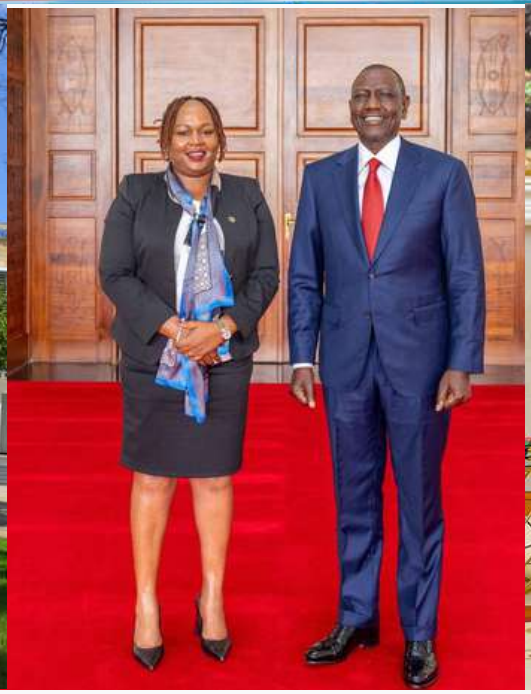
15TH OCTOBER, 2024

EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

HIGHLIGHTS

DEEPENING INTEGRATION, WIDENING COOPERATION



EAC SECRETARIAT LEADERSHIP PAYS COURTESY CALLS ON THE PRESIDENTS OF THE REPUBLICS OF KENYA AND BURUNDI

The East African Community (EAC) Secretary General, H.E. Veronica Nduva, paid a courtesy call on the President of the Republic of Kenya, H.E. William Ruto, in Nairobi, Kenya and the President of the Republic of Burundi, H.E Évariste Ndayishimiye in Bujumbura, Burundi.

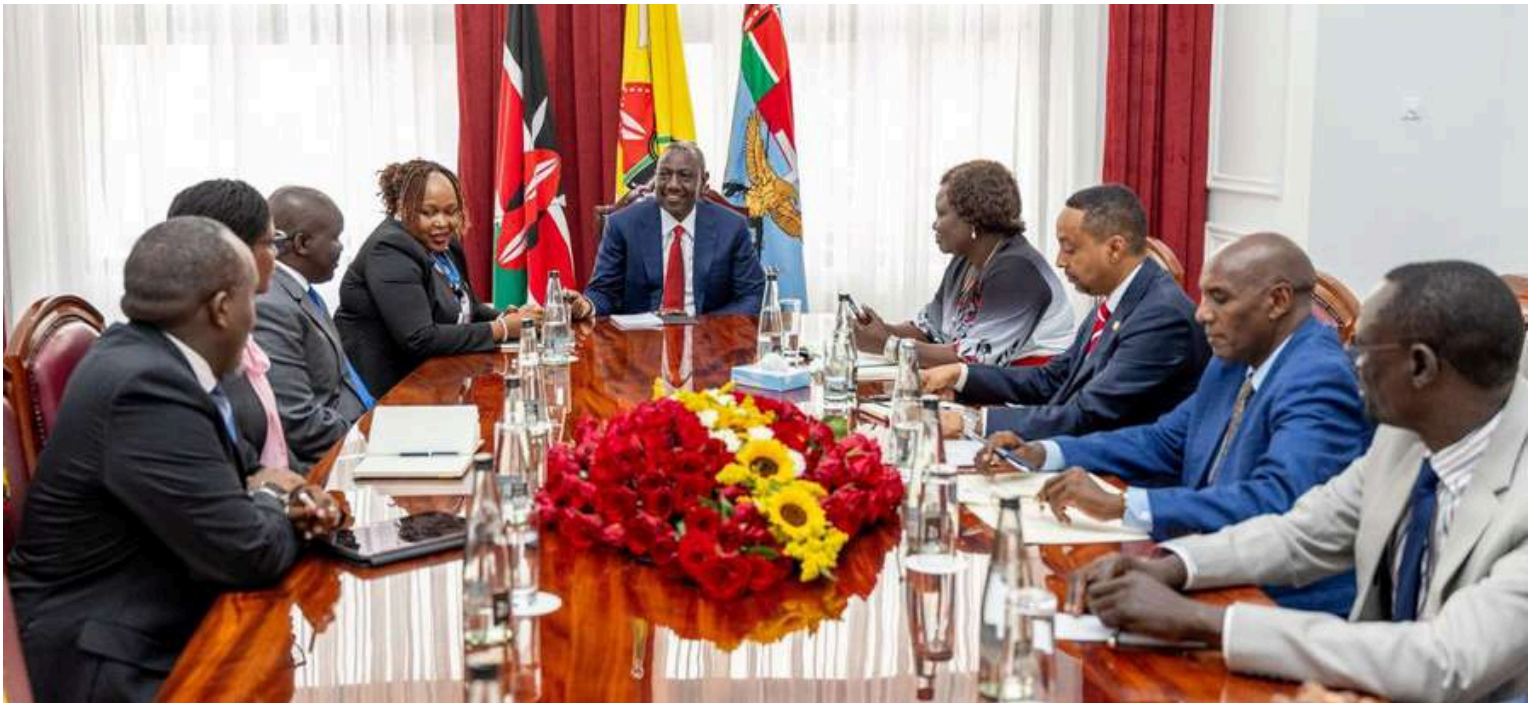
In both missions, she was accompanied by the EAC Deputy Secretaries General, Hon. Aguer Ariik Malueth and Ms. Annette Mutaawe Ssemuwemba.

During the meeting with H.E. William Ruto, the discussions focused on the state of the region, with digitization emerging as a key priority to enhance efficiency and reduce the cost of doing business. The meeting also explored avenues for further strengthening regional integration and promoting sustainable development within the EAC.

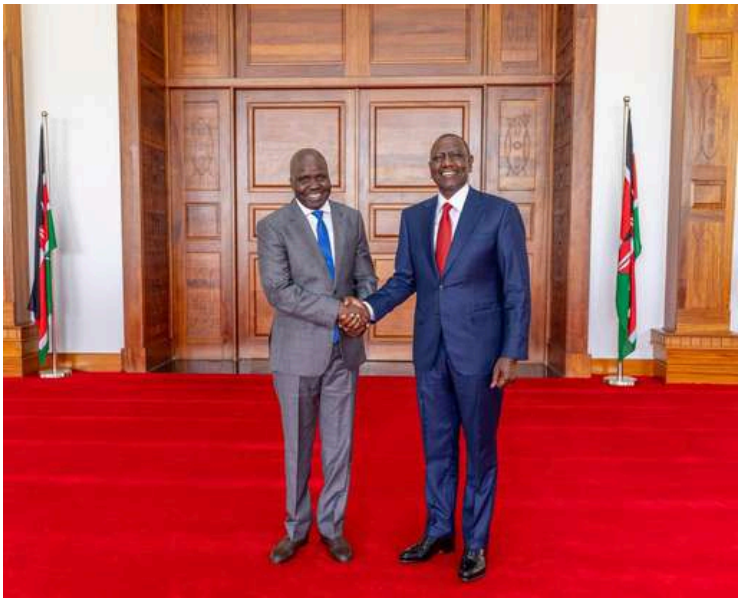
The EAC is working to improve its systems, aiming to lower trade costs and create a more efficient operational framework. Through digitization, the EAC will serve the citizens better and be better positioned in a rapidly evolving global economy.

ON THE SPOTLIGHT

- ***EABC CEOs - EAC Secretary General meeting renews call to boost intra-EAC trade.***
- ***EAC calls for coordinated response against Marburg Virus Outbreak.***
- ***The Republic of South Sudan Signs Mutual Recognition Agreement for Engineers, Advancing cross-border mobility and regional integration.***
- **EAC-EU convene a digital transformation cocreation to accelerate East Africa's digital economy.**



EAC SECRETARIAT LEADERSHIP PAYS A COURTESY CALL ON KENYA'S PRESIDENT



EAC SECRETARIAT LEADERSHIP PAYS A COURTESY CALL ON BURUNDI'S PRESIDENT

The East African Community (EAC) Secretary General, H.E. Veronica Nduva accompanied by the Deputy Secretaries General, Hon. Andrea Aguer Ariik and Ms. Annette Mutaawe Ssemuwemba, paid a courtesy call on the President of Burundi, H.E. Evariste Ndayishimiye, in Bujumbura, Burundi.

During the meeting, the leaders discussed the current state of the region, the agenda for the upcoming Ordinary Summit of EAC Heads of State scheduled for November 2024 and preparations for the EAC's 25th anniversary celebrations.

They also explored collaborative efforts to strengthen regional economic growth and advance social development initiatives within the Community.

H.E Nduva further paid a courtesy call on Burundi's First Lady, Mrs. Angeline Ndayishimiye Ndayubaha. They discussed ongoing efforts by her foundation, 'Bonne Action Umugiraneza Foundation' to empower women and children in the areas of family health and education. The EAC Secretariat leaders were welcomed by Burundi's Minister in charge of EAC Affairs, Hon. Gervais Abayeho who also engaged them on the state of regional integration.

EABC CEOS - EAC SECRETARY GENERAL MEETING RENEWS CALL TO BOOST INTRA - EAC TRADE

The EABC CEOs-EAC Secretary General Meeting held in Kigali, Rwanda has declared a commitment to boost intra-EAC trade to 40% by 2030 and Rwanda's trade and investment ties with counterparts.

The meeting, held under the theme "Enhancing Competitiveness in the EAC: Addressing Barriers and Leveraging Opportunities in Regional Integration," was organized by the East African Business Council (EABC) in partnership with the Private Sector Federation – Rwanda (PSF-R) and the East African Community (EAC).

In her address, H.E. Veronica Nduva, EAC Secretary General, highlighted that the EAC Heads of State have set an ambitious and achievable target to increase intra-EAC trade from 15% to 40% by 2030. She urged the private sector to promote the EAC as a unified trade bloc, emphasising that regional benefits outweigh national interests, with the EAC's market of 312 million being far larger than individual national markets.

Hon. Gen (Rtd) James Kabarebe, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs in charge of Regional Cooperation, Rwanda, reiterated the commitment of EAC Heads of State to the integration agenda. He pledged to secure the progress made and to address the setbacks to intra-EAC trade and investments.

Mr. Dennis Karera, Vice Chairperson of EABC, stated that this meeting of the private sector, EAC Secretary General, the Minister of Trade and Industry, and the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs in charge of Regional Cooperation has resulted in a declaration outlining practical recommendations to move from rhetoric to action. "Our shared goal is to increase intra-EAC trade and strengthen Rwanda's trade and investment ties with other EAC Partner States," he said.

Hon. Prudence Sebahizi, Minister of Trade and Industry, Rwanda, reiterated the government's commitment to partnering with the private sector in driving EAC integration. He emphasized the need to improve production and exports to meet regional, continental, and international market demands of goods and services.

EABC CEOS - EAC SECRETARY GENERAL MEETING RENEWS CALL TO BOOST INTRA - EAC TRADE

In 2023, the total global merchandise trade by the EAC grew by 2.37%, reaching over US$80 billion, with intra-EAC trade growing by 13.1% to US$12.1 billion. Rwanda's total trade grew by 20.3%, demonstrating the positive impact of ongoing reforms aimed at streamlining trade and improving market access.

This year the EAC is marking 25 years. The EAC has introduced several initiatives, including the e-Tariff toolkit and trade information portals, which provide the private sector with access to tariff structures and step-by-step guides on licenses, permits, and procedures for goods moving in and out of the region. Furthermore, the EAC has harmonized over 1,920 product standards across 80 sectors. The EAC's Industrialization Policy aims to increase the manufacturing sector's contribution to GDP from 8.9% to 25% by 2032.

The meeting brought together 150 business leaders and government officials from Rwanda, including members of the National Parliament, Permanent Secretaries from ministries, and the Director General of the Rwanda Revenue Authority, to discuss challenges, opportunities, and solutions to scale up intra-EAC trade and investments. Land-linked countries face unique challenges in capitalizing on the benefits of regional integration.

Discussions and presentations during the meeting focused on the liberalisation of air transport services, transport and logistics, manufacturing, tourism, and the movement of services and service providers. Key matters deliberated included the digital economy, upgrading transport networks, energy, road user charges, discriminatory levies and charges, stays of applications, work permits, and the One Tourist Visa, East African Payments System (EAPS), Single Africa Air Transport Market Agreement among others.

SOUTH SUDAN SIGNS MUTUAL RECOGNITION AGREEMENT FOR ENGINEERS, ADVANCING CROSS-BORDER MOBILITY AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION

The Republic of South Sudan has acceded to the Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) of engineers, marking a significant milestone towards the movement of professional engineers in the East African Community.

The MRA aims to streamline recognition of professional qualifications of engineers in the region, thereby paving the way for their cross-border mobility.

The accession agreement was signed by the Registrar of the Engineering Council of South Sudan, the Engineers Board of Kenya, the Engineers Registration Board of Tanzania, the Engineers Registration Board of Uganda, and the Rwanda Engineering Council.

The ceremony was witnessed by a representative of the EAC Partner States, the EAC Secretariat and GIZ through DIGEAT & LIFTED initiatives supporting the EAC to facilitate the movement of professionals in the region in line with the Common Market Protocol.

The Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community provides for the creation of a Common Market among the Partner States with free movement of labour, goods, services, capital, and the right of establishment. For this purpose, the Partner States are required to mutually recognize the academic and professional qualifications granted, experience obtained, requirements met, licenses, or certifications granted in other Partner States.

As an innovative step to breaking down barriers hindering the cross-border mobility of professionals in East Africa, the East African Community, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and the European Union (EU) jointly developed the project Digitalisation for East African Trade and Integration (DIGEAT) and LIFTED. The two projects focus on the existing Mutual Recognition Agreement for engineers and aim to improve cross-border mobility regulatory frameworks as well as establish a digital data exchange mechanism to facilitate the recognition of qualifications of practicing engineers in the region.

SOUTH SUDAN SIGNS MUTUAL RECOGNITION AGREEMENT FOR ENGINEERS, ADVANCING CROSS-BORDER MOBILITY AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION

By enhancing the mobility of professionals, the MRAs are expected to facilitate transfer of knowledge and skills in the region and improve access to a wider pool of experts, thereby promoting quality and professionalism in the EAC region.

Speaking during the ceremony, Dr. Dorcas Omukhulu, EAC Principal Education Officer underscored the need for the Competent Authorities in the 5 Partner States to ensure quality assurance of engineering professionals in the region.

“I also in this vein call upon the Partner States’ whose competent Authorities have not acceded to the Engineers’ MRA to do so”. She added.

Representing the Engineering MRA Coordination Committee in East Africa, Eng. Benard Kavishe, Chairman and Registrar of Engineers Registration Board of Tanzania observed that the decision was reached after comprehensive conformity assessment of the application by South Sudan, as guided by Article 11.3 of the MRA.

In his remarks, Mr. Ritcher Bjoern, the EAC – GIZ Cluster Coordinator reflected on the GIZ support to the East African economic integration journey for the last 25 years. “GIZ is pleased to support the Engineering Boards of different Partner States to facilitate not just the ceremony but also the platforms for cross-border skilled labour and look forward to working with the engineering stakeholders in the region.” he said.

The accession of South Sudan to the MRA is a testament to the EAC's commitment to fostering regional cooperation and creating a vibrant and prosperous East African Community.

EAC CALLS FOR COORDINATED RESPONSE AGAINST MARBURG VIRUS OUTBREAK

The East African Community (EAC) Secretariat has called for a swift and coordinated regional response to contain the ongoing Marburg Virus Disease (MVD) outbreak declared in Rwanda. The outbreak poses a serious threat to regional health security and requires urgent action from all EAC Partner States to prevent its spread across borders.

"There is an urgent need for a coordinated regional response to contain the spread of this highly infectious virus through swift identification, isolation, and treatment of cases and enhanced screening at borders and health facilities," said Hon. Andrea Aguer Ariik Malueth, EAC Deputy Secretary General, in charge of Infrastructure, Productive, Social & Political sectors.

He called for Partner States to strengthen their public awareness and infection control protocols including handwashing, avoiding physical contact with symptomatic individuals and surveillance at borders and health facilities.

Marburg virus is a severe zoonotic disease, similar to Ebola, and is associated with a high fatality rate varied from 24% to 88% depending on virus strain and case management. Transmission occurs through direct contact with bodily fluids of infected individuals or contaminated surfaces. As there is no specific vaccine or treatment, supportive care remains the main form of medical intervention.

Symptoms of Marburg Virus Disease typically include fever (often high), severe headache, muscle aches and pains, fatigue and weakness. Gastrointestinal symptoms such as severe diarrhea, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting and bleeding from various parts of the body (in later stages of the disease).

To Reduce the risk of contracting Marburg, the public is advised to:

- Practice proper hand hygiene using soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizers.
- Avoid contact with fruit bats and their excretions, as these are considered the natural hosts of the virus.
- Practice safe burial practices to minimize exposure to bodily fluids of individuals who have died from MVD.
- Wear personal protective equipment (PPE) when caring for infected individuals or handling animals that may be reservoirs of the virus.
- Avoid contact with nonhuman primates in endemic areas, as these can also transmit the virus.

Individuals suspecting that they may have contracted Marburg should:

- Seek medical care immediately as early supportive treatment is crucial to improve survival chances.
- Isolate themselves to prevent spreading the virus to others.
- Notify local health authorities or go to the nearest healthcare facility for assessment.
- Avoid contact with others, particularly through bodily fluids, until the suspicion of Marburg infection is ruled out.

The East African Community Secretariat in collaboration with partners including the German Government through GIZ and KfW is supporting the Partner States response and preparedness efforts to the ongoing MVD and Mpox outbreaks and further enhance pandemic preparedness efforts with a focus on enhancing regional resilience to health emergencies.

EAC-EU CONVENE A DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION CO-CREATION TO ACCELERATE EAST AFRICA'S DIGITAL ECONOMY

The East African Community (EAC) and the European Union (EU) officially launched the EU-EAC Regional Co-creation Workshop on Digital Transformation. Both parties reaffirmed their commitment to advancing a human-centric approach to digital transformation in East Africa, leveraging technology and innovation to strengthen regional integration.

As part of its digital transformation journey, the EAC initiated consultations with Partner States in 2022, further accelerating the momentum during the EAC Regional Digital Transformation Conference in October 2023. Held in collaboration with the European Union under a Team Europe Initiative, the conference identified seven strategic areas for engagement, aligned with the 6th EAC Development Strategy's goal of fast-tracking digital transformation in East Africa. These priorities include; connectivity, data governance, e-governance/cybersecurity, e-commerce, ICT regulations, digital innovation, and digital skills.

A joint digital transformation roadmap was developed to guide the cooperation between EAC and Team Europe. Among the short-term actions proposed were initiatives to boost the data economy across borders as well as benchmarking and project development of green and secure data centres.

Building on these efforts, the EAC, with support from GIZ, developed the Digital Transformation Strategy, which has been agreed upon by Partner States and is expected to launch in November 2024. This co-creation workshop aims to review progress on digital development collaboration, support the formulation of the Safe Digital Boost for Africa (SDBA) initiative, and launch the appraisal process for a digital economy package tailored to East Africa. The SDBA initiative is expected to support the EAC in implementing the Digital Transformation Strategy.

EAC-EU CONVENE A DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION CO-CREATION TO ACCELERATE EAST AFRICA'S DIGITAL ECONOMY

In her opening remarks, the EAC Deputy Secretary General in charge of Customs, Trade and Monetary Affairs, Ms. Annette Ssemuwemba reflected on the EAC digital transformation journey, and the commitments made including developing the EAC Digital Transformation Strategy which has since been validated, laying a strong foundation for the Safe Digital Boost Africa (SDBA) Project.

“This project is not just about technology; it is about the future success of our entire region. It represents a strategic move towards creating an interoperable regional digital market that will drive innovation, economic growth, and inclusive development. By fostering digital trade and integrating technology into key sectors such as e-commerce, data governance, and cybersecurity, we aim to transform lives across East Africa and create a competitive edge for our region in the global economy” she added.

Speaking during the event, Marc Stalmans, EU Head of Cooperation, highlighted the success of previous engagements and the EU’s ongoing commitment to supporting digital transformation in East Africa. "Today’s event follows last year’s EU-EAC Regional Conference on Digital Transformation, which launched our joint efforts toward an inclusive, human-centric digital transformation. The discussions led to a Digital Roadmap with key milestones, shaping the Safe Digital Boost for Africa initiative, a program we are proud to finance that will support digital economy activities in areas such as e-commerce, e-payments, e-governance, and cybersecurity," he said.

D4D Hub Deputy Coordinator for Africa, Hussein Jaffar, emphasized the role of the D4D Hub as a platform to identify synergies and support the co-creation of joint European initiatives based on extensive bilateral and multilateral cooperation experience between Africa, the EU and its Member States. “Coordinated and simultaneous action in key areas of digital transformation is crucial in a dynamic region with a fast growth in digitalisation,” he said.

The conference hosted deep dive sessions on e-Commerce & Payment, e-Governance, cybersecurity and national-regional inter-linkages and brought out key recommendations in the areas for collaboration.

Left: *On the the sidelines of the 79th UNGA meeting at the UN Headquarters in New York, USA, the EAC Secretary General engaged with the UN Deputy Secretary General Ms. Amina J Mohammed, on peace and security, trade and the EAC Payment System.* ***Right:*** *The EAC Secretary General held an engagement with Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa, the Assistant Secretary-General and Director of UNDP's Regional Bureau for Africa.*

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE EAC AT THE 2024 UNGA

Left: *The Secretary General held an engagement with the GIZ CEO (for Africa), Ms. Anna Sophie Herken, on various issues including GIZ's support in advancing the digital economy & health infrastructure, particularly in the Mpox response.*
Middle: *H.E. Nduva held a bilateral meeting with H.E Wairimu Nderitu, UN Under-Secretary-General & Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide on regional security issues.*
Right: *H.E. Nduva held a meeting with the president of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Mr. Rodger Voorhies, on strengthening the collaboration with EAC & supporting the Digital Financial systems for cross-border payments.*

PICTORIALS

A delegation from Kenya's State Department for Migration & Citizen Services, led by the eCitizen Kenya Director General, Amb. Issack Ochieng and a delegation from Moi University led by Prof. Abraham Siika held a consultative meeting with the EAC Secretary General and her team in Arusha.

Ms.Monica Kyamazima, Country Director, Willow International, met with H.E Nduva to discuss their vital work combating human trafficking in the region.

The EAC held a four-day Regional Validation Workshop on the EAC One Network Area (ONA) regulatory framework for voice calls, SMSs and Data within East Africa in Nairobi, Kenya.

TOP REGIONAL NEWS

- **Rwanda and DRC sign a joint undertaking to stick to the mediation of Angola.**

Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have made key steps towards addressing the conflict that has affected relations between the two countries, following the conclusion of the fifth Tripartite Ministerial Meeting for Peace and Security in the eastern part of DRC, held in Luanda, Angola. MORE

- **Kenya eyes new policy on eco-friendly coffee, tea trade**

The push to reduce the cost of air transport within East Africa has gained momentum with the East African Community submitting regulations to support liberalisation of air transport.The regulations highlighting how to leverage airfare, packing fees and other levies charged by airlines are to be submitted to the 19th Meeting of the Sectoral Council on Transport, Communication and Meteorology (TCM) for adoption next month. MORE

- **Central Corridor extends south as Zambia joins**

A significant milestone was reached with the launch of the system integration for data exchange between the General Directorate of Customs and Excise (DGDA) and the Central Corridor Transit Transport Facilitation Agency (CCTTFA) yesterday in Kinshasa, DRC. The event took place in the presence of the Executive Secretary and the Director General of DGDA, marking a new chapter in the collaboration between the two institutions. MORE

- **Rwanda pitches investment opportunities worth $785m at World Food Forum**

The Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources, Ildephone Musafiri, presented opportunities in tea production and processing, horticulture (targeting avocado and chili), Irish potato production and processing, small livestock production (poultry and pigs), and beef production. MORE

- **Consumers are in for some relief: Lower energy prices are on the way**

or consumers still scarred by jumps in their energy bills in recent years, the International Energy Agency has good news: Oil and natural gas prices will probably be lower over the next five years.Energy prices soared in the wake of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, which followed a rise in global demand as economies reopened after Covid lockdowns put lives on hold.
MORE

GLOBAL NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

- **African online retailer Jumia to exit South Africa and Tunisia**

  Africa-focused e-commerce retailer Jumia Technologies will close its South African online fashion retailer Zando and its Tunisian operations by the end of the year to sharpen its focus on its other markets, the CEO told Reuters.
  Jumia is aggressively cutting costs to try to turn profitable, including by reducing head count. MORE

- **Global conflicts driving up to 21,000 deaths daily from hunger: Oxfam**

  Hunger caused by conflicts around the world has reached record high levels, a new report by Oxfam has found, which accuses warring parties of weaponising food and blocking aid.Between 7,000 to as many as 21,000 people are likely dying each day from hunger in countries affected by conflict, according to the report, published by the United Kingdom-based charity on World Food Day on Wednesday. MORE

- **Africa's renewable resources can transform domestic and global energy supply, says investment bank**

  The International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates $110 billion will be invested in energy across Africa in 2024, as global players leverage the continent's potential for solar, wind and natural gas production. Continued growth is dependent on significant investment, targeted at improving African energy infrastructure and human skill sets to support the global energy transition from fossil fuels to renewables. MORE

- **Amazon goes nuclear, to invest more than $500 million to develop small modular reactors**

  Amazon Web Services is investing more than $500 million in nuclear power, announcing three projects from Virginia to Washington state. AWS, Amazon's subsidiary in cloud computing, has a massive and increasing need for clean energy as it expands its services into generative AI. It's also a part of Amazon's path to net-zero carbon emissions. MORE

- **US imposes sanctions on Iran's oil sector over missile attack on Israel**

  The United States has imposed sanctions on companies and vessels that are allegedly engaged in trading and transporting Iranian oil, to punish Tehran for its recent missile attack on military sites in Israel. The US Treasury and State Department announced the sanctions on Friday, as Israeli officials continue to pledge to forcefully respond to the Iranian attack. MORE

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