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HEROES OF CLIMATE ACTION

Climate Action

EDITION

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What is MIPAD?

The Most Influential People of African Descent (MIPAD) is a global civil society initiative in support of the United Nation's International Decade for People of African Descent.

The Decade, to be observed from 2015 to 2024, was proclaimed by the United Nations (General Assembly resolution 68/237), with the goal of strengthening national, regional and international action for the protection of human rights for people of African descent worldwide. The Decade also aims to promote greater knowledge of and respect for the contributions of people of African descent to societies.

*MIPAD identifies high achievers of African descent in Four (4) Categorizes:-
**Politics & Governance | Business & Entrepreneurship | Media & Culture and
Religious & Humanitarian** from all around the world as a progressive network of
relevant actors to join together in the spirit of recognition, justice and development.*



The International Decade for People of African Descent, proclaimed by General Assembly [resolution 68/237](#) and to be observed from 2015 to 2024, provides a solid framework for the United Nations, Member States, civil society and all other relevant actors to join together with people of African descent and take effective measures for the implementation of the programme of activities in the spirit of recognition, justice and development.

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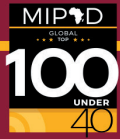
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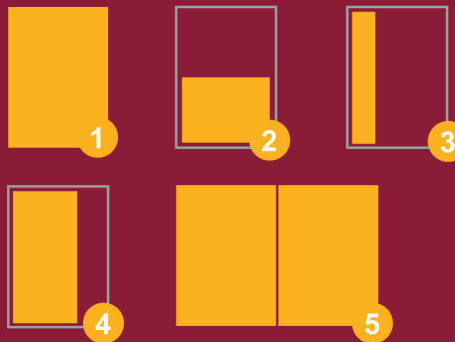
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Global airline group to launch carbon exchange platform to address climate change

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) is teaming up with a company to develop a carbon exchange platform where airlines, and passengers, can purchase offsets aimed at reducing the impact of air travel on the environment.



(XCHG), a commodity exchange company, will provide a common marketplace called Aviation Carbon Exchange for eligible emission units, the two organizations said in a joint statement on Thursday. International airlines are counting on a global carbon offsetting plan to cap CO₂ emissions from air travel at 2020 levels, mitigating the environmental impact of flying even as passenger traffic is forecast to

and Chief Operating Officer John Melby, who has worked with individual airlines and carbon markets for some time, told Reuters.

Commercial aviation is responsible for 2% of global carbon emissions and has been facing a growing backlash in Europe where a Swedish-born “flight shaming” movement has taken hold.

To achieve carbon-neutral growth

grow. The plan, known as Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA), is the first of its kind for a single industry in response to climate change. “We expect airlines from all over the world to participate,” XCHG President

after 2020, participating commercial airlines aim to substitute conventional fuel with more sustainable biofuels, but with biofuels costly and in limited supply, emissions may be offset by purchasing carbon credits from designated environmental projects around the world.

Those credits will be offered on the exchange, which enters a pilot phase in the current quarter. It will be powered by XCHG’s CBL Markets with real-time data, and airlines will pay a fee for each transaction.

The International Civil Aviation Organisation, the UN agency that ratified CORSIA, will determine which offsets from different environmental projects will be offered on the exchange.

CORSIA is expected to provide more than \$40 billion in funding for climate projects, and offset 2.6 billion tonnes of CO₂ emissions between 2021 and 2035.

Commercial airlines have also sought to reduce their carbon impact by using more fuel-efficient aircraft and finding more direct flight paths through improved air traffic control.

IATA represents some 290 airlines comprising 82% of global air traffic.

(Reporting by Tracy Rucinski; Editing by Chizu Nomiyama)

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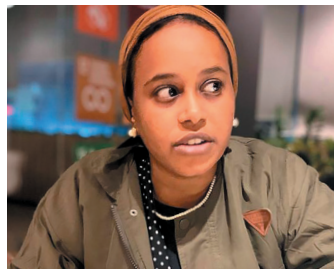
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AFRICA'S TOP ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE JOURNALISTS HONOURED AT CLIMATE CONFERENCE



“Diversity in the newsroom builds credibility, especially at a time when journalism is being called into question.”

By **Shravya Jain**

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New York Mayor Bill de Blasio began 2018 by pledging to divest the city's pension funds from fossil fuel investments and suing oil companies responsible for climate change. While major news outlets covered the announcement as a victory for de Blasio, his decision was, in large part, a response to a years-long campaign by environmental justice groups, whose members are overwhelmingly people of color. Though climate change has a disproportionate impact on low-

income Americans and communities of color, news outlets have long overlooked these groups in reporting on the issue. Part of the problem is a lack of diversity in newsrooms, which skews coverage of environmental disasters. During Hurricane Katrina and the Flint water crisis, for example, many outlets downplayed the impact these events each had on African-Americans or reinforced pernicious racial stereotypes. The good news is that times are changing. With the Trump administration's rollback of key environmental protections, environmental justice is becoming one

of the central issues for the climate movement and is increasingly showing up in the news. Nexus Media spoke with four leading black environmental reporters about diversity in the newsroom and environmental justice. The following conversations have been edited for length and clarity. Talia Buford Talia Buford writes for Pro Publica, covering environmental justice. She previously worked for the Center for Public Integrity, where she contributed to the seminal “Environmental Justice, Denied” series that highlighted the EPA's failure to protect vulnerable communities.

TALIA BUFORD

Talia Buford writes for Pro Publica, covering environmental justice. She previously worked for the Center for Public Integrity, where she contributed to the seminal “Environmental Justice, Denied” series that highlighted the EPA’s failure to protect vulnerable communities.



On diversity:

Diversity changes the way we tell stories: It’s not just about the sort of stories that get covered or the communities we cover. Having a diverse newsroom also changes the framework that we choose to tell those stories within.

When we began our environmental coverage as an industry, people weren’t the focus. We talked about acid rain and the hole in the ozone and what’s happening to polar bears, as opposed to the impact on poor or vulnerable communities. Having a different perspective in the newsroom is important because it reminds you that there are different ways to look at stories. Having people of color in the newsroom is important because it changes the conversation.

On the perspective of black reporters:

I think that black reporters and, really,

reporters of color, are more well-versed in intersectionality and the idea that nothing happens in a vacuum. We’re able to draw from our own experiences — or at least things we’ve heard of and understand from our communities — to piece together what the different implications could be in a way that may not be apparent to other reporters.

There can also be a sense of safety or comfort in communities. Sometimes, people are more comfortable talking to someone who looks like them and wants to hear their story, rather than someone who reminds them of people who have been dismissing them or giving their community false information. It’s not to say white reporters can’t do the same things, but a different perspective is always valuable.

On more reporters covering environmental justice:

It’s something that’s been happening. But I also want it to be such that I’m not necessary. I shouldn’t be the single reporter who focuses on environment, race and intersectionality. It should become something that’s ingrained in our coverage regardless of whether our main beat is environmental justice or not. But we’re not there yet. I do think a lot of news organizations are becoming more aware that we need to cover climate change in a different way, and you see the renewed awakening of civil rights coverage that is bleeding into other areas, like the environment.



VANN R. NEWKIRK II

Vann Newkirk is a staff writer at the Atlantic, where he covers politics and policy as it relates to civil rights. He has been following Puerto Rico’s struggle to rebuild after Hurricane Maria. His recent video, “Environmental Racism is the New Jim Crow,” has raised the profile of environmental justice.

On how growing up in North Carolina influenced his reporting:

I'm a Southerner. I grew up in a place where environmental justice was a big deal. My whole town was destroyed by floods in 1999. At that point, it was almost taken as an article of faith that certain communities would bounce back quicker than the others. It always sort of stuck with me — why did we accept that?

When I graduated from high school seven years later, there were still people in Edgecombe County who were suffering. My hometown, Rocky Mount, straddles two counties. One is about 70 percent black, and the other is about 50 percent black. The side of the town that had fewer white folks still had well water that was contaminated, still had people who had never been served. There were still FEMA trailers there, some of the first FEMA trailers we had in the United States.

On the changing environmental justice beat:

We're operating now in the post-Hurricane Katrina landscape when it has become much clearer how environmental justice is tied to policy. I also think that Hurricane Katrina was a really big deal for black activism and for Black Lives Matter. This really big moment is coinciding with more and more people understanding climate change and more people, according to the surveys, being concerned about it.

It has always been about race: who gets in and who's left out. If you tie in the climate change framework to that, you're going to see people of color living in communities that are marginalized day to day. They're the people [who are going] to suffer the first and worst. These are issues that can't be untied or detangled from each other.

But, we have a president who is promising an end to the climate regime, whose Department of Justice is promising a rollback of certain civil rights protections, who is promising more penal enforcement of drug laws. Those things all go hand in hand. Then, we have the EPA itself, which seems to have totally gone away from meeting environmental mandates, including environmental justice.

On the disconnect between environmental justice and climate change:

I think it's the bigger climate groups who are treating environmental justice as a secondary or a tertiary concern. [To them, environmental justice] may intersect with climate but is not totally a climate issue. What I've seen through my reporting is that climate change is always part of the concerns of environmental justice groups and people of color. The first stirrings of climate change — writing about it and thinking about it — came from what might be called the environmental justice communities. You had the folks in the islands who were noticing sea-level rise decades before it became a modern, household term. There are black farmers who noticed that their lands were becoming more arid. People on the margins have always known about climate change because that's where the climate is changing.



JUSTIN WORLAND

Justin Worland covers energy and climate for TIME. He has written extensively on China's energy policy, the rise of renewables and the Trump administration's work to dismantle federal climate protections.

On diversity:

There are a lot of obvious reasons why diversity is important in any organization. It brings new perspectives in a way that's productive everywhere. That's amplified in a newsroom, where journalists are required to interact with lots of different things, lots of different people, and be responsible about that.

I also believe that diversity in the newsroom builds credibility, especially at a time when journalism is being called into question in some places.

On the disproportionate impact of climate change:

Climate change will hit people of color and black America harder than elsewhere. You can look at any climate impact, really, and the situation is consistent. Take extreme heat. People of color often live in urban areas, where the heat island effect is worse. Or, you could look at the fact that communities of color tend to be in areas that flood more. If you look at environmental justice specifically, and the civil rights issues that communities of color and minority communities face, they are very closely linked.



BRENTIN MOCK

Brentin Mock is a staff writer at CityLab where he reports on justice. In the wake of last year's hurricanes, Brentin explored how discriminatory policies force communities of color to live in dangerous locations. He has also written about the connection between environmental injustice and police violence.

On environmental racism in black America:

The issue of climate change itself is yet another exacerbation of the kind of quality of life — and even life-and-death — issues confronting African-Americans throughout the entire history of being in America. These are basically borne out of racial segregation. Everything starts first with slavery, and then also with racial segregation, which took away the choice of where black people could live post-slavery.

We couldn't live where we wanted to live, and the places where we were told we could live were often the places that were least desirable. They were often the most dangerous places and those places that posed the highest risk to public, financial and even mental health.

Even before climate change started to really impact lives, there always have been the environmental justice burdens of living in the most polluted zip codes and in areas with fewer financial and economic

opportunities. These communities have the worst schools. They have the least amount of investment.

So, climate change takes those issues of racial segregation and takes those people who have been made vulnerable, and it just adds another risk to their lives. In fact, climate change is one of the most threatening factors because its impacts could be final. They could destroy your home, business or your neighborhood. They could definitely take your life, whether that's through the urban heat island or floods.

On the importance of different perspectives: Diversity is important because you need a multiplicity of perspectives in the news. For example, not everyone looks at climate change from the same perspective, and neither does climate change impact everyone the same or even equally. For some people, the biggest threat of climate change might be the destruction of certain plant or animal habitats. And while that's important, that won't be striking the same kind of way as somebody who, for example, lives in a floodplain zone and whose very own human life may be endangered because of their vulnerability to a possible flood.

The people living in the most at-risk areas are often people of color and people with low income. And if you don't have a diversity of reporters or writers who can kind of represent all of these various perspectives, then you are doing a disservice to your readers, because they are not getting the whole picture.

AFRICA'S TOP ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE JOURNALISTS HONoured AT CLIMATE CONFERENCE

The overall winner of the African Climate Change and Environmental Reporting (ACCER) Awards was Ethiopian Demis Mekuriyaw, who was praised by the judges for outstanding coverage of environmental issues in his country.

"Mekuriyaw is a highly organized and efficient journalist, whose thorough and precise approach to projects has yielded excellent results. He went out of his way on a shoe-string budget to report on climate change and environmental issues affecting his country," the judges said.

He works for Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation.

"I'm elated to be honoured for simply doing my job. I really am grateful and I pledge to continue to do my best in investigating and reporting environmental challenges in my country and elsewhere," said Mekuriyaw.

The ACCER awards are meant to encourage journalists on the continent and their media houses to cover the environment issues.

Guest of honour, Kenya's Environment and Forestry Chief Administrative Secretary, Muhamed Elmi, said climate and environmental issues were too important to be left to politicians alone.

"I will continue to say it again and again that climate change will deal with us if we do not deal with it," he said. "This is where our journalists come in. We also need to put in place incentives for media houses to support their journalists who cover the environment otherwise the journalists will do their work but their newsrooms will not publish. This subject is too important to be left to governments and politicians alone."

Mithika Mwenda, Secretary General of the PanAfrican Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA), which organized the

awards and CCDA-VII in partnership with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Kenyan government, said PACJA was happy with the response of environmental journalists from across the continent though more still needed to be done.

"We have seen over the years that environment and climate change issues are relegated in terms of news with politics taking centre stage. In this world with multiple problems competing for attention, climate change and environmental destruction, the root causes of global problems hardly receive priority so we hope the awards will make a difference. We are seeing the difference," he said.

James Murombedzi, Officer in Charge of the Economic Commission for Africa's African Climate Policy Center (ACPC), challenged the Environmental Journalists to write their stories in local African languages for maximum impact.

"There are many words that are used that we do not even have in our languages on the continent and the challenge is upon you as journalists to coin the words and the language that our people can understand in the discourse aimed at forging a collective effort to curtail

climate change, reduce poverty and ensure sustainable and equitable development is attained on the continent," he said.

Representatives from the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank also spoke and pledged to support the continent's environmental journalists to increase their capacity, understanding of science and related issues, working with the ECA, PACJA and other partners.

PACJA hosted a three-day training workshop for Africa's environmental and climate journalists ahead of CCDA-VII in a bid to build their capacity on climate and environmental issues; to build a critical mass of African journalists with a special focus on climate and the environment; to simplify and demystify the jargon used; and create a platform where journalists and other stakeholders can interact.

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Delta is going carbon neutral

The company will cancel out emissions in the air and on the ground

By Justine Calma

One of the biggest airlines in the world, Delta, has just committed to going carbon neutral. Its pledge — to cancel out all of the greenhouse gas emissions it produces — is one of the most ambitious climate commitments ever made by an airline.

Delta will spend \$1 billion over the next 10 years to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions and invest in ways to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Starting next month, the airline will work toward canceling out emissions from its flights and ground operations.

The new commitment builds on previous efforts by Delta and other airlines to meet consumers' growing worries about how flights are disproportionately helping to heat up the planet. A roundtrip flight from London to New York City generates as much carbon dioxide as a single individual might put out over the course of a year in 56 different countries, according to an analysis by The Guardian.

"We don't ever want to put customers in a position between having to choose a great travel experience, versus the impact they have on our planet," Delta CEO Ed Bastian said in a video

announcement.

"We don't ever want to put customers in a position between having to choose a great travel experience, versus the impact they have on our planet," Delta CEO Ed Bastian said in a video announcement.

Right now, about 2 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions come from aviation. But that number is expected to grow rapidly unless airlines take measures to shrink their carbon footprint. Greenhouse gases coming from aviation have jumped by nearly a third in the past five years alone, according to a report by the nonprofit International Council on Clean Transportation. Global aviation emissions have been forecast to triple by 2050.

Delta emits around 40 million metric tons of carbon dioxide annually, roughly equivalent to a year's worth of emissions from about 10 coal-fired power plants. The company has worked to cap it at that level since 2012; 98 percent of Delta's carbon dioxide pollution comes from its aircraft, which the company says is its "largest environmental impact." So it wants to update its fleet with more efficient planes, and it's looking into powering them with biofuels. For CES this year, Delta also offset the emissions from all of its flights to and from Las Vegas.

Following the heels of companies like Microsoft, Delta is also expressing more interest in carbon capture and removal rather than relying only on offsets to cancel out its remaining carbon footprint. Though it hasn't released many details yet, Delta said it will invest in negative emissions technologies that pull carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere. It's also considering ways to sequester carbon through nature-based solutions like forestry, wetland restoration, and grassland conservation.

One avenue Delta doesn't seem to be going down just yet is electric-powered flight. "I don't ever see a future that we're eliminating jet fuel from our footprint," Bastian said in an interview with CNBC. The technology for commercial flight is potentially still decades away — the batteries are too heavy — but an all-electric seaplane took off for the first time in British Columbia last December.

JetBlue announced in January that it would make all of its domestic flights carbon neutral starting in July. At the time, it was the biggest carbon neutral commitment from a US airline. Delta's announcement signals that more dominoes may be falling when it comes to airlines taking efforts to make their businesses more sustainable.

Lumi a new currency using the Sun as a Commodity.

Eloïne Barry

CEO, African Media Agency

The new currency on the block is unexpectedly from a tiny village in Western Jamaica, Accompong. Announcing the introduction of the Lumi, Accompong's Finance Minister Timothy McPherson is leading from the front and opening new pathways in Africa for a currency that is pegged against Africa's biggest resource which is renewable energy.

Explaining the innovative currency, he said that "We recognised that given the reality for climate change, the opportunity for Africa and its future economic development as well as the Caribbean and Latin America resides within embracing the reality for climate change and taking a leadership role and that should be based on renewable energy."

The most important factor determining the price of currency is either market forces of demand and supply or pegging it against other currencies performances. In this case, the Lumi draws on the future demand and supply for renewable energy, and in this case, solar energy.

Climatically, the sun shines brightest in Africa and as McPherson elucidates: "The financial engineering behind the Lumi recognises the way in which our ancestors, in colonial times and pre-colonial times, always took a leadership role in creating their own mechanisms for monetary exchange whether bartering, cowrie shells, copper plates or gold."

A conventional banker by day and experience, McPherson is an innovator and a financial visionary. This new currency is set to make waves especially in Africa with the renewed focus on a Pan-African vision that draws on Africa's pre-colonial past.

McPherson's focus is on striving for the achievement of the sustainable development goals critical for Africa's future. Drawing on his experience in Accompong, he is set to introduce the concept of the Lumi to the rest of Africa.

The success of this new currency could become a model especially for developing and underdeveloped countries. It does signal that the centre for financial innovation can derive from a small village called Accompong.



Fostering Sustainable Energy in Africa through Innovative Financial Architecture

Honorable Timothy E. McPherson Jr.

Minister of Finance, Accompong Jamaica

In a tiny village in Western Jamaica, the African 'maroon' community is taking on a mammoth task and adopting an entirely new monetary system.

While the village is relatively unknown, Accompong is semi-independent and has been described as "a nation within a nation". And while the rest of Jamaica falls under North America, Accompong is a little piece of Africa with a profoundly deep history of defying the norms. Founded in 1739 after rebel slaves and their descendants fought a protracted war with the British, the runaway Maroon slaves signed a peace treaty with the British to gain semi-sovereignty over the area.

With no taxes, no police or crime and a miniscule population of just 1000, creating an entirely new monetary system seems daunting. But with Accompong Finance Minister Timothy McPherson at the helm, the village is breaking barriers and may just lead the way for the African Union (AU) to challenge commonplace notions of currency.

"On the one hand, there is a massive need for energy and on the other hand, conventional financial instruments cannot facilitate those needs so there needs to be a change," he says.

McPherson has his eyes set on creating "a dynamic, sound and comprehensive new monetary system". The idea is to tap into Africa's biggest resource – renewable energy.

Prompt and forthright, McPherson is a powerful force in the global fast-paced world of finance. He is ensuring that his impressive record of 15 years of global experience as a leading financial engineer, investment banking change management advisor, and financial communications expert puts Accompong on the map.

Embarking on creating a new currency based on solar energy is Accompong's next great battle.

Finance Ministers are generally renowned for grandiose statements about boosting economic growth and the alignment of robust economies with the wellbeing of a country. In the case of McPherson, his impressive CV matches his bold plans for Accompong which has at the centre a bid to solve the twin challenges of Africa's abundant (and untapped) resources and climate change.

"I have a fairly predictable if not conventional background when it comes to finance," says McPherson quite coolly.

Despite that statement, his approach to bolstering Accompong's economy is anything but conventional.

"We recognised that given the reality for climate change, the opportunity for Africa and its future economic development as well as the Caribbean and Latin America resides within embracing the reality for climate change and taking a leadership role and that should be based on renewable energy," he says.

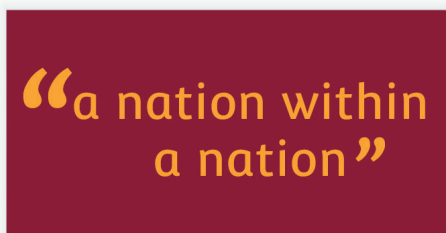
For the Finance Minister in trying to make a name for his village, it comes to the ultimate question, how do you finance that?

"A dear friend of mine Cardinal Peter Turkson from the Vatican said one of the focal points should be a climate change imitative," he begins.

It sounds like a Dan Brown novel with a postcolonial twist as he explains the seemingly fantastical reasons for creating a new currency.

"Africa has a dearth of energy," he explains. "If we're going to have a 21st century Pan-Africanism and we accept that the economy is the sphere for engagement for that Pan-Africanism, what is our commonality? And our greatest commonality is of course the sun that shines 365 days a year."

McPherson barely contains his excitement as he explains the emergence of the 'Lumi', a new currency based on solar energy. The goal is to create a Pan-African currency and find solutions that work for Africa.



“a nation within a nation”

The concept is to have a currency that is universally understood, that will not change significantly over time, and whose liquidity will always meet market expectations. It's not a completely novel idea and has already been achieved

with the gold standard. What is novel, is the focus on solar energy rather than traditional understandings of commodities. Utilising energy, which is understood by all, the Lumi will have parity with kilo-watt hours. Given our future demands for energy, the value could be higher than our traditional commodities like gold and silver.

"The financial engineering behind the Lumi recognises the way in which our ancestors, in colonial times and pre-colonial times, always took a leadership role in creating their own mechanisms for monetary exchange whether bartering, cowrie shells, copper plates or gold."

Unlike other currencies like the dollar or the euro, the Lumi is not a Fiat currency with a value backed by the government that issued it. Instead, the value of the Lumi is underpinned by energy making it commodity money. The rising importance of sustainable development goals like ensuring affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all creates the perfect environment for a currency pegged against solar energy.

“And in the 21st century, where renewable energy literally lets us harvest the energy in the sun, we recognise that gold isn't our greatest commodity, diamonds aren't our greatest commodity. Rather the sun is our greatest commodity,” he explains excitedly. “How do you take the sun and convert it into our greatest asset? The lumi is a manifestation of that,” says McPherson.

His initiative is ready to take wings. McPherson launched the Lumi at the start of October and in November, representatives from the African Union will visit Accompong to see if the Lumi could work in the rest of Africa.

“We're the oldest African peoples in the area and we want engage the continent wholeheartedly on an economic, and sociological point of view,” he says.

“Until Western powers sign off on structures, African leaders are reluctant to get on board because it hasn't run in a Western economy. I want to challenge that.”

As the Lumi enters the currency circles, the power that could be elicited for Africa is immense. It changes the discourse of currency and could see Africa on the front foot as it leads and creates new frontiers.



“...creating a new currency based on solar energy is Accompong's next great battle.”



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