

*Unleashed: A New Paradigm of African Trade  
with the World*

by John I. Akhile, Sr.

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Media Kit

2015

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# CONTENTS

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## Media Kit

<u>Letter from the Author</u> .....	3
<u>Online Presence and Outreach</u> .....	4
<u>Audience</u> .....	5
<u>Goals of <i>Unleashed</i></u> .....	6
<u>Why Buy or Read <i>Unleashed</i>?</u> .....	7
<u>About the Author</u> .....	10
<u>Contact Information</u> .....	11

Reviews and Quotes for <i>Unleashed</i> .....	13
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List of Reviewers and Endorsers .....	15
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Interview with IRIS Executive Magazine ....	19
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## Letter from the Author —

### A seminal opportunity to effect change for hundreds of millions of people

I am very excited about the change that will take place in African countries if the ideas suggested in *Unleashed* get to see the light of day. I hope that after reading the information presented here, you will become excited as well and want to contribute to the process. An opportunity to engage in an endeavor which has the potential of impacting millions of human beings is rare. I believe the message of the narrative of *Unleashed*, if properly disseminated, will transform how many African governments do business, and that transformation will unleash the potential of hundreds of millions of people in the countries of Africa.

*Unleashed* is a treatise on the challenge of economic development in African countries which proffers specific initiatives for reversing the widely held negative prognosis for the countries of these nations. If the genie of ideas releases a formula that will begin transformational change in the economic prospects of the countries of Africa, it is safe to say that the accretive value will be felt not only by African nations but will in fact, reverberate throughout the world. The idea of *Unleashed* derives from a fundamental belief that most of the suffering of the average African is unnecessary and due largely to competitive ineptitude of African governments. The nexus of this competitive ineptitude and derivative poverty is centered on the leaders' inability to unleash the potential of their countries using the resources at their disposal. In *Unleashed*, I have used the example of the "Asian Tigers" in a manner not previously addressed comprehensively. I rifled out statistics which support the inevitable conclusion that what they did worked and unearthed the underlying attitudes and intensity that drove the process, which enabled the success of each "Asian Tiger" economy. I outlined strategies, which governments can deploy unilaterally to engender an economic transformation that is based on the resources at their disposal, which happens to be—a fairly significant foundation of agricultural and mineral raw materials and low-cost labor. Using these two resources, African countries can evolve a competitive engine and transform the continent within a decade.

*Unleashed* also touches on some controversial issues, like the destructive NGOs and their double-edged sword fundraising. *Unleashed* puts the onus for development on African people, charging them to take back control of their countries and raise their citizens from poverty, using common sense approaches with proven success records.

As I stated before, I hope to interest you in this project. Accordingly, I encourage your involvement in a ground swell of people power to bring about long-overdue changes in how African affairs are managed. Everyone, including you, can and should do something. Join this crusade for change. I hope I have made a case that the message in *Unleashed* can unleash the potential of millions of Africans and liberate them from unnecessary poverty and hopefully, is deserving of your attention.

Best Wishes,  
John I. Akhile, Sr.

## Website: [www.unleashafricantrade.com](http://www.unleashafricantrade.com)

The website is centered on the literary component of the strategy. It is being developed as an interactive site with a guest blogger feature that will include posts from African diaspora, videos of prominent voices and issues in the African experience, with feedback commenting from readers and guests, among others. Below are some statistics from the past year.

### Visitors

**66.2 %**

Returning visitors

**33.8 %**

New Visitors

### Pageviews

**32,886** with our viewers visiting 2.5 pages on average per visit

### Countries

**127** representing every continent except Antarctica

## Social Media Connections



**6,404**

Page Likes



**500+**

Connections &

**7,973**

Followers



**1,918**

Followers



**25**

Videos &

**167**

Subscribers

## Outreach Efforts

### Traditional Media:

Through radio, television, and print, we will engage media in every relevant forum in media centers around the world with particular emphasis on media opportunities in every African country and in all the Western nations.

### Social Media:

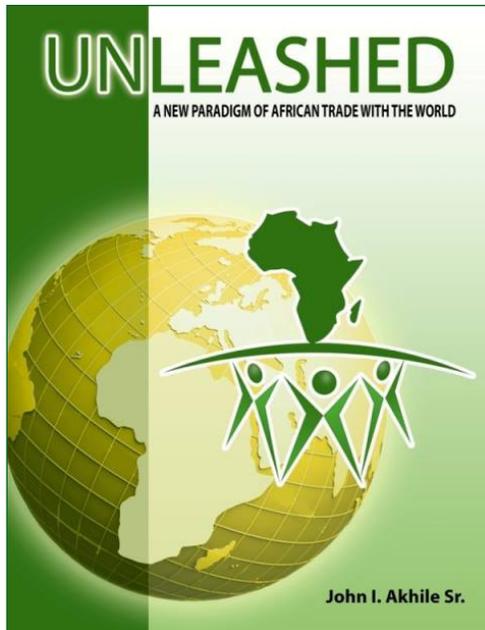
The social media campaign will employ blogging, guest commenting, street and personality interviews in all the relevant social media forums in the world. The personality interviews will be posted on the website to publicize principals who are making a difference in the African experience but also to shine light on the “fierce urgency of now” in that experience.



## Audience

Although *Unleashed* focuses on the African continent, it is also a work that discusses Africa's relationship with the global market, and so it is fitting that our audience is also an international one. We are reaching out to the following groups across the world, while focusing heavily on Africa, the U.S., Western Europe, Asia, and China:

- **Multilateral Organizations:** heads and senior operatives of Africa-based multilateral organizations such as ADB, AU, ECOWAS, SADC, CEEAC, CEMAC, etc.
- **Public Sector:** Department heads; Decision-making Management; Ministers and Ministerial Staff in the government of every African country in addition to the Senior Management of companies doing business, or aspiring to do, in African countries
- **Private Sector:** Board members of public operations, CEOs, CFOs, Management-level personnel; Members of Trade Organizations like the Chambers of Commerce; small African business owners and local entrepreneurs; Fund Managers with Africa portfolio, and International Trade companies that buy goods and services in African countries
- **Specific Department heads of Non-African public sector that have significant trade interests in African countries:** i.e. France, Great Britain, Germany, Greece, Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Italy, U.S., China, Brazil, and Japan
- **Philanthropic Groups:** Senior managers and leaders of NGOs, charity organizations and other non-profits with significant operative presence in African countries
- **African Diaspora community:** Individuals with heritage-linked emotional ties to African countries
- **Non-Africans:** There are many people in the West and around the world with emotional ties to African countries who are very supportive of measures to bring change to the countries of the continent.
- **Libraries and Universities:** There are over 120,000 libraries in the U.S. alone, which includes public, school, university, and government libraries. There are countless universities even in the U.S. with business programs, and Africa-centric programs which could potentially use *Unleashed* as a textbook. We can also expand to foreign libraries and universities.



“The indictment of foreign aid and nongovernmental organizations is well-developed, as is Akhile’s prescription for developing a viable export-driven economic base that goes beyond the raw materials that African countries have tended to rely on. Although readers who prefer a broader approach to development may find the book limited in its strictly economic focus—the political repression that accompanied growth in Taiwan and Singapore is not mentioned—they will likely find it a useful tool for the aspects of growth it does address. Frequent citations and a detailed list of sources add to the solidity of Akhile’s study and situate the book within the context of other examinations of economic development and prescriptions for growth.”

--Kirkus Reviews

## About *Unleashed: A New Paradigm of African Trade with the World*

The book has taken a holistic view about the issues that directly and indirectly bear on the ability of African nations to evolve strategies and mechanisms for transcendent economic growth. It takes a look back in history to review the mechanisms with which Europeans plundered the material and human resources of the people of Africa. Drawing on examples of the Asian Tigers’ paths to successful economies and prosperous societies, *Unleashed* looks into the deficiencies in both the governance apparatus of African countries as well the human shortcomings of the leaders of African countries which directly bear on poor policy prescriptions and follow through in most if not all the countries. It makes tangible suggestions for new institutions and policies that will unleash the inherent potential of African countries and create permanent successes.

### Goals of *Unleashed*

- To affect change in the attitudes and inclination of people who are currently governing and who aspire to govern African peoples in the future to become driven by the need to serve rather than the need to profit from their service.
- To communicate in a manner which will compel “decisioniers” to take action and implement ideas that have been successful in similar situations facing African countries in order to engender economic and social transformation to free hundreds of millions of people from the scourge of debilitating impoverishment.
- To open up a pipeline of information that will permeate the grassroots of African voters and empower them with information with which they can properly measure their leaders.
- To agitate for a transformational shift in global attitudes towards the African condition by by-passing the filter of mainstream editors and media to disseminate the reality of African countries and people.
- To engage the global community by bringing a new progressive demand-support dynamic into the aid support structure in the home of NGOs.
- To unleash the potential of hundreds of millions of Africans and free them to create their own prosperous societies.

# Why buy or read *Unleashed: A New Paradigm of African Trade with the World*?

*Unleashed* propounds answers to the issue of unnecessary poverty in African countries by suggesting specific tried and tested ideas and institutional structures that will enable sustainable economic development in every African country.

## *Unleashed* is relevant

Every African country can find itself in *Unleashed*, because it sketches the challenges most—if not all—African countries have experienced since the dawn of Euro-militaristic-economic-entrepreneurial mercantilism and their struggle since that encounter to cope, respond, and find their own footing. In addition, the millions of business people, activists, NGO community and government agencies who are interested in African countries can also find their voice for or against one or more contestable ideas in *Unleashed*.

## *Unleashed* will work

The most compelling reasoning of the treatise is to make success a function of what African leaders do within their borders as opposed to what others can help them to do. The ideas in *Unleashed* can be implemented by any country and any government regardless of the prevailing financial condition, physical and population size, or material endowment of the country and are based on case studies which have been proven successful. The most important reason this book will work to create positive change is that the Ideas in *Unleashed* are practical and useable in many ways:

1. African leaders will find it difficult to avoid questions about implementing many simple and practical yet profoundly functional, and proven ideas in *Unleashed* that include specific, implementable ways in which African countries can build competitive and productive economies and evolve prosperous societies.
2. *Unleashed* discusses how to engender an environment in which the business of manufacturing or producing value added goods for export will not only thrive but in fact become the pre-eminent choice of business startups for businesses and entrepreneurs.
3. Countries can transform into a veritable magnet for entrepreneurship; by introducing business incentives, administrative reforms and vigorous information dissemination, which will make them an ideal place to establish and conduct business for indigenes and foreigners alike.
4. *Unleashed* implores African leaders to accomplish the most basic imperative of their mandate, which is to work hard to find, develop, and implement practical solutions to all the problems plaguing the proper functioning of society—including public service delivery, corruption, sanitation and esthetics in their countries, etc.

***Unleashed* serves three main functions pertaining to “Brand Africa”** —the image and perception of anything about Africa and its countries in the world.

- Examines the challenges posed by countervailing forces against development masquerading as help, such as: NGOs, nonprofits and volunteer organizations which populate African countries and feed into Brand Africa by profusely disseminated negative messaging in their home countries.
- Discusses the challenges posed by the “do-gooder” community and how to both manage the inevitability of some NGO activity as well as addressing the need to reduce the areas in which nonprofits operate in African countries through a dual prong of localized (needs) assessment and a centralized comprehensive initiative of the African Union.
- Discusses how African countries, through a continental and nation-specific strategy can begin to address centuries of brand-defilement and restorative brand-enhancement, in order to begin to degrade the negative stigma attached to Brand Africa and engineer a replacement reality and regenerative perception in the 21st Century global market.



## ***Unleashed* discusses institutional changes regarding:**

“Competitive ineptitude” refers to an unwillingness of African leaders to take the necessary steps to mix it up with the outside world and compete for their share of global prosperity.

The importance of African countries adopting similar institutions to the ones that helped to structure, define and hone the competitive edge of the Asian Tiger’s export-led industrialization, the most important of which is the organization responsible for promoting exports.

Introducing new institutions to radically transform the competitive environment in African countries. An important institution outlined in *Unleashed* is one that will take the lead in teaching indigenous businesses how to do business in developed countries by analyzing the Japan External Trade Organization, the original template for the concept which has since been copied by every single “Asia Tiger,” and has been invaluable in helping their exporters to secure market share.

## *Unleashed* mirrors the Asian Tigers

- The narrative is anchored in the tools that enabled the leaders of the “Tiger” economies of Asia to accomplish the economic miracles, in order to enable people to enter into the chambers of the minds of the “Asian Tigers” driving personalities, absorbing the spirit of their actions and hopefully become empowered to act.
- The “Asian Tigers” mirror for African countries includes narratives which highlight the determination and resolve of the personalities that created the ideas and engineered the process leading to economic success for the countries. They include Park Tae-joon of South Korea and Dr. Goh Keng Swee as well as Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore.
- One of the salient points of the “Asian Tigers” mirror is that the ideas were not original after Japan. Each “Tiger” economy copied what they saw had been successful for Japan. The idea behind using the “Asian Tigers” as a “mirror” is to communicate and drive home the fact that each “Asian Tiger” copied the road map to success from Japan’s own earlier triumph; and by adopting the tangible reality as well as the intangible spirit of the same blueprint, African countries will attract the same prosperity.

## *Beyond Unleashed: An agenda for change*

*Unleashed* is just the first step on the agenda for change and in the creation of an organization which will use market initiatives including literary works, innovative services, and social media to vigorously agitate the socio-economic-political sub-structure of African countries. Overall, it is a three-step process with the primary aim to contribute to positive catalytic change in African countries in this generation. Change that will unleash the potential of the people of African countries, and bring relief to hundreds of millions of individuals trapped in a mega-structure of bad governance, devoid of real opportunities and subsisting in abject and desperate poverty.

The second step of this project is establishing a company to broker industrial plants and machinery in African countries.

The third step will then be to develop “voiceofafricans.com,” a social media site that will connect people of the African diaspora as well as non-Africans to engage in friendship, community, business, and social relationships and, above all, political agitation. The site will serve two purposes:

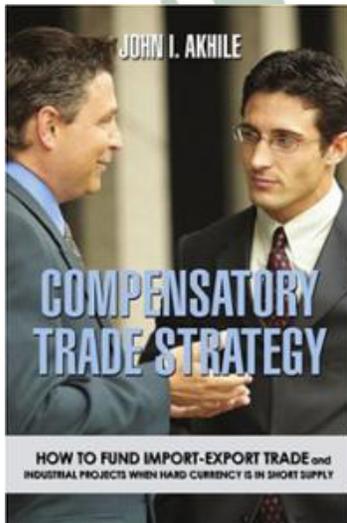
- A social and relationships environment where people will meet other people and share their experiences and pictures similar to the Facebook experience.
- A town hall environment where people will meet people from their home country and around the world who want to organize and discuss issues of interest to them and also plan a mobilization for change within the country.



## About the Author

**John I. Akhile, Sr.** has varied entrepreneurial accomplishments in several fields. His range of interest includes international trade, real estate and restaurants, demonstrating his keen interest in international affairs and in the cultural underpinnings of society. In many respects he is a true “Renaissance” man. An avid reader with an insatiable desire to learn, he has a vast knowledge and command of diverse fields. However, his central passion has been the African continent, having concentrated on the issues hindering development and growth in African countries for more than three decades. It has led to two literary works.

At varying points along the way, Akhile has owned and run an international trade business, owned a multi-million dollar real estate portfolio comprised of 145 apartment units in Chicago Illinois, and was a partner with former Heavyweight Champion Evander Holyfield in a much publicized restaurant venture in Atlanta, Georgia. He is a natural entrepreneur and a firm advocate of the free enterprise economy. Akhile is a father of two.



*Compensatory Trade Strategy: How to Fund Import-Export Trade and Industrial Projects When Hard Currency is in Short Supply* was written to address the trade and industrial financing deficiencies hampering aggressive economic development in African countries using compensatory trade techniques such as Offsets, Direct Compensation and Evidence Accounts. As African countries embrace the importance of deploying all of the above strategy for development and intra-African trade, *Compensatory Trade Strategy* will be good reference for policy makers.

## Additional Information

The book is available to order on [www.unleashafricantrade.com](http://www.unleashafricantrade.com) for \$24.95 + shipping and handling, or \$7.95 for a downloadable eBook.

Advance Reader Copies are available electronically or physically. To request a copy, contact any of the people below.

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# Reviews and Endorsements

# Reviews and Quotes for *Unleashed: A New Paradigm of African Trade with the World*

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“A comprehensive strategy for encouraging economic development in African nations.

“In this business book, Akhile (Compensatory Trade Strategy, 2006) takes the reader on a detailed journey through the problems that have hampered economic development in much of Africa and the concrete steps that can overcome many of the hurdles. The analysis draws heavily on the contrasting success of the “Asian Tigers,” particularly Singapore, Japan and South Korea, as instances of successful economies in countries that were once under the control of Western nations.

“Akhile guides the reader through a history that may be unfamiliar to many, from the 19th-century Opium Wars to the 1961 assassination of Patrice Lumumba, connecting each element to his central theme of building vibrant and sustainable African economies. Numerous charts and tables provide data to back up Akhile’s analysis, but despite the number of illustrations, the text remains dense, with sentences like ‘Let us be unequivocally clear that while there is probably a very miniscule minority of altruistic-minded people involved in the charade of non-profits in African countries, the vast business enterprise of aid is not about how to help African people; rather it is to ensure the continued existence of the various and sundry organizations through ever competitive struggles for donations, government contracts and subsidies’ throughout. The indictment of foreign aid and nongovernmental organizations is well-developed, as is Akhile’s prescription for developing a viable export-driven economic base that goes beyond the raw materials that African countries have tended to rely on. Although readers who prefer a broader approach to development may find the book limited in its strictly economic focus—the political repression that accompanied growth in Taiwan and Singapore is not mentioned—they will likely find it a useful tool for the aspects of growth it does address. Frequent citations and a detailed list of sources add to the solidity of Akhile’s study and situate the book within the context of other examinations of economic development and prescriptions for growth.

“A thorough and well-reasoned, if wordy, exploration of the possibilities for economic growth in Africa.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

“John Akhile has written well and wisely about the need for responsible captains on the ship of state to sail across the political waters in a safe and just manner. *Unleashed: A New Paradigm of African Trade with the World* ups the ante to a higher and more demanding level. Do read this challenging book and weigh, judiciously, Akhile’s cogent and poignant arguments—the future of Africa hinges on hearing the insights of Akhile.”

—**Dr. Ron Dart, Professor of Political Science at the University of Fraser Valley, B.C. Columbia**

“At present, Africa accounts for a very minimal percentage of the world’s GDP with a share in global manufactured exports close to zero. This weak integration in the global economy is a result of the failure of most countries in Africa to become competitive trading partners in a broader range of economic activities worldwide. The economic, political and social premise of *Unleashed* is that the situation can and should be turned around, and the author sets a roadmap through which this transformation can be achieved.

“The book sets out a clear matrix of choices that can enable African countries to fashion better trade strategies in order to benefit from the current unequal global trade system. The author presents a historical narrative leading to the current economic situation in Africa where many countries were lulled into a false sense of security believing that they are well off due to the presence of abundant natural resources. As discussed by the author, the time to recalibrate how Africa trades with the global community has never been this ripe. The clarion call urging stakeholders to approach and subscribe to equal approaches to trade matters and to do so with enthusiasm and tact can only be achieved if they are better informed and aware. Few texts present practical and visionary lessons to help cultivate, harness, and realize the benefits of adopting effective trade strategies in Africa like *Unleashed*.

“African countries have the potential to become major competitors with other parts of the world in economic growth and industrial transformation through radical improvements in trade dependency. International trade plays a major part in developing national economies and strategies to improve this cannot be overlooked any more. *Unleashed* offers fresh paradigms to reinvigorate Africa’s trade interactions with the world and presents pertinent strategies for having an improved manufacturing-base that will enable the continent to be more export oriented. The development imperatives and resource requirements for building a stronger export oriented economy needs great emphasis on cheap and quality labor, technology and infrastructure, power in order to create international competitiveness in prices of goods and costs of production. As presented in the book, the presence of abundant natural resources and a land mass in Africa can ensure that there are cost reductions in trade flows and thus increasing Africa’s competitiveness in global trade.

“The book carefully analyses economic models pursued by other countries, specifically Asian economic policies which took a deliberate pursuit of export oriented industrialization and trade by broadening their industrial structure in order to raise their competitiveness. In this era of cut throat competition, Africa should therefore review and solve the challenges impeding strategic trade policies. The author carefully discusses these, especially with regard to promoting project development opportunities which are inclined to profit making and higher return on investment, providing capital security mechanisms that will in turn encourage capital migration and most of all developing a conducive business, political and social environment that attracts and retains investment.

“Economic diversification holds great potential to increase Africa’s resilience and would contribute to achieving and sustaining long term economic growth and development in the continent. However, the expansion of activities in underdeveloped sectors like trade, or indeed the development of new activities, is a significant challenge and requires a combined effort by African governments, the private sector and the international community. Through his arguments in the book, the author demonstrates his commitment to help African economies reap the benefits of larger domestic markets through a focus on developing manufacturing industries. John Akhile appreciates that among the various factors which have the potential to drive economic diversification, a country’s natural resources are of critical importance. Many African countries are blessed with a diverse array of natural resources and *Unleashed* provides a blueprint through

which additional value can be created from the resources mainly through focusing on developing export-oriented economies.

“The book also carefully points out the hindrances towards achieving the full potential of African economies particularly the suboptimal government management of resources and failure to maximize the gains from these resources to exploit other economic sectors. Their role in creating expanded markets for African products is particularly important for improved diversification in Africa, but this is complicated by market access issues and African capacity to take advantage of international business opportunities which the author urges concerned stakeholders to address.

“Whether in the government, private sector or academia, *Unleashed* offers invaluable insights on achieving Africa’s full economic potential. Progress has been made over the past few years, but a lot more needs to be done.”

—Mike Mina, International Affairs consultant and Managing Editor of IRIS Executive Magazine, an East African Business, Investment, and Management Magazine

## Endorsers and Reviewers of *Unleashed: A New Paradigm of African Trade with the World*

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*Unleashed: A New Paradigm of African Trade with the World* by John I. Akhile Sr. has attracted an impressive list of reviewers. We are proud to share the list of distinguished persons who have reviewed or endorsed *Unleashed* as well as those who are in the reviewing process. I think you will agree with us that the list is impressive and demonstrates the strength of the narrative of *Unleashed*.

(In Alphabetical Order)

**Lord Adusei Aikins**—*Modern Ghana* magazine columnist

**Dr. Edward Akuffo**—Department of Political Science, University of the Fraser Valley, Abbotsford, B.C.

PhD International Relations and Comparative Politics in Developing Countries—University of Alberta

MA International Relations—Brock University

BA Hons. Political Science with Linguistics—University of Ghana

**Ohene Baffour Awuah**—Consultant, Trans Africa Invest

Founder and Chief Operating Officer, ASBA Solutions, UK.

**Steve Bynum**—Producer and Host of Worldview, WBEZ, Chicago Public Radio

A senior producer for Worldview, WBEZ’s weekday global affairs program, Steve is responsible

for creating in-depth series, features, and outreach events that connect listeners to global communities in Chicago and around the world.

**Dr. Hubert Danso—CEO of Africa Investor**

**Dr. Ron Dart—Department of Political Science, University of the Fraser Valley, Abbotsford, BC**

Professor Dart has twenty-two books to his credit. Dr. Dart was on staff with Amnesty International before he joined UFV in 1990. Ron is the Political Science advisor to the Stephen Leacock Home/Museum, on the National Executive of the Thomas Merton Society of Canada, and he has written/published on George Grant, Stephen Leacock and Thomas Merton.

**Max Jarrett—Deputy Director, Africa Progress Panel**

Max Bankole Jarrett is the Deputy Director of the Africa Progress Panel. He has over twenty-three years of professional experience in the field of political and socio-economic affairs as an international broadcaster, writer and analyst in the media sector; and, as an Executive Office aide, speech writer and team leader in the United Nations system. His most recent duties as a UN officer included serving as an Adviser to the Executive Director of the Coalition for Dialogue on Africa (CoDA), a policy-oriented think tank that brings together a range of stakeholders to promote dialogue, and, provides a platform for African voices to be heard. Between 1990 and 2001 Max worked with the BBC World Service in London, editing, producing and presenting “Network Africa” and “Focus on Africa,” the BBC’s award winning daily current affairs radio programs for its African audience. During that period, he also wrote country analyses and reports for the Economist Intelligence Unit.

**Wanjohi Kabukuru—East African Correspondent, The New African**

Wanjohi Kabukuru is the Eastern African correspondent of New African the oldest English language, pan-African monthly magazine published in London and distributed in over 100 countries. He also writes on the environment and security affairs for Diplomat East Africa, the leading East African regional diplomatic affairs magazine. Prior to becoming an international journalist he was formerly an investigative reporter covering human rights and environmental justice for The People’s Daily in Kenya. Kabukuru contributes articles to Radio France International (RFI), the Mail and Guardian, Inter Press Service among other media entities. His coverage has won numerous awards, and he a former editor of Zwazo magazine in Seychelles. Kabukuru has presented papers in media conferences across the globe and is a member of several international professional media bodies.

**KIRKUS REVIEWS**

Founded in 1933, Kirkus has been an authoritative voice in book discovery for 80 years. Kirkus Reviews magazine gives industry professionals a sneak peek at the most notable books being published weeks before they’re released. When the books become available for purchase, Kirkus serves the book reviews to consumers in a weekly email newsletter and on Kirkus.com, giving readers unbiased, critical recommendations they can trust.

### **Francis Matambalya—Nordic Africa Initiative**

Senior Researcher & Professor at NAI since November 2010

Subject areas: International trade and economic diplomacy, including regional integration and development co-operation between the European Union (EU) and Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group of countries.

### **Mike Mina—Managing Editor, IRIS Executive Magazine**

Mike Mina is Co-Founder and Executive Editor of IRIS Executive, an East African Business and Human Resources Magazine distributed in Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda.

### **Desmond Mushi—Africa Leadership Academy**

Desmond Mushi joins African Leadership Academy's Economics and African Studies Departments from Kilimanjaro, in Tanzania. Desmond completed his undergraduate degree from Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, with a double-major in Economics, and African studies and a General Education Concentration in Applied Mathematical Methods. He wrote his Economics thesis on "Impact Assessment of Microfinance on Poverty Reduction – an Economic Model" as well as an honors thesis in African Studies titled, "Microfinance as an Ambivalence: Kilimanjaro Women Experiences With Capitalist Development."

### **Jenny Chika Okafor—President, Nigerian Women in Diaspora Leadership Forum**

Jenny is a devoted, self-motivated, committed, community spirited and inspirational mother, lawyer, charity worker, human, women, youths and children's rights advocate. Jenny is passionate about equality issues which promote and protect the physical, mental and moral integrity of all people regardless of their gender, background or circumstances in life. She believes in the sanctity of life. As part of her achievements, she has personally championed successful human rights campaigns and appeals. To many people who know her professionally, she is lawyer of great distinction. She is a valuable member of many community organizations and has succeeded in making valuable contributions and changes to the way of life of members of such organizations and her local community. Jenny has led and managed many grass root organizations. Through her exemplary leadership skills, she has influenced enduring changes which have shaped the future of the groups and their beneficiaries. She is now focused on leadership issues concerning women and young females.

### **Chido Onumah—Director, African Centre for Media & Information Literacy**

Chido Onumah is a Nigerian journalist, based in Abuja. He has worked as a journalist in Nigeria, Ghana, Canada, and India. He has been involved for more than a decade in media training for professional journalists as well as promoting media and information literacy in Africa. He is currently coordinator of the African Centre for Media & Information Literacy (AFRICMIL), Abuja, Nigeria. AFRICMIL is a pan-African centre dedicated to a new vision of media and information literacy in Africa. From 2002 to 2004, Onumah worked as Director of Africa

programs at the Panos Institute in Washington, DC, helping journalists in West Africa, as well as the Caribbean, report in depth on issues that are frequently underreported or misreported — issues such as HIV/AIDS, environmental degradation, and ethnic and religious conflicts. Onumah was educated at the University of Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria, as well as the University of Western Ontario, Ontario, Canada, where he earned an MA in journalism. He was associate editor of Weekly Insight newspaper, and assistant editor of African Agenda magazine both in Accra, Ghana. He served as coordinator, West African Human Rights Committee, Accra, Ghana, and correspondent for African Observer magazine, New York, and AfricaNews Service, Nairobi, Kenya.

### **James Shikwati**—CEO, *The African Executive*

James Shikwati is a Kenyan libertarian economist and Director of the Inter Region Economic Network who promotes freedom of trade as the driving solution to poverty in Africa. He has made comments which imply that aid towards Africa does more harm than good to their people, based on the central arguments that it is mainly used either by politicians as a tool to manipulate people and influence votes, or as a mechanism for dumping subsidized foreign agricultural products onto local markets at below cost making it nearly impossible for African farmers to compete. He was named a Young Global Leader 2008 by the Forum of Young Global Leaders, an affiliate of the World Economic Forum based in Geneva, Switzerland. James Shikwati who was recently ranked among the top 100 most influential Kenyans by The Standard Group (a leading Kenyan media house) also runs IREN, a think tank that was ranked among the Top Go-To Think Tanks in the World by the Think Tanks in Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) for bridging the gap between knowledge and policy. Shikwati facilitates numerous workshops for high schools, Universities, journalists, farmers, policy makers and think tanks (among others) to inculcate entrepreneurship, market economics dynamics, awareness on topical issues, inform policy and attract investment. Shikwati has been published in both local and international newspapers and magazines such as The Times, The Guardian, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, The Sydney Herald, Der Spiegel, Daily Nation, Daily Monitor and The East African Standard among others. Shikwati is one of 245 leading executives, public figures and intellectuals – all age 40 or younger – chosen from around the world

### **Danielle Walker**—Africa Business Initiative, U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Danielle Walker has worked at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce since 2005. She currently manages the day-to-day operations of the Chamber's Africa Business Initiative (ABI), which is the business community's leading advocacy group aimed at strengthening U.S.-Africa trade relations. She works closely with Chamber member companies, business coalitions, AmChams, government leaders, and business executives to achieve their business objectives in this complex part of the world. Walker played an integral role in the establishment of the two bi-lateral business councils that operate under the aegis of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Africa Business Initiative—the U.S. Côte d'Ivoire Business Council and the U.S.-South Africa Business Council. She serves as executive director of the U.S.-Côte d'Ivoire Business Council and is a part of the leadership team managing the U.S.-South Africa Business Council.



# Interview with *IRIS* *Executive Magazine*

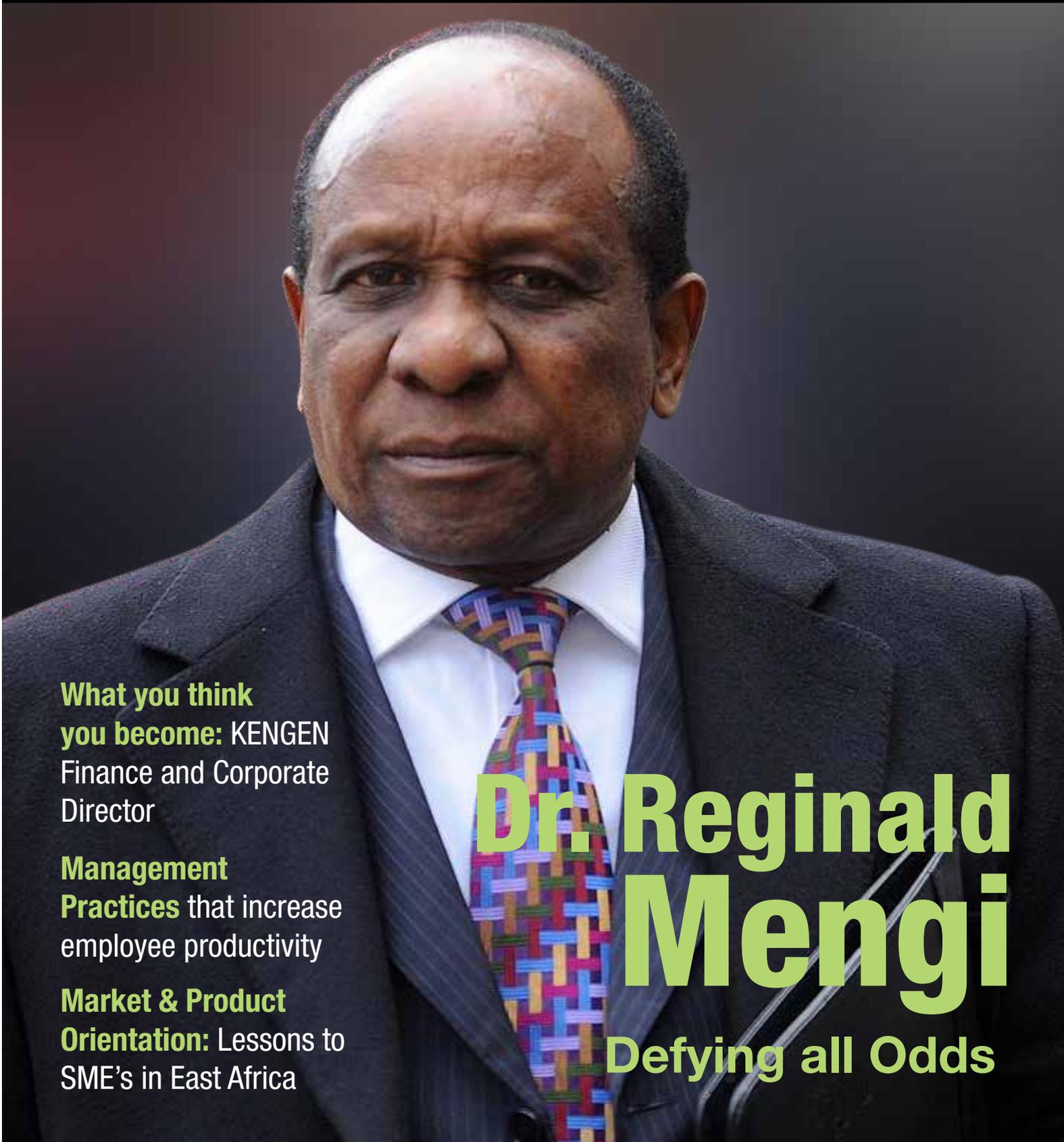
IRIS

# Executive

May-June 2014

Tsh: 5000 | Ksh: 250 | Ugx: 7,500 | Rwf: 2,000

Spotlight on The East African Business & Investment Frontiers



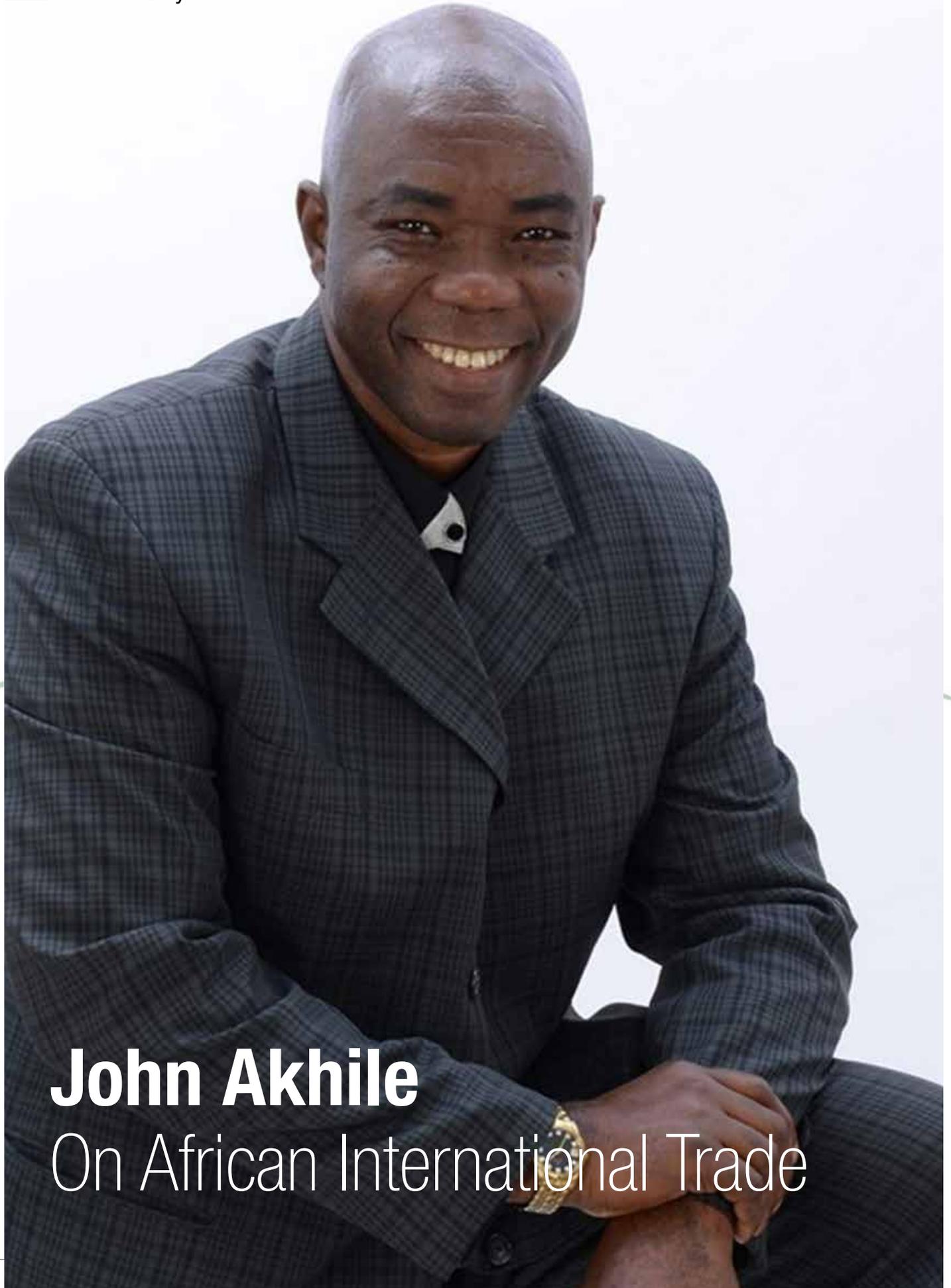
**What you think  
you become:** KENGEN  
Finance and Corporate  
Director

**Management  
Practices** that increase  
employee productivity

**Market & Product  
Orientation:** Lessons to  
SME's in East Africa

## Dr. Reginald Mengi

**Defying all Odds**



**John Akhile**  
On African International Trade



**1** Who is John Akhile Sr? I am a 57 year-old African; a Nigeria-born US citizen, father and grandfather by the grace of God. Unleashed is my second of two books which are centered on matters of prime importance to African countries. I am of the inclination that the term "Pan-Africanist" is an over-worked 1950s cliché. I prefer to describe myself as very Pro-Africa because it is, at the core, a matter of a blood heritage. It is the land of my ancestors. However, I am not anti any nation or group of nations. I am a big fan of and committed advocate for the collective well-being of the human family.

I have had the privilege of starting several businesses in America because of the opportunity that the free enterprise system affords people who are willing to take risks. Currently I am President of African Trade Group LLC and Word Power Publishing Company LLC, both of which are in the start-up stage with great prospects and potential. I am very excited about their development and steady growth trajectory so far. It has been a lot of fun. African Trade Group LLC is an Africa-centric broker of industrial projects, commodities as well as a manager of creative trade platforms in trade and industrial project structuring and facilitation under the vast umbrella of Structured Finance (CDOs, ABS) and Compensatory Trade techniques (Offsets, Barter, Parallel Barter, Compensation trade, Evidence accounts, Switch Trade, etc.). The core objective of African Trade Group LLC is to promote the concepts and ideas espoused in Unleashed. Word Power Publishing is focusing on African diaspora. The idea behind WPP is to shine a light on matters that are germane to the well-being of African people everywhere through the power of words.

I have had the singular pleasure and honor of meeting some great men and women in America including: The Late Coretta Scot King, widow of the Rev. Martin Luther King; Ambassador Andrew Young, Chairman of Goodworks International; Comer Cottrell, Founder and owner of Pro Line, one of the largest manufacturers of Afro-centric hair

products in America; Congressman John Lewis, the civil rights icon; Basketball great and one of the wealthiest athletes in the world Michael Jordan; Baseball great, Hank Aaron and his wife Bilye; the Late Robert Mondavi, founder of one of the world's greatest wineries and his widow, Magarit Modavi; former President Jimmy Carter and former first lady Mrs. Rosaline Carter, to mention a few iconic personalities. One of the more rewarding encounters is getting to know former Heavyweight Boxing Champion, Evander Holyfield with whom I had a business venture.

**2** What motivated you to come up with your new book Unleashed: A new paradigm of African trade with the world? I am passionate about African countries and peoples.

I am singularly motivated by the desire to contribute my share to instituting a new standard of performance that will lead to a successful evolution of a positive African experience. I believe each generation is consigned with redeeming the times and have a sacred duty and responsibility to care for their environment, people, and culture. It is my view that we are all called to serve each other. We are all equipped with varying degrees for the shared task of serving each other and the culture from which, by the grace of God, we sprung. One of my acts of service is to write a book that is meaningful to the burning questions of today, relative to social economic justice and prosperity of Africa peoples and their societies.

**3** What are two of the most fundamental achievements you are hoping for through this publication? Unleashed is a message of hope! The hope is that Africa countries,

by following a well-worn track of an economic playbook that has been created by the nouveau-riche nations in the Asian and South American hemisphere, will customize it to their particular environment so that lasting progressive seeds of economic emancipation will be planted, germinate, and grow. So the first goal is

for everyone—including; entrepreneurs, would-be entrepreneurs, business owners and business managers of small and large businesses, heads of government, government administrators and law-makers, students, young and old--that reads the book, to perceive and grasp practical applicable possibilities that they can personally adopt as their own. The second is for the public sector and leadership to grasp tangible ways in which they can transform the economies of their countries from low income to high income economies.

**4** Do you think African countries reap the full benefits of trade liberalization? Why? Well, the answer is probably self-evident to the adequately informed who have taken the

time to observe the tea-leaves in the low rate of converting economic opportunity into tangible progress by nations of the continent. Africa countries can and should commit to doing better. As long as there are countries depending on aid to fund their current accounts and per capita income of the average African person is less than \$500.00 per year, there is much that remains to be done in the quest for economic emancipation. Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) is a great example of how African governments have not taken full advantage of opportunities when presented with such. The US state department has been embarking on seminars to help African countries understand that there is an opportunity to sell to Americans. To put it in proper perspective, it means the customer-banker, having given you permission to draw on his largess by selling him your goods and services, has to teach you how to sell it to him but because you don't know or won't, on your own initiative, learn how to do it. It is an unprecedented initiative but one that has not made much progress. Although it is motivated by the need to counter China's successful pseudo-aid blueprint in African countries, there is no denying that the opportunity is there. The US Exim bank has also been executing seminars to



help African countries take advantage of expanded facilities for credits. According to them, the response has been disappointing, which is why they are doing the seminars.

**5** Some people argue that the unequal participation of African states in the global economy is being hampered by world trading systems such as protectionism which reduce economic opportunities of African enterprises in the international markets. What do you say to this? We should note that there is historical record going all the way back to post-war ascendance of Japan, that none of the Asia Tigers had the foresight to negotiate a grand bargain that gave them access to the US market. On the contrary, US response has usually been precipitated by local US industry lobby when the threat of a foreign supplier impacts their market share. In other words nothing is stopping African countries from selling to America. Even without a preferential trade arrangement, African countries can sell to America and bear the cost of a tariff in order to introduce their goods into the market. There is a reason. American economy and American consumers have built or amplified the economies of many countries around the world, including: Japan, China, South Korea, Singapore, Germany, India, Taiwan, etc. So when America is offering their market to you on a platter, they are offering you the best that they have to give you and for many countries, it has been enough. The question to ask is why it has not been enough for African countries? To a lesser degree the same access is available to African countries in other western markets. The Tiger economies were not invited to do business in the West. On the contrary, they invited themselves because they "KICKED OPEN" the door to western markets by the share power of western consumers discriminating in favor of their products. It was not high tech and fancy gadgetry either. Rather for some countries it was hair extensions, wigs,

custom jewelry and they sold them by the hundreds of millions and billions. It built Samsung, one of the greatest electronic enterprises in the world. The only regions in the world where the US government has made extraordinary efforts to engage their businesses and governments are in Africa and the Caribbean. That ought to give all of us pause.

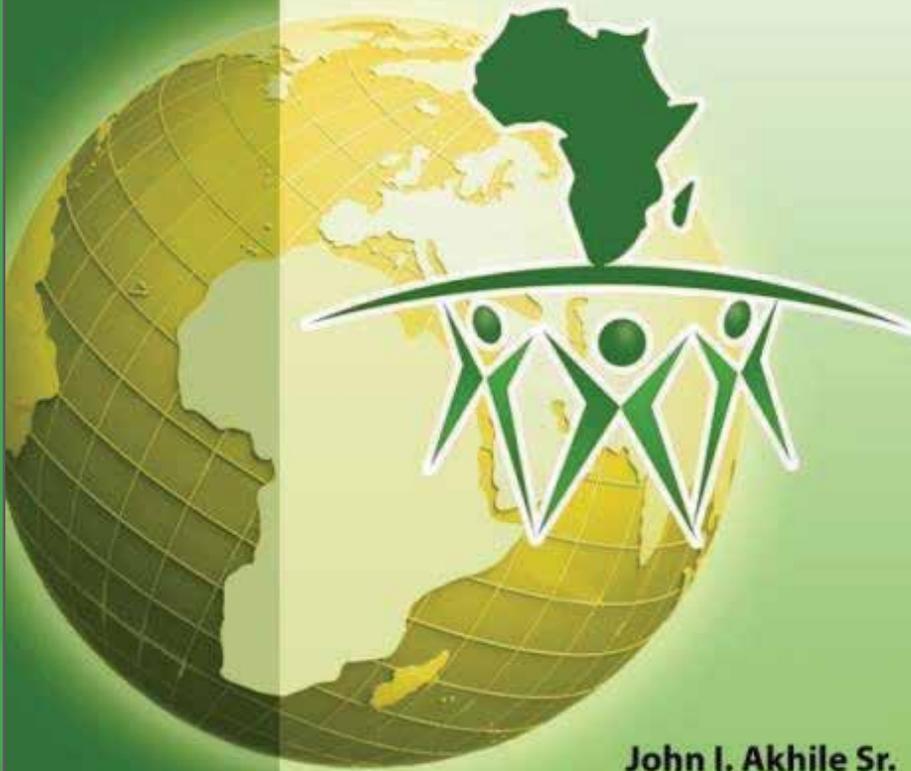
**6** In developed economies, the private sector and for-profit investments have proved to build business success stores. Do you think the private sector in Africa is doing enough in building her economy? If not, what measures should be adopted in order to ensure their effective participation? There two primary factors affecting the level of contribution that the private sector and entrepreneurial class are making towards meeting demand imperatives in their respective countries. The first is the low-level of material control that indigenous people have in the local economy. The second issue is that most governments have not successfully used the power of incentives to influence the rate and direction of flow of capital in their economy. In most cases, incentives that are created actually do more harm than good for the economy. It creates a bubble of wealth through the syndrome of "bad capitalism" exacerbated by the nefarious influence of rent-seeking. The status-quo is compounded by lack of an aggressive all-out effort to develop an entrepreneurial culture, by creating an entrepreneurial development process for people who are interested in learning about how to start, finance and manage an enterprise. Entrepreneurs are the ones that create business enterprises that respond to needs expressed or yet to be expressed of society. I did not know I needed a desktop computer until Bill Gates figured a way for it to be useful for my every day existence. We all agree that the world has never been the same since. The action of one entrepreneur has transformed the entire world.

**7** What advice can you give to African states in order to change the mindset of the "father and son" relationship inherent in the global economic system whereby developing economies always look up to the West for financial support? It is called the "No begging bowl mentality." To paraphrase Lee Kuan Yew, the Father of modern Singapore, Western business people gained respect for their efforts when they understood that Singapore was not extending a begging bowl but was instead seeking synergistically advantageous business associations. Singapore used it because they refused to go hat in hand to western governments and businesses. They were more interested in what they could do together with them than what they could get from western businesses. The key here is that western culture preaches independence. This means that western society expects people to stand on their own two feet. The post war rise of the welfare state redefined some of the principles of independence and individuality but it was never replaced. What has emerged instead is an internal war between two sides of one country. On one side you have those that abhor the welfare state because it requires ever higher levels of Taxation to provide for its needs (conservative) and on the other side, the side that accommodates the welfare state (liberal). It is noteworthy that western societies apply the same standards to states as well. Businesses, as Singapore discovered, are more likely to want to do business with you if they know that you are seeking mutually advantageous association and not a handout.

**8** What strategies can you advise local enterprises and SMEs to adopt in order to produce products and services that are competitive in the international market? Well for starters, it is really important to recognize that as an exporter, you are selling to people of a different culture and taste so you have to tailor your products to their standards. Exporting is an endeavor that

# UNLEASHED

A NEW PARADIGM OF AFRICAN TRADE WITH THE WORLD



An insightful, thought-provoking narrative that will unleash the potential of indigenous entrepreneurs, public sector officials, and labor force of African countries

*Unleashed: A New Paradigm of African Trade with the World* is a treatise on the challenge of economic development of African countries that proffers specific initiatives for reversing the widely held negative prognosis for those countries. If the genie of ideas releases a formula that will begin transformational change in the economic prospects of the countries of Africa, it is safe to say that the accretive value will be felt not only by African countries but will in fact, reverberate throughout the world.

The book takes a look back in history to review the mechanisms with which Europeans plundered the material and human resources of the people of Africa. Drawing on examples of the Asia Tigers' paths to successful economies and prosperous societies, *Unleashed* looks into the deficiencies in both the governance apparatus of African countries as well the human shortcomings of the leaders of African countries that directly bear on poor policy prescriptions and follow through since independence of most if not all the countries. It makes tangible suggestions for new institutions and policies that will unleash the inherent potential of African countries and create permanent successes.

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requires a national commitment because it requires the entire economic structure of: government agencies, banks and other financial institutions, the entire national transport logistics, including air and ocean, to work in tandem in order to ensure export competitiveness across the board. The price of admission into international markets for most new to manufacturing and processing export countries has always been the price of their products. Most African countries have to earn their way into the consciousness of consumers in rich countries by offering good quality products at the best price in the marketplace. It is always important for aspiring exporters to do a reconnaissance of the target market to gain as much insight into how it functions and what appeals to the consumers. Finally, in executing an actual transaction, an exporter cannot afford to spring a negative surprise on a new import customer by diverging from agreed terms. Unless you are the only one in the world that sells the item or items, you are not likely to ever get another order from the customer.

**9** Do you think regional economic blocs in Africa are doing enough to strengthen the regions bargaining power both internationally and amongst themselves with regard to trade? One way to enhance the strength of regional trading blocs, and ultimately the entire continent, is to vastly expand trade within and between regions, keeping the economic benefits within the regional economic blocs and within the continent. Most discussions about African trade centers on trying to get higher prices for raw materials. It is a fruitless endeavor because in the west the group responsible for actually buying and using African commodities are mostly not at the table. That is because they are in their boardrooms trying to unlock the code for expanding their market share in whatever business they are doing. It is also necessary to mention that the price of raw materials is determined largely by

market forces to which, in many cases, customers for African commodities are also often beholden. For the future of African countries the focus should shift to building capacity in manufacturing and other value added exports. Expanding trade within the continent is a matter of urgent survival and requires bringing the best and brightest creative minds to bear on cracking the code. For starters, trade within regional economic blocs should be done without hard currency through evidence accounts and switch.

**10** There have been various efforts by African banks and other African development finance institutions to provide financial solutions to SMEs, as well as disadvantaged groups like women, youth and rural populations. Is this enough in solving the poverty and unemployment issues in the continent? Greater access to capital is never a bad initiative. In the context of addressing structural deficiencies that are the under-pinning of socio-economic underperformance, it is not sufficient. The nature of banking requires a certain level of caution and due diligence process. It is a weeding out process. That then limits the flow of resources into the market place. As part of a larger strategy, it is a good initiative. Having said that I believe there is a very simple and uncomplicated path to economic prosperity for all African countries. It doesn't require much more than leaders of each country pulling together a brain trust to flesh out ideas and then to actually test every good idea. Inertia is enemy of progress. While well-conceived activity is the mother of great progress. The first step is to commit to becoming export driven, making and supplying low cost goods and services to affluent states. The second is to commit to converting all or most of the raw materials being exported into semi-finished or finished goods for export from the producing country.

Finally, to create a financial structure of accountability and strict oversight, through which funds needed to improve existing as well as to create new infrastructure can flow. Finding jobs for every able bodied person is the way to alleviate poverty. The process I have just outlined will create jobs that will last for decades.

**11** Do you think there is adequate political commitment to make trade and growth of domestic industries a national priority among African governments in their development agenda especially due to increasing domestic demand and consumption? It is difficult to predict the choices that will be made by leaders of the public sector of African states but because I am an eternal optimist, I can hope for the best. One of the goals of writing the book is to make the message, that there is a way to change the trajectory of economic destiny of African countries, so pervasive that only the severely (hearing and sight) challenged will fail to know of the existence of ways to attack and eradicate the scourge of poverty. If South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and China did it, then it is safe to predict that Africans can do it as well. On the second point, it is precisely due to increasing domestic demand that African states have to begin to take account of who is benefiting from the rising buying power of their still largely poor countries. Growth of industries to meet domestic demand will ensure that the buying power circulates fully in the local economy and that the country derives the full benefit of its multiplier effect.

**12** Parting shot: What are your economic prospects of Africa in the next 20 years? Africa is Rising and nothing can or will stop it!