance remarks in Freetown, was notably concrete for a ceremonial handover speech. He singled out the need to operationalise the long-delayed ECOWAS Standby Force as a genuine, functioning counter-terrorism instrument, to pool member states' resources more effectively, to strengthen the bloc's financial independence from external donors, and to expand protection and support for communities living under the shadow of the region's conflicts. None of these are new ideas — ECOWAS has discussed a standby force since the early 2000s and a financial autonomy mechanism, funded by a small community levy on imports, has existed on paper for two decades without ever being fully and reliably collected — but the specificity of Faye's framing suggests at least an intention to move past rhetoric.

What he brings that his predecessors did not is a distinctive credibility with precisely the audience ECOWAS most needs to reach: the juntas and their domestic constituencies. Bio, a career naval officer turned two-time elected president, and Tinubu, the

African News

Diomaye Faye's ECOWAS Moment:

Can Senegal's Young Reformer Steady a Region at War With Itself?

Contd from Page 10
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Worth Noting:

- It would be difficult to overstate how much ECOWAS has been diminished institutionally in the two and a half years since the July 2023 coup in Niger set off the chain of events now defining the bloc's crisis.
- What began as a punitive response to that coup — sanctions, a threatened military intervention, and diplomatic isolation of Niamey — produced precisely the opposite of its intended effect. Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, all under military rule following coups between 2020 and 2023, drew together in mutual defence, formed the Alliance of Sahel States in September 2023, and announced their intention to leave ECOWAS altogether in January 2024.
- After a series of failed mediation efforts and a six-month grace period extended at the December 2024 Abuja summit, their withdrawal became formally effective on 29 January 2025.

consummate Nigerian political insider before him, both spoke the language of ECOWAS orthodoxy fluently but struggled to be heard sympathetically in Bamako, Ouagadougou or Niamey, where the bloc is widely perceived, fairly or not, as an instrument of French and Nigerian interests dressed up in regional colours. Faye's own biography as a prison-cell candidate who broke Senegal's political establishment, his public sovereigntist language on natural resources and foreign military bases, and his demonstrated willingness to informally mediate with the AES states already in December 2024, together give him an opening that his more conventional predecessors lacked. If any sitting ECOWAS head of state can get Bamako, Ouagadougou and Niamey to take a phone call seriously, the odds favour Faye more than most.

He also arrives with the wind of Senegal's diplomatic standing behind him. Dakar has long cultivated a reputation, not always fully deserved but genuinely useful, as a stable, moderate voice in West African affairs — a country that has never suffered a successful coup, that hosts significant international institutions and conferences, and that under Faye has been vocal about redefining, rather than rupturing, its security relationship with France. Pairing the Authority's chairmanship with the ECOWAS Commission presidency, now also held by a Senegalese general with direct experience of the region's security architecture through his time as a UN military adviser, gives Faye an unusually aligned institutional platform: chair and Commission president answering, in effect, to the same capital for at least the transition period. That concentration of authority carries risks of over-centralisation, but it also removes one of the chronic frictions that has hobbled ECOWAS chairmen in the past — a Commission bureaucracy pulling in a different direction from the rotating political leadership.

Finally, Faye brings a generational argument that matters more than it might first appear. At 46, he is closer in age to the millions of unemployed, underemployed and digitally connected young West Africans whose

Senegal's Bassirou Diomaye Faye

frustration with elite governance has powered both the coup wave and Pastef's own rise in Senegal. A chairman who can plausibly claim to understand that frustration, rather than simply managing it from above, has an opportunity — not a guarantee, but an opportunity — to reframe ECOWAS's public image away from that of a club of ageing incumbents protecting one another's power and toward something closer to a genuine reform vehicle. Whether he uses that opening or squanders it will shape how the bloc is perceived by its own citizens for years after his one-year term ends.

The Weight He Carries at Home

Any honest assessment, however, must set these assets against a harder truth: Faye takes on ECOWAS's chairmanship while his own government is absorbed in one of the most serious governance and fiscal crises Senegal has faced in a generation, and that crisis has, in recent months, become acutely political.

The origins of the problem predate Faye's presidency. Shortly after taking office in April 2024, his government's audits uncovered previously undisclosed liabilities under his predecessor Macky Sall, eventually estimated at around a quarter of Senegal's GDP, that had been concealed from both the Senegalese public and the International Monetary Fund. The revelation triggered a credit downgrade, the suspension of an existing IMF facility, and a slow, difficult renegotiation that has dragged through 2025 and into 2026, with Senegal's public debt now estimated above 130 percent of GDP and growth forecasts repeatedly cut — the IMF's own projection for 2026 growth fell to around 2.2 percent, down sharply from the 6.7 percent Senegal recorded the previous year, driven partly by a fuel subsidy bill that finance officials warned could overshoot its budget allocation by as much as two billion dollars.

The political fallout from this fiscal strain has now reached the heart of Faye's own governing alliance. In May 2026, after months of visible tension over whether Senegal should accept an IMF-style debt restructuring, Faye dismissed his prime minister and closest political ally, Ousmane Sonko — the very figure whose disqualification from the 2024 race had put Faye in the presidency in the first place, and the man behind the "Diomaye is Sonko" slogan that defined that campaign. Sonko, who had publicly resisted IMF engagement as a "disgrace" to national sovereignty, was replaced by the technocratic economist Ahmadou Al Aminou Lo, while Sonko himself pivoted to a new institutional base as speaker of Senegal's National Assembly, where his Pastef party retains a dominant majority. Financial markets registered the rupture sharply, with Senegal's dollar-denominated bonds tumbling to record lows and analysts warning of a growing probability of formal restructuring on the country's foreign-currency debt.

This matters for ECOWAS for two distinct reasons. First, it is a plain question of bandwidth: a president personally negotiating his own country's debt crisis with the IMF's managing director, managing a public and consequential rupture with his former mentor and prime minister, and steering a fragile domestic coalition through a subsidy crunch has less time, attention and political capital to spend flying between Bamako, Abuja, Accra and Niamey than a chairman with a settled home front would have. Second, and perhaps more corrosively, it complicates the very credibility Faye is meant to bring to the table. Part of his appeal to the Sahelian juntas and to disillusioned voters across the region rested on the image of a clean-break reformer delivering on anti-establishment promises without compromising them for outside approval. A prime minister sacked over disagreements about IMF terms, and a president now "personally handling" negotiations with the same international lender his government once treated with defiant scepticism, tells a more complicated story — one of a reformist project running into the same hard fiscal constraints that have humbled sovereigntist rhetoric across the continent before. West African publics, and especially the juntas in the AES who built their legitimacy partly on rejecting exactly this kind of external financial dependence, will not have missed the irony.

None of this disqualifies Faye from leading ECOWAS effectively. Leaders have governed successfully abroad while managing serious problems at home before. But it should temper any expectation that his chairmanship will be defined primarily by bold new initiatives rather than by the harder, more constrained work of keeping existing commitments from unravelling further while he simultaneously fights fires in Dakar.

Priorities for a One-Year Tenure

Given all of this, what should Faye actually try to accomplish in the twelve months available to him, and what should observers watch for as tests of whether the chairmanship is succeeding?

First, make the counter-terrorism force real, not aspirational.

Faye named this his own priority in Freetown, and he was right to. ECOWAS has authorised, funded on paper, and repeatedly delayed a standby force for over two decades. A single, credible step this year — an agreed troop-contribution formula, a functioning joint command structure, or even a limited operational deployment along a defined stretch of the Benin–Niger–Burkina Faso frontier — would

Contd Page 13

African News

Diomaye Faye's ECOWAS Moment:

Can Senegal's Young Reformer Steady a Region at War With Itself?

Contd from Page 12
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Worth Noting:

- **The three departing states then went further than simple secession. In July 2024 they signed a treaty in Niamey upgrading their mutual defence pact into a full confederation, complete with a five-thousand-strong joint force, ambitions for a common currency to replace the CFA franc, and a coordinated diplomatic posture aimed squarely at reducing Western, and particularly French, influence in the Sahel.**
- **Through 2026 the AES has been consolidating rather than reconsidering: foreign ministers from the three countries met in Bamako in June to harmonise positions ahead of engagement with ECOWAS and the United Nations, while technical experts gathered in Ouagadougou to draft a common negotiating framework.**
- **The picture that emerges is not of three isolated, struggling juntas awaiting rescue by their former bloc, but of an increasingly institutionalised rival organisation settling in for a long stay outside the ECOWAS tent, with five-year transition timelines now running to 2030.**

do more for the bloc's relevance than another year of communiqués. Failure here, by contrast, will be read by coastal states as confirmation that ECOWAS cannot protect them, accelerating the same drift toward unilateral or bilateral security arrangements — with Rwanda, with private contractors, with France in some cases and Russia in others — that is already visible in the region.

Second, treat the AES relationship as a long game of confidence-building rather than a reunification project.

The evidence from 2026 is unambiguous: Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger are consolidating their confederation, not searching for a way back into ECOWAS. Faye's own credibility with these governments is real, but it should be spent on achievable, narrower goals — sustained counter-terrorism information-sharing, protection of free movement for ordinary citizens across the old ECOWAS-AES boundary, and coordinated positions ahead of shared forums like the UN General Assembly — rather than staked prematurely on the AES reversing a decision its leaders have called irreversible. A chairman who quietly delivers functional cooperation on terrorism and trade will do more for regional stability than one who publicly chases a reunification that is not coming, and risks a visible failure that would further damage ECOWAS's standing.

Third, press ahead on the community levy and financial autonomy, even at domestic political cost.

ECOWAS's chronic inability to fund its own institutions and operations without leaning on the European Union and other outside donors has long undermined its authority to speak independently on security or governance matters. Faye's own emphasis on this point in his acceptance remarks should be taken as a genuine test: if Senegal, holding both the Authority chair and the Commission presidency simultaneously, cannot make progress on collecting the levy reliably and insulating ECOWAS's core budget from donor conditions, it is difficult to imagine which configuration of leadership could.

Fourth, use the coastal security crisis, not the AES dispute, as the organising emergency of the year.

The temptation for any chairman is to let the drama of the Mali-Burkina-Niger rupture dominate the bloc's attention, precisely because it is the most visible fracture. But the coastal spillover into Benin, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana's northern borderlands is the more urgent threat to the twelve members ECOWAS still has, because it threatens to reproduce, inside the bloc itself, the exact governance failures and coup dynamics that produced the AES rupture in the first place. A chairman who mobilises resources, intelligence-sharing and development support toward Benin's and Togo's northern regions this year will be doing more to prevent the next departure from ECOWAS than any amount of diplomacy aimed at the three states already gone.

Fifth, apply ECOWAS's democratic and constitutional standards evenly.
One of the AES governments' most effective rhetorical weapons has been the accusation that ECOWAS enforces its principles selectively — harshly against juntas, more gently against elected leaders who manipulate constitutions to extend their own rule. A chairman who is seen to hold all member states, not only the weakest or most isolated, to the same standard on term limits, electoral integrity and civilian oversight of security forces will do more to rebuild the bloc's moral authority than any single security initiative. This is politically uncomfortable, since it may require Faye to speak uncomfortably about fellow elected heads of state rather than only about juntas, but the credibility of ECOWAS's founding logic depends on it.

Sixth, keep the private sector and economic integration agenda visible, not just security.

Analysts have noted that Faye, despite his sovereigntist rhetoric, is expected to work closely with business figures such as Aliko Dangote and the ECOWAS Business Council on trade facilitation and investment, and this economic dimension should not be crowded out by the undeniable urgency of security matters. A regional bloc whose only visible output for a year is troop deployments and communiqués about terrorism will struggle to make the case to its own citizens that integration delivers tangible benefits, particularly at a moment when free movement and trade across the AES boundary are already under strain.

Senegal's Bassirou Diomaye Faye

Should West Africa Hope?

The honest answer is: cautiously, and conditionally.
There are real grounds for a measure of hope. Faye's biography gives him an unusual capacity to be heard by audiences — juntas, disaffected youth, sovereigntist publics — that previous ECOWAS chairmen struggled to reach at all. The concentration of the Authority chair and the Commission presidency in the same capital removes a structural friction that has hampered past chairmanships. And Faye has, unlike many predecessors, already named concrete priorities rather than vague aspirations, giving observers something specific against which to measure his year in office.
But the grounds for caution are at least as substantial. ECOWAS's fundamental problem is not a shortage of well-intentioned chairmen; every recent occupant of the position, from Tinubu to Bio, arrived with plans to strengthen the standby force, deepen integration and heal the AES rupture, and each departed with those ambitions substantially unrealised. The structural constraints — a rotating one-year term too short to see most initiatives through, a Commission historically under-resourced and dependent on external donors, member states with sharply divergent threat perceptions and foreign alignments, and a rival confederation next door that shows every sign of permanence rather than transition — do not disappear because a more sympathetic figure now holds the gavel. Faye's own domestic fiscal crisis, and the very public rupture with Sonko that crisis has produced, will consume time, credibility and political capital that a less encumbered chairman might have spent entirely on regional affairs.
The most useful frame for judging this chairmanship, then, is not whether Faye "solves" West Africa's wars and fractures in twelve months — no single leader could, and it is unfair to the office and to Faye himself to measure success against that standard. The more meaningful test is narrower and more achievable: does ECOWAS end this chairmanship with a functioning, rather than merely authorised, counter-terrorism capability; with a demonstrably more reliable independent revenue base; with evidence of sustained, practical cooperation with the AES states even absent formal reunification; and with its remaining members, especially the increasingly threatened coastal states, feeling that the bloc is finally organising itself around their most urgent fear rather than around the drama of a rupture that already happened eighteen months ago. If Faye can deliver even two or three of those narrower outcomes, his chairmanship will have been more consequential than most of those that preceded it, whatever the state of Senegal's own finances by the time he hands the gavel on next July. If he cannot, West Africa will not be worse off for having tried a different kind of chairman — but it will have confirmed that the office itself, rotating annually among heads of state each managing their own domestic fires, may simply be too weak an instrument for the scale of the crisis the region now faces. That, ultimately, may be the more important verdict Faye's year in charge delivers: not just what he achieves, but what the limits of his achievement reveal about whether ECOWAS as currently constructed can still do the job it was founded to do.

CRIME

Court convicts Obado, Oyamo and Obiero of Sharon Otieno's murder

A High Court verdict closes a seven-year chapter in one of Kenya's most closely watched criminal trials — and ends the political career of a man who once commanded one of the country's most powerful county governments

By: Diaspora Times Team
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Contd from Page 1

Worth Noting:

- **The judge ordered the trio remanded in custody immediately. The matter will return to court on 18 August 2026 for a pre-sentence report, with the hearing to be conducted virtually. Murder carries a maximum penalty of death in Kenya, though such sentences are rarely imposed. Their bonds, which had allowed them to move freely for years during the trial, were cancelled on the spot.**
- **Obado had arrived at the Milimani Law Courts that morning in his Lexus, greeted supporters outside and walked calmly into the courtroom. By the end of the day, court orderlies were escorting him to a prison van. Nearly eight years after regaining his freedom pending trial, a murder conviction transformed his legal status in a matter of minutes. It was a journey that compressed the entire arc of his public life into a single afternoon.**

Former Migori Governor Okoth Obado, his former personal assistant Michael Oyamo and former Migori County Clerk Caspal Obiero

Each accused is accordingly convicted under Section 322 of the Criminal Procedure Code."

The judge ordered the trio remanded in custody immediately. The matter will return to court on 18 August 2026 for a pre-sentence report, with the hearing to be conducted virtually. Murder carries a maximum penalty of death in Kenya, though such sentences are rarely imposed. Their bonds, which had allowed them to move freely for years during the trial, were cancelled on the spot.

Obado had arrived at the Milimani Law Courts that morning in his Lexus, greeted supporters outside and walked calmly into the courtroom. By the end of the day, court orderlies were escorting him to a prison van. Nearly eight years after regaining his freedom pending trial, a murder conviction transformed his legal status in a matter of minutes. It was a journey that compressed the entire arc of his public life into a single afternoon.

To understand the weight of Thursday's verdict, it is necessary to trace how far Obado had come — and how steeply he had fallen. A self-made grassroots politician, Obado rose from representing sugarcane farmers in South Nyanza to becoming Migori's inaugural governor. He began his working life as a sugarcane farmer before training as a teacher, graduating from Kenyatta University with a Bachelor of Arts in Education and later earning a Master's degree in Strategic Management from the same institution. He served as principal of Chung'e Secondary School before entering elective politics, and later became chairman of the Kenya Sugar Board. Those were the years in which he constructed the grassroots authority that would eventually carry him to the pinnacle of county governance.

In the 2013 general election, Obado contested for the governorship on a People's Democratic Party ticket, defeating ODM candidate Prof. Oyugi Akong'o — a remarkable achievement in a region where ODM's dominance had long been treated as an immovable political fact. His election victory was challenged in court, prompting a recount, but the outcome was upheld and he was confirmed as Migori's first governor under the devolved system. Ahead of the 2017 general election, he again fought fierce internal battles within ODM before securing the party's gubernatorial ticket, going on to defeat his longtime rival Ochilo Ayacko and earning a second five-year term.

In his heyday, Obado's supporters referred to him as Obado Sirkal — equating him to the power of the national government itself — and were eager to defend him at all costs. So dominant was his influence that he openly challenged ODM leader Raila Odinga's regional supremacy without attracting the full wrath of Raila's supporters, a rare act of defiance in Nyanza politics. In the rough and murky politics of South Nyanza, Obado traversed the political landscape like a colossus — a commanding political force wrapped in a remarkably polite and soft-spoken demeanour, a study in contrasts whose supporters' faith in his leadership rarely wavered.

Yet even before Sharon Otieno's name entered the public consciousness, there were fractures beneath the surface. His first term was marked by allegations of corruption and financial mismanagement, including claims of irregular procurement of ambulances amounting to KSh230 million and expensive furnishing of his official residence approximated at around KSh20 million. His supporters frequently clashed with those of his longtime political rival Ayacko. One of the most notable incidents occurred during the 2017 election campaign when violence erupted at an ODM rally in Migori. Kisumu Governor Anyang' Nyong'o was forced to take cover beneath a podium, while former Mombasa Governor Hassan Joho's bodyguard was shot and injured. Obado was a man of formidable political energy — but that energy, observers noted in retrospect, was not always disciplined.

Then came September 2018, and everything changed.

On the morning of 5 September 2018, Kenya woke to the brutal killing of a 26-year-old university student, her body found dumped in a thicket in Owade village in Homa Bay County. Sharon Belyne Otieno, a Rongo University student, was 28 weeks pregnant when she was killed alongside her unborn child. A post-mortem revealed she had possibly been sexually assaulted and stabbed eight times in the neck, abdomen and back.

The court found that Sharon's pregnancy was the engine of everything that followed. Justice Githua ruled that Obado had pressured Otieno to terminate the pregnancy, allegedly giving her KSh30,000 to procure an abortion. Sharon declined after consulting her mother and resolved to keep the child. "The totality of the evidence adduced in this case shows that this particular pregnancy formed the basis of subsequent events, which culminated in the unlawful death of the deceased," the judge said.

The court found that Obado supplied the motive, instigation and funds to finance the killing, while Obiero provided logistical support and concealment to avoid detection. Oyamo, the court found, convened a meeting to deliver Otieno to her killers. Prosecutors told the court that the evidence demonstrated planning, facilitation, execution and a cover-up, arguing that Sharon's pregnancy posed "a real and imminent threat" to Obado's public standing. Justice Githua held that Obado's physical absence from the scene of the murder did not diminish his criminal responsibility, because the accused had acted in concert with others not before the court.

The judgment rested on circumstantial evidence drawn from 42 prosecution witnesses and 81 exhibits. Justice Githua found that the prosecution had established an unbroken chain linking the accused to the offence. "I am satisfied that the circumstances presented in this case, taken cumulatively, form a chain so complete that there is no escape from the conclusion that the accused persons, jointly with others not before the court, committed the offence charged," she ruled.

Contd Page 15

CRIME

Court convicts Obado, Oyamo and Obiero of Sharon Otieno's murder

A High Court verdict closes a seven-year chapter in one of Kenya's most closely watched criminal trials — and ends the political career of a man who once commanded one of the country's most powerful county governments

Contd from Page 14
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Former Migori Governor Okoth Obado and the late Sharon Otieno

Worth Noting:

- **On the morning of 5 September 2018, Kenya woke to the brutal killing of a 26-year-old university student, her body found dumped in a thicket in Owade village in Homa Bay County. Sharon Belyne Otieno, a Rongo University student, was 28 weeks pregnant when she was killed alongside her unborn child. A post-mortem revealed she had possibly been sexually assaulted and stabbed eight times in the neck, abdomen and back.**
- **The court found that Sharon's pregnancy was the engine of everything that followed. Justice Githua ruled that Obado had pressured Otieno to terminate the pregnancy, allegedly giving her KSh30,000 to procure an abortion. Sharon declined after consulting her mother and resolved to keep the child. "The totality of the evidence adduced in this case shows that this particular pregnancy formed the basis of subsequent events, which culminated in the unlawful death of the deceased," the judge said.**

The court rejected Obado's claim that he had accepted the pregnancy, finding instead that the evidence demonstrated sustained pressure on Otieno to terminate it. The court noted that on Obado's own admission, he learned about Sharon's pregnancy in March 2018 — the same month he claims to have terminated, or decided to terminate, his relationship with her. The judge found that sequence deeply telling.

In his defence, Obado had been unequivocal. "I did not kill Sharon Otieno. I did not conspire with my two co-accused persons or anyone to kill the late Sharon Otieno. I did not procure anybody to kill the late Sharon Otieno," he told the court. He admitted to the romantic relationship and acknowledged paternity of the unborn child, but said he had ended the affair, had no intention of marrying Otieno and had continued providing her with financial support. The court found that financial support, even if genuine, did not undo the weight of evidence that he had sought to suppress the pregnancy before it could damage his political standing.

The murder charge was not the only legal battle consuming Obado's post-gubernatorial years. In 2021, Obado, his four children and others were charged over an alleged conspiracy to defraud Migori County of about KSh505 million through economic crimes, money laundering and conflict of interest. The case centred on allegations of systematic looting of county resources through fraudulent procurement arrangements, with prosecutors accusing Obado of abuse of office, conspiracy to commit economic crimes, money laundering and illegal acquisition of public assets. Specific allegations centred on the misappropriation of approximately KSh73 million in county funds through fictitious contracts.

In September 2025, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions announced recovery of KSh235.6 million in assets from Obado and 17 co-accused following a plea bargain. The High Court allowed the DPP to withdraw the corruption charges after adopting the plea bargain agreement as a judgment of the court in May 2026. That settlement, which had appeared to offer Obado a measure of legal relief, now sits in the shadow of a murder conviction.

His political repositioning in those years told its own story. From 2021, Obado's relationship with ODM leadership deteriorated once again. He gradually gravitated toward the People's Democratic Party while publicly aligning himself with William Ruto's United Democratic Alliance, despite maintaining that the two parties had no formal arrangement. He emerged as one of Ruto's key allies in Nyanza, actively supporting UDA's expansion in the region ahead of the 2022 general election. Despite that loyalty, Obado did not secure a government appointment after Ruto became President. Within ODM circles, he had become an unwanted figure. A senior ODM official told reporters they did not recognise him, adding that Obado was the architect of his own downfall.

The isolation was social as much as political. Once revered as Obado Sirkal, a grassroots giant who dared to defy even Odinga, the former governor faced a reckoning marked by court battles, asset seizures and social exile. His home in Uriri, which had once been a meeting point for supporters, was described as deserted. "He no longer holds power, and many have abandoned him. These days, when he leaves public events, nobody bothers to accompany or follow him," a neighbour was reported as saying.

Sharon's family, who had travelled repeatedly from western Kenya across nearly eight years of hearings — funding their own transport and accommodation to Nairobi each time the case came up — received the verdict quietly from their side of the courtroom. "Our girl is gone, but we finally got justice," a family member said outside the court. Sharon's father told reporters they now awaited sentencing, uncertain whether the court would impose a short or lengthy term. "That worries us," he said, adding that the family would determine next steps once sentencing was complete.

Obado's arrest and prosecution made him the first serving governor in Kenya to face charges related to a capital offence. His conviction on Thursday extends that grim distinction: he is now the first former governor to be found guilty of murder by a Kenyan court. The verdict, and the accountability it represents — however delayed — carries implications for how Kenya's judiciary and public institutions handle the intersection of political power and serious criminal conduct.

The case also restored, at least partially, something that had been in danger of being lost. For years, Sharon Otieno's name had been attached primarily to a political scandal, her identity filtered through the controversies of a powerful man. Thursday's verdict returned the story to its centre: a 26-year-old student and her unborn child, whose lives were taken to protect a secret, and whose family spent nearly a decade demanding that the law take notice.

The sentencing hearing is expected on 18 August 2026, following the submission of a pre-sentence report. Whatever term the court ultimately imposes, the conviction itself is irreversible at this stage — a finding of fact, entered into the record, that one of South Nyanza's most powerful politicians ordered the death of a young woman who refused to disappear quietly. For the man who once arrived at court in a Lexus to cheers from his supporters, the road ahead leads somewhere very different.

Europe

ICC member states dismiss prosecutor Khan over serious misconduct

The removal of Karim Khan ends a tenure defined by landmark arrest warrants and engulfed by allegations of sexual assault — leaving the world's only permanent international criminal court to rebuild its credibility at a moment of acute geopolitical strain

By: Diaspora Times Team
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Worth Noting:

• The secret ballot, conducted at United Nations headquarters in New York during a special session of the Assembly of States Parties, delivered a decisive if sobering verdict on a tenure that had been consumed, in its final years, as much by internal scandal as by the headline-grabbing prosecutions that defined it. Sources told AFP that only 13 states voted for Khan to remain in his post. A further 15 members abstained.

• Paivi Kaukoranta, president of the court's governing body, read out the result without ceremony. "The assembly decided by a majority of 82 states parties that the elected official, prosecutor Karim Khan, committed serious misconduct and a serious breach of duty and to remove Karim Khan from office," she said, before praising members for the "spirit of unity shown in upholding the integrity of the court."

International Criminal Court member states voted on Friday to remove prosecutor Karim Khan from office, with 82 of the court's 125 member states finding him guilty of serious misconduct and a serious breach of duty following allegations that he sexually assaulted a female member of his staff — marking the first time in the court's history that a sitting chief prosecutor has been ousted.

The secret ballot, conducted at United Nations headquarters in New York during a special session of the Assembly of States Parties, delivered a decisive if sobering verdict on a tenure that had been consumed, in its final years, as much by internal scandal as by the headline-grabbing prosecutions that defined it. Sources told AFP that only 13 states voted for Khan to remain in his post. A further 15 members abstained.

Paivi Kaukoranta, president of the court's governing body, read out the result without ceremony. "The assembly decided by a majority of 82 states parties that the elected official, prosecutor Karim Khan, committed serious misconduct and a serious breach of duty and to remove Karim Khan from office," she said, before praising members for the "spirit of unity shown in upholding the integrity of the court."

Khan, 56, a British barrister who had held the post since 2021, was not present in the chamber. He has denied all wrongdoing and his lawyer, Tayab Ali, moved swiftly to signal that Friday's decision would not go unchallenged. "Mr Khan will challenge the lawfulness and fairness of the decision through all available legal mechanisms," Ali said. He went further, warning that the removal carried consequences beyond a single individual. "The independence of the International Criminal Court depends upon its elected officials being protected from removal through processes that are political, procedurally unfair or inconsistent with the findings of independent judicial bodies," Ali posted on X.

Karim Khan

The allegations at the centre of the case were made by a Malaysian lawyer who served as Khan's direct assistant. Speaking last week to CNN, the woman — who asked to be identified only by her first name, Sarah — described a pattern of escalating behaviour that culminated in physical assault. "There is no way for something to be consensual when you have such a power disparity," she said. "What I think many people don't understand is that Mr Khan was not just my boss, he was everyone's boss." Khan had voluntarily stepped back from his duties in May 2025 while a UN investigation was conducted, but maintained throughout that the allegations were false.

The ICC said on Friday that Khan's office will now be headed by deputy prosecutors Nazhat Shameem Khan and Mame Mandiaye Niang. Khan's dismissal immediately triggers the election process for a new chief prosecutor, although a vote is not expected before next year. The 25th session of the Assembly of States Parties, scheduled from 7 to 17 December 2026 at the UN in New York, is expected to address the prosecutorial election, with the realistic options being either folding it into that session or convening a resumed session in early 2027.

The timing could scarcely be more fraught. Khan's removal comes at a moment when the court is already facing a campaign by the United States to dismantle the ICC, which Washington describes as a threat to its sovereignty. Since its creation in 2002 under the Rome Statute, the ICC has set international standards for adjudicating the world's gravest crimes, recording seven convictions and maintaining a current docket of 34 cases. Its authority rests entirely on the cooperation of its member states — an authority that has been tested severely in recent years.

Much of that testing has been linked to Khan's most consequential decision. In 2024, he applied successfully for arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former defence minister Yoav Gallant over the conduct of the Gaza war. The ICC also issued warrants for senior Hamas commanders, several of whom have since been killed. The warrants drew immediate and intense American fury. Khan and several ICC judges were placed under US sanctions, and Washington made clear it regarded the court's jurisdiction as illegitimate in cases involving the United States or Israel, neither of which has ratified the Rome Statute.

On Friday, American officials were unsparing in their response to his departure, though the message carried its own ambiguities. "It is good that he is gone, but he is only one small cog in this irredeemably corrupt institution," State Department spokesman Tommy Pigott said on X — a statement that appeared to celebrate Khan's removal while simultaneously rejecting the legitimacy of the institution that removed him.

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar went further, calling the removal "long-delayed" and arguing that the Gaza arrest warrants had been "an attempt to deflect from the serious misconduct he feared would be revealed." He called for the warrants to be revoked immediately. Khan's removal will have no immediate legal impact on those warrants, which can only be withdrawn by ICC judges, not by member states or the prosecutor's office.

Human rights defenders were careful to separate the man from the institution. Liz Evenson, international justice director at Human Rights Watch, said after the vote that the court "is more than any one person; it's a critical court of last resort that anchors a global movement for justice," adding that the court must "hold itself to the highest standards." Leila Sadat, professor of international criminal law at Washington University, welcomed the outcome. "Members of the court acted swiftly and decisively to remove an embattled and discredited official so that the court can move forward with its important work in all the situations on its docket," she said.

For Africa, the verdict lands with particular weight. The continent has historically had a complex and often adversarial relationship with the ICC, with African leaders at various points accusing the court of disproportionately targeting African defendants while shielding Western and allied nations from scrutiny. Khan's pursuit of arrest warrants against Netanyahu was widely noted across the continent as evidence of a more even-handed prosecutorial approach. What his departure means for that trajectory will depend heavily on who succeeds him — and on whether the court can stabilise itself sufficiently to carry out an election process that is both credible and swift.

For now, the court faces a period of institutional uncertainty at precisely the moment it can least afford one. Its Gaza investigation is stalled. Its senior officials are operating under American sanctions. Its founding legitimacy is being actively contested by two of the world's most powerful governments. And the office at the centre of all of it — the prosecutor's office, meant to be the engine of accountability — is, for the foreseeable future, leaderless.

The court that was created to speak for victims of the world's worst crimes will need, before it can do anything else, to demonstrate that it is still capable of governing itself.

The Diaspora Times Global

OPINION

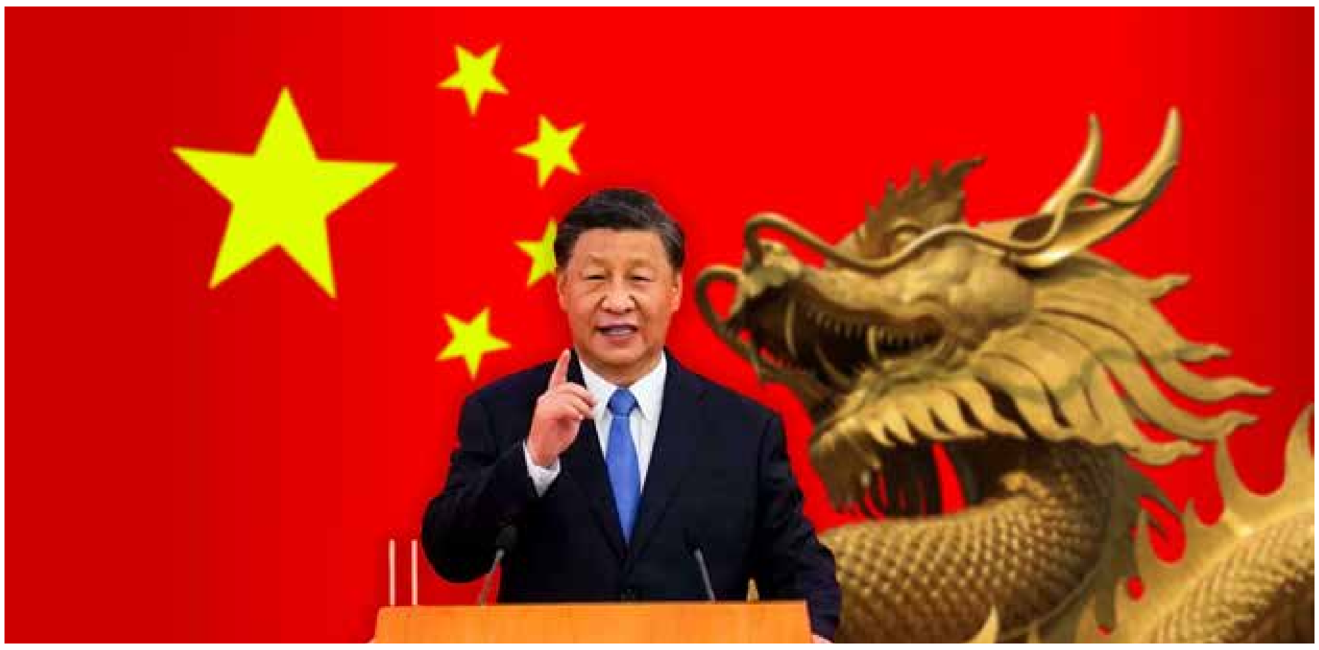
Xi Jinping's AI Vision: Beyond Innovation, Towards Responsible Global Governance

Chinese President Xi Jinping sought to answer that question at the opening of the 2026 World AI Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance in Shanghai last week

By: ELIJAH MWANGI
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Worth Noting:

- **China's sustained investment has produced tangible results. According to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, the country's core AI industry surpassed 1.2 trillion yuan in 2025, supported by more than 6,200 AI enterprises. AI technologies are increasingly embedded in manufacturing, logistics, healthcare, finance and government services, while Chinese companies continue to make significant advances in robotics, autonomous systems and foundation models. These developments provide the backdrop against which China is increasingly contributing to global conversations on AI governance.**
- **What made Xi's speech in Shanghai particularly significant, however, was its emphasis on principles rather than performance.**
- **The first was openness and cooperation. Xi argued that AI innovation should be driven by collaboration, open-source development and the sharing of scientific knowledge. Rather than allowing technology to become another casualty of geopolitical competition, he advocated creating an ecosystem where innovation benefits from international cooperation. It is a recognition that the world's biggest technological challenges are unlikely to be solved in isolation.**



Chinese President Xi Jinping

Artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer a futuristic concept confined to research laboratories or science fiction. It is rapidly transforming economies, reshaping industries and redefining global competitiveness. From healthcare and education to manufacturing and public administration, AI is becoming the engine of the next technological revolution. Yet as nations compete to develop increasingly powerful AI systems, an equally important question is emerging: who should shape the rules that govern this transformative technology?

Chinese President Xi Jinping sought to answer that question at the opening of the 2026 World AI Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance in Shanghai last week. While much of the global AI conversation has centred on breakthroughs in computing power and large language models, Xi shifted the focus towards governance, international cooperation and shared responsibility. His message was clear: the future of AI will be defined not only by innovation, but also by the principles that guide its development.

This vision did not emerge overnight. For more than a decade, Xi has consistently described AI as a strategic technology that will influence economic growth, scientific advancement and national development. As early as 2014, he urged Chinese scientists to anticipate emerging technological trends. In 2017, China elevated AI to a national strategic priority through its New Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan. A year later, Xi famously likened AI to the "lead goose" in a migrating flock, capable of driving transformation across multiple industries through innovation and productivity.

China's sustained investment has produced tangible results. According to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, the country's core AI industry surpassed 1.2 trillion yuan in 2025, supported by more than 6,200 AI enterprises. AI technologies are increasingly embedded in manufacturing, logistics, healthcare, finance and government services, while Chinese companies continue to make significant advances in robotics, autonomous systems and foundation models. These developments provide the backdrop against which China is increasingly contributing to global conversations on AI governance.

What made Xi's speech in Shanghai particularly significant, however, was its emphasis on principles rather than performance.

The first was openness and cooperation. Xi argued that AI innovation should be driven by collaboration, open-source development and the sharing of scientific knowledge. Rather than allowing technology to become another casualty of geopolitical competition, he advocated creating an ecosystem where innovation benefits from international cooperation. It is a recognition that the world's biggest technological challenges are unlikely to be solved in isolation.

The second principle was security. As AI systems become more capable and autonomous, Xi stressed that they must always remain under meaningful human control. He also warned against stretching the concept of national security in ways that unnecessarily restrict technological cooperation. Balancing innovation with safeguards is becoming one of the defining policy challenges of the AI era. Governments must protect their citizens and critical infrastructure while avoiding regulations that could stifle scientific progress or deepen technological divides.

Xi's third pillar was inclusiveness. He argued that AI should enrich rather than diminish the diversity of world civilisations. As artificial intelligence increasingly influences education, communication and culture, it should respect different languages, traditions and development paths instead of promoting a single technological model. In a digital age where algorithms shape how information is produced and consumed, preserving cultural diversity is no longer simply a social concern but a governance issue.

Perhaps the most consequential aspect of Xi's address was his call for stronger global governance. Artificial intelligence is advancing far more rapidly than the regulatory systems designed to oversee it. Different countries are adopting different legal and ethical frameworks, creating an inc reasingly fragmented global landscape. Xi argued that the United Nations should play a central role in coordinating AI governance, aligning technical standards and promoting international cooperation. He also emphasised the importance of helping developing countries build AI capacity so that technological progress does not widen existing digital inequalities.

The conference also produced a significant institutional outcome with the establishment of the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization (WAICO), the first intergovernmental international organisation dedicated specifically to AI cooperation and governance. Headquartered in Shanghai, WAICO aims to promote innovation, strengthen governance, encourage capacity building and foster international collaboration. Its creation reflects China's intention to champion the interests of the Global South in the realm of AI, move beyond policy statements and help build institutions capable of addressing the challenges of the AI era.

Naturally, translating broad principles into globally accepted governance will not be straightforward. Artificial intelligence raises complex questions about ethics, accountability and security, and redefines national sovereignty and the international order. Countries have different political systems, legal traditions and strategic priorities. While AI should not be monopolized by the club of the rich and powerful, building international trust will require transparency, broad participation and confidence that emerging governance mechanisms serve the collective interests of humanity rather than the ambitions of individual states.

Xi's message in Shanghai highlights an increasingly important reality. The global conversation about artificial intelligence has to go beyond the race to maximize the financial and strategic gains by building the most powerful models. It emphasizes the creation of a framework that levels the playing field for the majority of the international community, encourages innovation for the positive and good, and protects humanity from dangerous consequences that might be caused intentionally or inadvertently by the capitalists and politicians of a few countries. Xi's proposition will shape that framework, influence the future of technology and the global economy, and contribute to a more just and equitable global order.

Shanghai, therefore, marked more than just another international technology conference. It demonstrated China's determination to contribute not only to AI innovation but also to the global architecture that will govern it. Xi Jinping's vision has undoubtedly elevated governance to the centre of the AI debate, and has the potential to become the foundation for international consensus among several competing approaches.

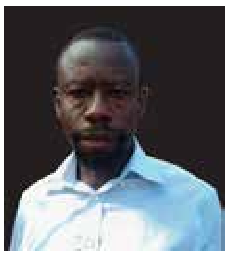
As artificial intelligence continues to transform the world, one conclusion is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore: technological leadership alone will not define the next era. Equally important will be the wisdom to ensure that innovation is guided by principles that are responsible, inclusive and beneficial to all. Xi Jinping's call in Shanghai offers a compelling contribution to that conversation.

Elijah Mwangi is a scholar based in Nairobi who comments on local and global affairs.

Diaspora

Zimbabwe trust marks 14 years of turning overlooked lives into community assets

More than 40 graduates received nursing aide certificates in Harare as Green Light International Trust celebrated a decade and a half of restoring potential in forgotten places



By: Chimeno Azriel
azrielchimeno@gmail.com
Zimbabwe

Worth Noting:

- **The anniversary theme, From Dust to Life, was not chosen for its poetry. For GLIT and for many of the graduates who passed through its programme, it is a literal description of a journey — from circumstance and obscurity to skill, purpose and the capacity to serve others.**
- **"We are very proud of these graduates," said Tawanda Makwiramiti, GLIT's founder and director, speaking on the sidelines of the ceremony. "During their attachment at our rehabilitation centre, they gained much-needed first-hand experience working with patients with disabilities. That exposure is what prepares them to serve with confidence in the community."**
- **Makwiramiti was direct in his message to the graduating class. "Today is not the end. It is the beginning. As GLIT, we will continue to walk with you, support you, and create opportunities for you to use the skills you have gained to transform lives."**

Zimbabwe's Green Light International Trust (GLIT) graduated more than 40 nursing aide trainees in Harare yesterday, marking the organisation's 14th anniversary with a ceremony that doubled as a quiet but compelling argument for community-centred healthcare.

The graduation was held at Robert Mugabe Mall in the heart of the capital, a public space more accustomed to commerce than ceremony. Yesterday it became something else entirely — a hall of testimony, as graduates dressed in bright yellow stoles walked across the stage to receive certificates in Community Rehabilitation and Basic Home Nursing Care, the culmination of six months of classroom instruction and hands-on field attachment.

The anniversary theme, From Dust to Life, was not chosen for its poetry. For GLIT and for many of the graduates who passed through its programme, it is a literal description of a journey — from circumstance and obscurity to skill, purpose and the capacity to serve others.

"We are very proud of these graduates," said Tawanda Makwiramiti, GLIT's founder and director, speaking on the sidelines of the ceremony. "During their attachment at our rehabilitation centre, they gained much-needed first-hand experience working with patients with disabilities. That exposure is what prepares them to serve with confidence in the community."

Makwiramiti was direct in his message to the graduating class. "Today is not the end. It is the beginning. As GLIT, we will continue to walk with you, support you, and create opportunities for you to use the skills you have gained to transform lives."

The six-month nurse aide training programme is one of GLIT's flagship offerings and reflects the organisation's deliberate focus on practical, community-facing skills. Trainees begin with classroom instruction covering basic nursing principles, rehabilitation techniques, patient hygiene, communication and the ethics of care, before moving into field attachments at clinics, rehabilitation centres and private homes. It is in those attachments — sitting with an elderly patient, supporting someone recovering from injury, navigating the particular demands of home-based care — that the theoretical becomes instinct.

The result, GLIT argues, is graduates who do not simply hold a certificate. They hold competence.

That distinction mattered to those who attended yesterday's ceremony. Harare Mayor Jacob Mafume, represented by Councillor Tomasi, praised the organisation's contribution to health and youth development in the city. Chief Zvimba, also present, commended GLIT's emphasis on practical skills that directly serve vulnerable populations.

"We appreciate GLIT for stepping in to train and equip our youths on health issues," said the representative of the mayor's office. "This kind of work strengthens our communities and reduces the burden on our health system."

The observation points to something larger than a single graduation ceremony. Zimbabwe, like many countries in the region, faces persistent pressure on its formal health infrastructure. Hospitals are stretched. Families caring for elderly relatives or persons with disabilities often do so without training, without support, and without respite. Community-based caregivers — skilled, equipped and present — represent one of the most cost-effective responses to that gap. GLIT has spent 14 years making that case through action rather than advocacy.

The graduates who received their certificates yesterday come from varied backgrounds. Some arrived seeking a first formal qualification. Others came to put a certificate to years of informal caregiving they had already been doing, unpaid and unrecognised, within their own families and neighbourhoods. All of them, across six months of early mornings, classroom sessions and community placements, demonstrated the discipline that care work demands.

The yellow stoles they wore were a shared symbol, but the stories beneath them were distinct. Many balanced training with family responsibilities and, in some cases, paid work. That they completed the programme at all is, in itself, a form of achievement that the certificates do not fully capture.

Their graduation adds to a growing network of GLIT-trained caregivers operating across Harare and surrounding areas — a network that is quietly supporting families, easing pressure on health facilities and opening employment pathways for young people in a country where formal job opportunities remain scarce. Multiply the impact of a single trained caregiver across the families and patients they serve, and the scale of what 14 graduating classes represent begins to come into focus.

For GLIT, the anniversary is both a moment of reflection and a statement of intent. Fourteen years in, the organisation shows no signs of narrowing its ambitions. Makwiramiti's parting instruction to the graduates carried the weight of an institution confident in what it has built.

"Go and serve with excellence," he told them.

From dust to life, one graduate at a time.

Graduation Ceremony in pictures

Diaspora

The Limited Role of Intellect and Reasoning in Sufi Doctrine

Sufism (Arabic: Tasawwuf) is a spiritual and ethical doctrine in Islam that guides human beings toward moral and spiritual perfection.

By: Bekmurodova Ruxshona
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Abstract: This article briefly discusses the limitations of intellect in Sufi doctrine and explains the true place and function of reason within the framework of Sufism.

Keywords: Sufism, intellect, reasoning, spirituality, divine truth, heart, knowledge.

The Limited Role of Intellect and Reasoning in Sufi Doctrine

Sufism (Arabic: Tasawwuf) is a spiritual and ethical doctrine in Islam that guides human beings toward moral and spiritual perfection. Scholars have expressed various opinions concerning the origin and meaning of the word Tasawwuf. Among these views, the explanation of Ibn Khaldun has been widely accepted. In his famous work Muqaddimah, he states that the word Tasawwuf is derived from the Arabic word suf (wool), because early ascetics wore garments made of wool as a symbol of their simple lifestyle and detachment from worldly pleasures. In this way, they distinguished themselves from those who were attached to worldly life.

Historically, Sufism emerged within Islamic civilization as a movement emphasizing spiritual devotion and asceticism. The representatives of Sufism strictly observed Islamic law (Sharia) and belonged to different schools of Islamic jurisprudence and theology. It is also known that the term Sufism was introduced into European languages during the eighteenth century by Orientalist scholars.

Now let us turn to the central topic of this article. What is intellect in its true essence? Is it knowledge, wisdom, or ignorance? The honor and value of intellect increase through knowledge. It is distinguished through Sharia and human perception. Regarding the significance of intellect, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "After Allah created the intellect, He said to it, 'Come forward,' and it came forward. Then He said, 'Go back,' and it went back." Then Allah declared: "By My Power and Majesty, I have not created anything more honored than you. Through you I take, through you I give, through you I reward, and through you I punish."

The intellect through which human beings perceive reality originates from the First Intellect (al-'Aql al-Awwal), which Allah created as light, just as He created the sun with its radiance. This is the universal intellect, independent of material limitations. The honor of intellect lies in the fact that without it, human beings cannot attain happiness either in this world or in the Hereafter. Through intellect, mankind becomes Allah's vicegerent (khalifah) on earth, faith reaches perfection, and believers draw closer to Allah. Allah compares His light with divine illumination in the Qur'an: "Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth." (Surah An-Nur, 24:35)

In ancient Western thought, many arguments were presented against the use of reason in the search for spiritual truth. However, Sufism emphasizes that ultimate reality cannot be attained solely through intellect but through spiritual experience (hal), purification of the soul, and closeness to Allah. Imam Al-Ghazali, in his famous work Kimya al-Sa'adah (The Alchemy of Happiness), explains both the significance and the limitations of human intellect. According to him, intellect is an invaluable gift that enables human beings to distinguish between right and wrong, yet it cannot, by itself, fully comprehend divine realities. True knowledge is attained when intellect is illuminated by the light of faith and supported by the purity of the heart.

Similarly, Alisher Navoi presents the relationship between intellect and spiritual truth in his masterpiece Lison ut-Tayr (The Language of the Birds), which was inspired by Farid al-Din Attar's Mantiq al-Tayr (The Conference of the Birds). In this symbolic work, the spiritual journey toward divine truth is described through artistic and philosophical imagery. Navoi demonstrates that although intellect guides human beings toward knowledge, it alone is insufficient to attain the highest level of spiritual realization. Only sincere love for Allah and the purification of the heart enable a person to reach ultimate truth.

Jalal al-Din Rumi illustrates the same concept in his Masnavi through the famous story of the elephant in a dark room. Several people touch different parts of the elephant, and each believes that the part he touches represents the whole reality. One thinks the elephant is like a wall, another believes it resembles a rope, while another compares it to a pillar. Each description is based on limited perception. According to Rumi, the elephant symbolizes the absolute truth, whereas the people's hands represent the limited capacity of human intellect. The darkness symbolizes ignorance. If they had possessed a lamp—that is, the divine light of guidance and the enlightenment of the heart—they would have perceived the complete reality. Therefore, intellect is like a small lamp that provides limited illumination, but when the sun of divine truth rises, the lamp is no longer sufficient.

At this point, an important question arises: why are intellect and reasoning regarded as limited in Sufism? Based on the available sources, two main explanations can be identified. First, human intellect is connected to the material world. It functions through experience, observation, and logical reasoning. However, divine realities transcend the boundaries of ordinary logic and therefore cannot be completely understood through rational thinking alone. Second, human intellect is itself limited because human beings are limited. People are born, grow, change, and eventually die. Their intellectual abilities also develop gradually and remain imperfect. Absolute and unlimited knowledge belongs only to Allah.

Sufism distinguishes between two forms of intellect. The first is the partial intellect (al-'Aql al-Juz'i), which is concerned with calculation, worldly benefit, and practical affairs. The second is the universal intellect (al-'Aql al-Kulli), which is illuminated through divine inspiration, spiritual unveiling (kashf), and the light of the heart. Through this higher form of intellect, human beings become capable of approaching divine truth.

The heart occupies the highest position in Sufi thought because it is regarded as the mirror upon which the light of Allah is reflected. Divine love (ishq) is considered the force that enables human beings to perceive spiritual truth beyond the limits of ordinary reasoning. Therefore, Sufism does not reject intellect or deny its importance. On the contrary, it recognizes intellect as one of the greatest blessings granted by Allah. However, it teaches that intellect alone cannot reveal the complete reality of the Divine. When intellect is combined with sincere faith, spiritual discipline, remembrance of Allah (dhikr), and the purification of the heart, it becomes a means of approaching the truth. In matters concerning the material world, intellect serves as an essential guide, but in matters of spiritual realization, the heart occupies a higher position because it receives divine illumination.

As Alisher Navoi beautifully expressed, "Intellect opens many paths, but only love opens the path to the Truth." This statement reflects one of the central principles of Sufism: reason is valuable and necessary, yet it reaches its perfection only when it is guided by divine love and spiritual enlightenment. In this way, Sufism establishes a balance between intellect and the heart rather than placing them in opposition.

In conclusion, Sufism acknowledges the greatness and honor of human intellect while emphasizing its limitations in understanding the infinite reality of Allah. Reason enables people to distinguish right from wrong, to acquire knowledge, and to fulfill their responsibilities in this world. Nevertheless, the deepest spiritual truths cannot be attained through rational thinking alone. They require faith, purification of the soul, divine inspiration, and the enlightenment of the heart. Therefore, according to Sufi doctrine, the intellect is not rejected but complemented by the heart, which serves as the primary means of experiencing divine reality. The ultimate goal of Sufism is to guide human beings toward spiritual perfection by harmonizing intellect, knowledge, faith, and divine love.

Green Entrepreneurship: From Small Ideas to Great Change

By: Mamatkhonova Madinabonu Kamol
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Behind every product on the market lies a choice: with what resources, and by what path, should it be created? In recent years, more and more entrepreneurs around the world have been answering this question with "a path that causes less harm to nature." This direction is called green entrepreneurship, and it is no longer a passing trend — it is becoming a new rule of the market.

Green entrepreneurship means turning the preservation of natural resources, the reduction of waste, and benefit to the local community into business goals, alongside the pursuit of profit. These two things — income and responsibility — are not opposites; in fact, over the long run, they reinforce one another.

In Uzbekistan, this direction is developing slowly but steadily. Farmers introducing drip irrigation systems, small enterprises using renewable energy sources, and business owners choosing paper and biodegradable materials over plastic for packaging — all of these are living examples of green entrepreneurship.

Yet this path is not without obstacles. Green technologies are often expensive at the initial stage, financial support remains insufficient, and public demand for ecological products is still taking shape. For these very reasons, the government, banks, and the education system must work together — through affordable loans, tax incentives, and practical training — to encourage young entrepreneurs.

It is worth emphasizing that green entrepreneurship is within reach not only of large companies but of small businesses as well. A single family bakery switching to an energy-efficient oven, a local café choosing reusable dishware over single-use containers — all of this is part of the bigger picture.

Green entrepreneurship is the language of tomorrow's economy. Anyone who learns this language today and applies it in their own business strengthens not only their own income but also the future of the community and nature around them.

And isn't that, after all, true entrepreneurial skill?

Mamatkhonova Madinabonu Kamol
3rd-Year Student, Department of Economics
Faculty of Tourism and Economics
Kokand University
Email: mamatxonovamadinabonu60@gmail.com

Sumatriptan

Sumatriptan: A modern solution for migraine relief

By: Diaspora Times Team
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Migraine is far more than an ordinary headache. It is a complex neurological disorder that affects millions of people worldwide, disrupting work, education, family life, and overall well-being. For many individuals, a migraine attack can begin suddenly and last for several hours or even days, bringing intense throbbing pain, nausea, vomiting, and extreme sensitivity to light, sound, or even certain smells. According to the World Health Organization, migraine remains one of the leading causes of disability among people under the age of fifty, highlighting the urgent need for effective and accessible treatment options.

Over the past few decades, remarkable progress has been made in understanding the biological mechanisms behind migraine. These advances have led to the development of medications designed specifically to stop migraine attacks rather than simply reduce pain. Among these therapies, sumatriptan has become one of the most widely recognized and trusted treatment options. Since its introduction in the early 1990s, it has helped millions of patients regain control over their daily lives by providing rapid and targeted relief from migraine symptoms.

Unlike conventional painkillers, which mainly reduce inflammation or block pain signals, sumatriptan acts on the underlying biological processes involved in migraine attacks. It belongs to a class of medicines known as triptans, which selectively activate serotonin (5-HT$_1$B and 5-HT$_1$D) receptors in the brain. This action narrows dilated cranial blood vessels, reduces the release of inflammatory neuropeptides, and interrupts the transmission of pain signals within the trigeminal nerve pathway. As a result, many patients experience not only significant pain relief but also improvement in associated symptoms such as nausea, photophobia, and phonophobia.

One of the greatest advantages of sumatriptan is its rapid onset of action. When taken during the early stage of a migraine attack, many patients begin to notice symptom relief within 30 to 60 minutes after taking the oral tablet, while injectable formulations may provide relief in as little as 10 to 15 minutes. This fast response is particularly important because timely treatment can prevent migraine attacks from progressing to more severe stages, allowing patients to return to their normal activities sooner.

Today, sumatriptan is available in several convenient dosage forms, including tablets, nasal sprays, and subcutaneous injections. This variety allows healthcare professionals to tailor treatment according to the patient's symptoms and the severity of the attack. For example, patients who experience severe nausea or vomiting may benefit more from nasal or injectable formulations, as these routes bypass the digestive system and provide faster absorption.

Despite its impressive effectiveness, sumatriptan is not suitable for everyone. Because the medication causes constriction of certain blood vessels, it should not be used by individuals with coronary artery disease, previous stroke, uncontrolled hypertension, or certain other cardiovascular conditions without careful medical evaluation. For this reason, healthcare providers recommend that patients receive an appropriate diagnosis before starting treatment and always follow prescribed dosing instructions.

The success of sumatriptan represents an important milestone in modern migraine management. It demonstrated that medications specifically designed to target migraine mechanisms could achieve better clinical outcomes than traditional pain relievers alone. Moreover, its development paved the way for newer generations of triptans and other migraine-specific therapies that continue to improve the quality of life for millions of people around the world.

The development of sumatriptan marked a turning point in migraine medicine. Before its introduction, treatment options were largely limited to general painkillers, ergot derivatives, and anti-inflammatory drugs, many of which produced inconsistent results or caused significant adverse effects. Scientists realized that migraine was not simply a vascular disorder but a complex neurological condition involving abnormal activation of the trigeminovascular system and changes in serotonin signaling. This new understanding encouraged researchers to search for medications capable of targeting the biological mechanisms responsible for migraine attacks rather than merely suppressing pain.

Sumatriptan became the first member of the triptan family to reach clinical practice. Developed through years of pharmacological research, it was specifically designed to activate selective serotonin 5-HT$_1$B and 5-HT$_1$D receptors without affecting many other serotonin receptor subtypes. This selectivity represented a major scientific achievement because it allowed the drug to relieve migraine symptoms while reducing the likelihood of many unwanted neurological effects associated with less selective compounds. Since its approval, sumatriptan has served as the foundation for the development of several newer triptans, including zolmitriptan, rizatriptan, eletriptan, naratriptan, almotriptan, frovatriptan, and eletriptan.

Another reason for the lasting popularity of sumatriptan is its flexibility in clinical practice. Unlike many medications that are available in only one dosage form, sumatriptan can be administered as oral tablets, nasal spray, subcutaneous injection, and, in some countries, transdermal delivery systems. This diversity allows physicians to choose the most appropriate formulation according to the patient's clinical condition. Individuals experiencing severe nausea or vomiting during migraine attacks may be unable to swallow tablets, making injectable or intranasal formulations particularly valuable because they provide rapid absorption without relying on the gastrointestinal tract.

Clinical experience accumulated over more than three decades has confirmed that the effectiveness of sumatriptan is highest when treatment begins during the early stage of a migraine attack. Delayed administration often reduces therapeutic success because the neurological processes responsible for migraine become progressively more difficult to reverse as the attack advances. For this reason, many headache specialists encourage patients to recognize their earliest migraine symptoms and initiate treatment promptly after diagnosis by a healthcare professional.

The benefits of sumatriptan extend beyond pain relief alone. Many patients report substantial improvement in migraine-associated symptoms, including nausea, vomiting, photophobia, phonophobia, and reduced ability to concentrate. Restoring normal daily functioning is considered one of the most important treatment outcomes because migraine frequently interferes with work performance, academic activities, social relationships, and overall quality of life. In many cases, successful treatment enables patients to resume their routine within a few hours instead of losing an entire day to debilitating symptoms.

Despite its proven effectiveness, healthcare professionals emphasize the importance of responsible use. Sumatriptan is intended for the acute treatment of migraine attacks rather than long-term prevention. Frequent use of any acute migraine medication, including triptans, may contribute to medication-overuse headache, a condition in which headaches become more frequent because of excessive reliance on pain-relieving drugs. Therefore, patients experiencing recurrent migraine attacks should consult healthcare providers to determine whether preventive therapy may be more appropriate.

Today, more than thirty years after its introduction, sumatriptan remains one of the most extensively studied migraine medications in the world. Its efficacy has been demonstrated across numerous randomized clinical trials and supported by decades of real-world clinical experience. Although innovative therapies such as calcitonin gene-related peptide (CGRP) antagonists and monoclonal antibodies have expanded treatment options in recent years, sumatriptan continues to occupy a central place in international migraine management guidelines because of its rapid action, well-established safety profile, and widespread availability.

Understanding how sumatriptan works, when it should be used, and who can benefit from it enables both patients and healthcare professionals to make informed treatment decisions. As migraine research continues to evolve, sumatriptan remains one of the most important and reliable options for the acute treatment of migraine attacks, combining scientific innovation with proven clinical effectiveness.

Shavkatova Sarvinoz Bakhodir
Student, Tashkent State Medical University
Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan

Business leaders and policymakers urge Kenya's 7.4 million small enterprises to aim beyond survival

The third annual KEPSA SME conference brought together over 1,500 delegates to confront the structural barriers choking Kenyan enterprise growth

By: Diaspora Times Team
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Worth Noting:

- **The government signalled it was prepared to act. Speaking on behalf of Cabinet Secretary Wycliffe Oparanya, Principal Secretary for MSME Development Susan Mang'eni announced a package of interventions designed to move local enterprises into regional competitiveness, anchored by the World Bank-partnered Kenya Jobs and Economic Transformation project. Mang'eni also called on established corporate leaders to mentor entrepreneurs developed through state programmes such as NYOTA.**
- **"Formalisation should be a pathway to opportunity, supported by flexible policies, appropriate taxation and incentives that enable businesses to grow," she said.**
- **KEPSA chief executive Carole Kariuki reinforced that message, pointing to the alliance's nationwide programmes — among them the Ajira Digital Programme, the Kenya AI Skilling Alliance, and the MSME Financing Gateway — as evidence that enterprise support had moved beyond isolated gestures toward the construction of functioning ecosystems across all 47 counties.**

Kenya's most influential public and private sector voices converged in Nairobi on Thursday with a single, urgent message for the country's 7.4 million micro, small and medium enterprises: survival is no longer enough.

The third annual SME Conference, Awards and Exhibition, hosted by the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) at All Saints Cathedral Auditorium, drew more than 1,500 delegates under the theme "Beyond Survival: Building Smart and Resilient Businesses." Over two days, policymakers, financiers, development partners and entrepreneurs wrestled with the structural barriers — scarce credit, regulatory friction, limited market access — that continue to constrain enterprises which collectively employ roughly 15 million Kenyans and contribute an estimated 40 percent of gross domestic product.

The government signalled it was prepared to act. Speaking on behalf of Cabinet Secretary Wycliffe Oparanya, Principal Secretary for MSME Development Susan Mang'eni announced a package of interventions designed to move local enterprises into regional competitiveness, anchored by the World Bank-partnered Kenya Jobs and Economic Transformation project. Mang'eni also called on established corporate leaders to mentor entrepreneurs developed through state programmes such as NYOTA.

"Formalisation should be a pathway to opportunity, supported by flexible policies, appropriate taxation and incentives that enable businesses to grow," she said.

KEPSA chief executive Carole Kariuki reinforced that message, pointing to the alliance's nationwide programmes — among them the Ajira Digital Programme, the Kenya AI Skilling Alliance, and the MSME Financing Gateway — as evidence that enterprise support had moved beyond isolated gestures toward the construction of functioning ecosystems across all 47 counties.

Principal Secretary for MSME Development Susan Mang'eni

"We are building ecosystems where access to finance, market opportunities, skills and enterprise support reinforce one another to help businesses grow," Kariuki said.

Mary Ngechu, KEPSA's director for SMEs and startups, outlined what delegates could expect in practical terms: strategic masterclasses, digital exhibition catalogues, business advisory clinics, and an awards programme designed to surface and celebrate entrepreneurs solving real problems. "From the inaugural conference to this year's edition, the vision has grown," Ngechu said. "MSMEs are not just participants in the economy — they are the economy."

The financing dimension drew some of the sharpest attention. Equity Bank commercial director Kagiso Moloi placed a number on the problem — a KSh3 trillion MSME funding gap — and outlined how the bank intended to close part of it. Moloi said Equity accounted for 37 percent of MSME lending reported by the Kenya Bankers Association in the first quarter of 2026, and introduced unsecured working capital and local purchase order financing of up to KSh10 million per borrower, alongside port duty financing aimed at preventing supply chain delays.

"Finance alone is not enough," Moloi cautioned. "MSMEs need access to markets, technology and the right partnerships to grow. Our role is to connect these threads so that when a business is ready, everything is aligned to help it move from survival to sustainable growth."

Victor Oteku, country representative for the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Kenya office, used his address to press for an enabling regulatory environment built on social market economy principles — one that encourages voluntary formalisation, widens access to affordable finance, and supports the adoption of emerging technologies including artificial intelligence.

"MSMEs are creating livelihoods and offering hope to millions of young people and women," Oteku said. "We must build enterprises resilient enough to withstand uncertainty and contribute to a stronger economy and society."

The conference's centrepiece is Friday's third annual SME Awards, which will recognise 18 entrepreneurs across six innovation excellence categories — among them the Imara, Malkia, Binti Chipukizi and Biashara Green Innovation Awards — alongside eleven ecosystem enablers whose work in market access, innovation, sustainability and incubation has materially advanced MSME growth across Kenya.

The stakes of all of this are not abstract. Behind every statistic about GDP contribution and employment figures is a business owner navigating price shocks, bureaucratic friction and credit markets that too often turn them away. The collective ambition of Thursday's gathering was that, by Friday evening, fewer of those owners would have to navigate those challenges alone.