

Southern African events of international significance – 2011

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Although it has been said that Africa is a slumbering giant slowly waking from a deep sleep as illustrated by increased growth rates in countries (unfortunately excluding South Africa which has shown a decline in financial growth), the reality is that as far as the African continent is concerned, a ‘marginalisation’ in the availability of information from certain countries is evident when trawling through various information sites in search of relevant information, and finding virtually nothing on the countries under review.

January

- 8 The governing African National Congress (ANC) celebrated the centenary of its establishment in Bloemfontein (now Mangaung) in the Free State province in 1912. Commenting on the ANC, Africa’s first ‘liberation movement’ it was observed that, given the problems confronting the party of late, the position could at best be summarised in the words of Nelson Mandela in *Long walk to freedom*: ‘After climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb’. Interestingly, Bloemfontein, the former Boer capital of the Orange Free State, was also the ‘birthplace’ of the National Party, the main proponent of apartheid. It was also the birthplace of JRR Tolkien, the author of *Lord of the rings*.
- 19 Tendai Biti, Minister of Finance from the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) (and secretary general of the party) warned that Zimbabwe was facing a ‘bloodbath’ if President Robert Mugabe pressed ahead with elections in 2011. Biti, credited with steering Zimbabwe from hyperinflation to economic stability, called for a ‘road map’ to a free and fair ballot. This would entail protecting individual voters against violence, possibly with the assistance of southern African neighbours, and guaranteeing the results against fraud.

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On the same day (of Biti's pronouncements) ZimOnline, a Zimbabwean news agency, reported that more than 80 000 youth militia, war veterans, and soldiers would be deployed across the country to ensure victory for Robert Mugabe in elections that 'look set to be the bloodiest ever witnessed in Zimbabwe'.

It was also reported by the Zimbabwean media watchdog, MISA-Zimbabwe, that soldiers from 42 Infantry Battalion threatened vendors of *The Mirror*, a weekly newspaper in Masvingo province, at gunpoint. *The Mirror's* editor said army officials later apologised for the incident.

24 Flooding in South Africa killed more than 100 people and forced at least 8 400 others from their homes. The flooding forced the South African government to declare 33 disaster areas. Following upon the flooding, Elisabeth Byrs, a spokeswoman for the UN's Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs, pointed out that five countries in the region, other than South Africa, – Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Zambia were on flood alert.

27 Nelson Mandela, age 92, democratic South Africa's first President, spent his second day in hospital for what were described as 'routine medical tests'. It was reported that he had been seen by a specialist pulmonologist who treats respiratory disorders. Mandela had not been seen in public since the final of the football World Cup in July 2010. He retired from public life in June 2004 ahead of his 86th birthday, telling his adoring compatriots: 'Don't call me, I'll call you'.

February

Toward the end of January and the beginning of February African leaders met in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, for their biannual summit. The summit's theme was 'shared values' (among these were good governance, the rule of law, democracy, and fundamental rights). The question was asked by a senior African diplomat '[w]hose values [were] they anyway?' He asked whether they were the values of the young men and women demonstrating in Cairo, Alexandria, and Suez, and the 600 million or so Africans under the age of 24. Or were they those of the elderly statesmen like Teodoro Obiang, President of Equatorial Guinea since 1979, a notorious dictator who a number of people said made Robert Mugabe look benign, and who was elected chairperson of the African Union (AU) at the summit.

25 The building of the pan-African Great Green Wall (GGW) was approved by an international summit as an ancillary event of the joint conference of the Committees on Science and Technology and for the Review of the implementation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) held in Bonn, Germany. The 'Green Wall' is a living green wall of trees and bushes, (inhabited by birds and animals) to be planted just south of the Sahara, from Djibouti on the

Horn of Africa in the east, across the African continent to Dakar, Senegal, in the west (in the so-called Sahel zone which constitutes the transition between the Sahara in the north and the African savannahs in the south. The Sahel zone includes parts of Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Sudan). During the meeting the Global Environment Facility (GEF) confirmed its promise to allocate up to \$115m to support the construction of the green wall.

March

- 1 UK's International Development Minister, Andrew Mitchell, announced a refocusing of the UK's overseas development assistance (ODA) under which sixteen countries would cease to receive aid. These countries are: Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, China, Gambia, Indonesia, Iraq, Kosovo, Lesotho, Moldova, Niger, Russia, Serbia, and Vietnam. He justified the donation of UK, ODA totalling £280 million a year to India, despite its nuclear weapons and space programmes, on the ground that it had 450 million people living in deep poverty. The government maintained its pledge that the ODA budget, currently £8,4 billion a year, would be ring-fenced from expenditure cuts.
- 30 Abel Chikomo, director of the Zimbabwe Human Rights Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) Forum, was arrested and charged with running an illegal private and voluntary organisation (PVO) (see 1 April below).

April

During April Malawi and the UK expelled one another's diplomatic envoy's after *Wikileaks* published a cable citing the British High Commissioner of accusing the President of Malawi, Bingu wa Mutharika, of 'not tolerating criticism'.

- 1 The London-based human rights organisation Amnesty International (AI), called on the Zimbabwean police authorities to end 'the systematic harassment and intimidation of human rights groups' after Abel Chikomo, director of the Zimbabwe Human Rights Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) Forum was arrested and charged (see 30 March above).
- 11-13 World experts on the ocean met at the University of Oxford – an event of huge importance to African countries with shorelines. This event was led by the International Programme on the State of the Ocean (IPSO), in partnership with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and brought together a select group of world science

leaders on ocean stresses and impacts to reflect on these, and propose creative solutions. The workshop provided a crucial opportunity for oceanographers to interact with other disciplines to determine and analyse the net effect of what is already happening to the ocean and is projected to happen in the future.

- 14 A summit meeting of the leaders of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) – South Africa having been admitted to the group for the first time – was held in China. The closing communiqué of the meeting (the Sanya Declaration) called for Russia’s speedy admission to the World Trade Organisation (WTO); for the implementation of reforms to the IMF; of an expanded role for the IMF’s quasi-currency (the special drawing right (SDR)) in the international monetary system; and for reform of the UN Security Council to make it more ‘representative’, with the BRICS countries playing a ‘greater role’.
- 15 A meeting of Finance Ministers and central bankers of the G-20 (Group of 20) most advanced industrialised countries and major emerging economies was held in Washington DC. The participants agreed on a set of ‘indicative guidelines’ to monitor the effects of national economic policies on the global economy, and also to determine which countries contributed most to global trade and monetary imbalances. Although all G-20 economies would be monitored, a smaller group of countries – major economies and those accounting for more than five per cent of total G-20 output – would be subject to deeper analysis, undertaken by the IMF. The meeting was chaired by Finance Minister, Christine Lagarde of France, which currently held the presidency of the G-20. The four approaches to monitoring economies specified in the indicative guidelines were: (i) an assessment of imbalances using economic models specific to the country in question; (ii) a statistical assessment based on national economic trends; (iii) a comparison of imbalances with a group of countries at similar stages of development; and (iv) a statistical comparison of a country’s indicators with the full G-20.

The members of the G-20 are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, the EU, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the UK, and the USA.

- 29 An overexcited cheetah jumped from behind a fence and scratched the nose of Botswana President, Ian Khama! The President’s injuries were minor and his spokesperson, Jeff Ramsay said that it was a ‘freak accident, not an attack’. The cheetah was part of a menagerie kept by soldiers at the Botswana defence force barracks at Mogoditshane in Gabarone, the capital of Botswana. President Khama established the Botswana Defence Force animal awareness park in 1989 when he was

a lieutenant general in command of Botswana's armed forces to teach wild animal behaviour to soldiers who were being deployed to fight poachers killing rhinoceroses and elephants.

May

- 12 From Walvis Bay (translated into English meaning 'Whale Bay'), Namibia it was reported that scientists from the Namibian Dolphin project confirmed the sighting of a grey whale. What made this report 'astonishing' was that the particular north Pacific species had been regarded as extinct since the 18th century, and had never been seen south of the equator. The significance of the sighting created huge excitement among marine biologists. On the one hand, the sighting might suggest good news – the great whales were recovering from being hunted to near extinction during the 20th century, or the sighting might suggest bad news – that the changing climate was disrupting their feeding habits with unknown consequences.

June

Speaking at the annual conference of the International Emissions Trading Association (IETA), Christina Figueres (executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)) controversially reopened the debate on the acceptable limit of global warming. Whereas the 16th conference of the parties to the UNFCCC (COP 16) in Cancún (Mexico) in December 2010 agreed on a ceiling of 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, Figueres said that such a temperature rise would still be disastrous for low-lying and small island states and sub-Saharan Africa, and that a new target of 1,5 degrees Celsius should be set (see 6-17 June).

In Pretoria (the administrative capital of South Africa), Mozambique's Defence Minister Filipe Nhussi and his South African counterpart, Lindiwe Sisulu, signed a memorandum of understanding on a bilateral counter-piracy agreement. The agreement includes plans for Mozambique and South Africa to establish joint patrols in their respective territorial waters, including the Mozambique Channel, which separates Madagascar from the African continent and through which some 30 per cent of the global oil trade passes. The agreement also involves joint training initiatives, the sharing of intelligence information, and on-going support in military developments.

6-17 Sessions of the UN Climate Change Conference were held in Bonn, Germany.

- 6 At the opening of the talks Figueres pointed out that the Paris-based International Energy Agency (IEA) estimated in May that global CO₂ emissions in 2010 reached a record high, and emphasised that if there were further delays in implementing drastic cuts in emissions,

humanity would have to develop 'more powerful technology' in order to avert the worst scenarios of climate change.

- 8 The 159th meeting of the Conference of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was held at its headquarters in Vienna, Austria without agreement on future oil production levels. Saudi Arabia's Oil and Mineral Resources Minister, Ali Ibrahim al-Naimi, described the conference as 'one of the worst meetings we have ever had'. There was speculation that the failure of the meeting to produce an agreement effectively spelt an end to OPEC's system of quotas, allowing its members to set their own production levels without consultation.
- 10 Oil prices fell by over US\$1 a barrel when it was reported that Saudi Arabia had unilaterally increased production by 0,5 million b/d, bringing its total output to 9,5 million b/d.
- 16 The 28-member Paris-based International Energy Agency (IEA) raised its estimate of global oil demand to 89,3 million b/d for 2011 and warned of dangers for the world economy if OPEC failed to boost production. The IEA also called on its own members to release some of their strategic oil reserves onto the market to bring down prices.
- 17 South Africa's Kumi Naidoo, the head of the environmental campaigning group *Greenpeace International*, was arrested after he boarded a semi-submersible oil drilling rig in Baffin Bay off the west coast of Greenland chartered by the Cairn Energy Company in defiance of a court injunction. Naidoo was protesting against the failure of Cairn Energy to publish a contingency plan for dealing with an oil spill in Arctic waters.
- 17 On the final day of the talks UN Climate Change Conference held in Bonn, Germany (see 6-17 June above) Christina Figueres (executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)), identified areas of progress in preparation for the UNFCCC annual conference of the parties (COP 17) to be held in Durban (South Africa). These included the composition and role of the adaptation committee (to the effects of climate change) and the form of the clean technology mechanism.
- 20 A report produced and released by an international panel of marine experts for the International Programme on the State of the Ocean (IPSO) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), found that the health of the oceans was deteriorating far more rapidly than previously predicted, as a result of the cumulative combined effects of climate change, pollution, and overfishing. The report found that if the 'current trajectory of damage' continued, it would inevitably cause a catastrophic rate of extinctions of marine species comparable to the five recognised mass extinctions in Earth's pre-history.

July

- 12 It was announced by the South African National Defence Force that South African and US armed forces were to conduct a joint military exercise in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. The exercise during which the two militaries would share technical expertise, would commence on 24 July and end on 5 August and would involve 5 000 soldiers.
- 18 In an opinion piece in the UK daily newspaper *The Guardian* headed 'The time has come for African free trade', David Cameron, British Prime Minister, wrote that '[i]t is now possible to imagine an Africa no longer dependent on aid, and a real source of growth for the whole world. And the road to get there lies through freeing up the wealth creating power of enterprise and trade.' He concluded: 'For too long 55 nations' borders have been allowed to hold Africa's people back. It is time to make African free trade the common purpose of the continent and the wider world.'
- 21 According to Malawian officials, at least eighteen people were killed in two days of public unrest in that country – one of the biggest anti-government protests in sub-Saharan Africa in 2011. A further 41 people were injured, six critically. The protests sparked by worsening fuel shortages, rising prices, and high unemployment saw calls for President Bingu wa Mutharika to step down. President Mutharika came to power in 2004 and was re-elected in 2009. The heavy crackdown against opponents of the president was likely to intensify public anger against him with the coalition of 80 groups against him claiming that Malawi was facing its worst shortages in 47 years (it gained independence from Britain in 1964) and was turning into an 'autocratic kleptocracy'.

August

- 3 Ayaya Kassim, a Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) youth assembly chairman from Mbare, Zibabwe, was admitted to a hospital in Harare with serious burns after ZANU-PF youths reportedly poured hot cooking oil onto his face as he visited an MDC colleague. The case was reported to the police but no arrests were made. Over recent months, the ZANU-PF had intensified its political and physical attacks on the MDC ahead of a possible general election. Hundreds of MDC officials had been arrested, beaten up, tortured, and killed, in an upsurge of state-sponsored violence.
- 5 Maxwell Ncube, director of elections in Zhombe, in the Midlands province, for the Movement for Democratic Change-Movement (MDC-M), the smaller dissident faction of the Movement for Democratic Change led by Welshman Ncube, was abducted by unknown assailants (see 8 August).

Eliphaz Mukonoweshuro, Zimbabwean Public Service Minister since February 2009, died following a short illness. A member of the MDC, 58-year-old Mukonoweshuro had been taken ill six weeks earlier suffering from a heart-related ailment, and had been receiving specialist treatment at a hospital in Johannesburg, South Africa.

- 8 Maxwell Ncube was found murdered following his abduction by unknown assailants (see 5 August).
- 15-16 The death in an overnight house fire of General (retired) Solomon Mujuru, one of President Robert Mugabe's most likely successors, raised questions about who would succeed the 87-year-old leader as head of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), the dominant party in the fragile two-year coalition with the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). Mujuru, who died after his farmhouse 55 km south-west of Harare (the capital) caught fire, was the former head of Zimbabwe's armed forces and one of the most powerful figures in the ZANU-PF. He had been widely tipped to succeed Mugabe. Some analysts said that there were grounds for suspicion that Mujuru (62), had been assassinated by opponents within ZANU-PF. The police said that there were signs that Mujuru, who was alone in the house at the time of the fire, had tried to escape from the blazing thatched-roofed building. The cause of the fire was not immediately clear. Mujuru's wife, Joyce Mujuru, has served as vice president since December 2004.
- 15-19 The 61st meeting of the standing committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) was held in Geneva, Switzerland. The meeting launched a trust fund to secure the long-term survival of the African elephant, aiming to raise some US\$100 million over three years chiefly to enhance the enforcement of laws against poaching. The committee considered recent findings on poaching levels of African and Asian elephants and the illegal trade in ivory. A report prepared by CITES and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) found that levels of elephant poaching in 2010 were the highest since 2002. Poverty and poor governance were the driving factors, fuelled by an expanding demand for ivory in China. The committee also recognised poaching of rhinoceroses and the illegal trade of their horns as a major challenge, with the situation described as 'almost out of control'. All rhinoceros populations suffered from poaching, especially those of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), India, Mozambique, Nepal, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. According to a South African government report, 174 rhinos were illegally killed in South Africa in the first six months of 2011, compared with 330 in the whole of 2010 and 13 in 2007.

September

At least 30 people were arrested following an anti-government protest in Luanda, the Angolan capital. The protesters, estimated to number some 200 people, were calling for President José Eduardo dos Santos to relinquish power after some 32 years of rule. Several protesters, police officers, and journalists were injured during sporadic outbreaks of violence. The main opposition National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) said that the ‘violent acts committed ... against citizens exercising their rights are a result of the brutal nature of the regime and a grave violation of the constitution’ (see 26 September).

8 South African President Jacob Zuma appointed Judge Mogoeng Mogoeng as South Africa’s new chief justice, despite accusations that the judge had been lenient on rapists and was homophobic. Justice Mogoeng was a pastor in an evangelical church that condemned homosexuality. Opposition parties, social justice, women’s, and gay rights groups, and three bar associations had written submissions against the nomination, saying that they would fight Mogoeng’s appointment in the Constitutional Court. South Africa has one of the world’s highest incidences of rape.

Julius Malema, the controversial leader of the youth wing of the ruling African National Congress (ANC), was found guilty of ‘hate speech’ for singing ‘Shoot the Boer’, an apartheid-era liberation song calling on people to shoot white farmers. (‘Boer’ is the Afrikaans word for ‘farmer’.) Judge Colin Lamont, at Johannesburg’s South Gauteng High Court (sitting as Equality Court), prohibited the ANC and Malema from singing the song, even at private gatherings, saying: ‘No justification exists allowing the words to be sung’. Such songs were inappropriate in a society now struggling to redefine race relations, Lamont, J said. Malema had persisted in singing the song at rallies, despite a court interdict restraining him from doing so. The populist youth leader and other prominent ANC figures had argued that ‘Shoot the Boer’ was not a literal incitement to murder, but a celebration of the fight against minority rule. The finding did not carry a criminal penalty but Malema was ordered to pay some of the court costs. The civil case was brought by the Afrikaner civil rights group Afriforum, which argued that white farmers felt threatened by the song’s lyrics. On hearing the verdict, scores of Malema’s supporters outside the court immediately broke into the song, in a direct challenge to the ruling. Malema was already the subject of a separate ANC disciplinary hearing that could see him suspended or expelled from the party. (See *Afri-Forum v Julius Sello Malema* 2011 12 BCLR 1289 (EQC).)

14 A military aircraft crashed at Albano Machado airport in central Huambo province, Angola, killing all 30 passengers, including three

army generals and six civilians. The aircraft, an Embraer 120, crashed shortly after take-off. The six-strong crew survived the crash and were being treated for their injuries in a nearby military hospital.

- 20 The IMF's half-yearly 'World Economic Outlook' report was released and warned that the world economy had entered a 'dangerous new phase' in which there was danger of a return to recession in both the USA and the Euro-zone countries. The report lowered its growth forecast for the global economy to 4% in both 2011 and 2012 (reductions of 0,3 and 0,5 percentage points respectively). Although emerging economies were forecast to enjoy healthy, if slowing, growth rates, with China on 9% in 2012, India 7,5%, and sub-Saharan Africa averaging 5,8%, the developed economies were expected collectively to grow by less than 2%. The report warned that even this could be jeopardised if too severe fiscal consolidation weakened demand and inhibited lending.
- 21 The website of the South African daily newspaper *Business Day* reported that the ANC and Malema had applied to appeal against the judgment, (see 12 September) saying that Lamont, J had effectively imposed 'an absolute prohibition' on the song. In their application, Malema and his party said that the court had determined the case 'on the basis of its subjective views on the history of the struggle, and to the complete disregard of the nine-day-long evidence presented before it'.
- 23-25 The annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank were held in Washington DC. World Bank president, Robert Zoellick, spoke of the risk of economic contamination, saying that financial turmoil in the developed world threatened to destabilise the economies of small developing countries.
- 23 Speaking at the annual meetings of the IMF and World Bank, Christine Lagarde, managing director of the IMF, called for immediate action to support global economic growth, warning that world leaders faced the urgent challenge of the threat of a 'collapse in global demand'. Against a background of extreme volatility in international stock markets, Lagarde said that economic policy-making should not be driven by investor panic. However, no consensus emerged on measures to expand the €440 billion (US\$1.00 = 0.7397 euros as at 23 September 2011) European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF), created as part of the EU rescue plan to bail out Greece's sovereign debt crisis. The IMF said that only the European Central Bank (ECB) had the financial power to accomplish this, but it was reported that Germany was sceptical. Analysts agreed that mere bland statements of intent would make no impact on the situation.
- 26 The Reuters news agency reported that a protest in Luanda, the capital Angola, against prison sentences of up to three months handed down

to eighteen protesters involved in a demonstration against President dos Santos (see 3 September), was blocked by the security forces on 24 September.

October

- 4 South African Nobel peace prize recipient, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, angrily denounced the ruling African National Congress (ANC) as worse than the former oppressive apartheid regime after the Dalai Lama was forced to pull out of Tutu's 80th birthday celebrations because he had not been granted an entry visa. Tutu, who had invited the Tibetan spiritual leader to deliver a lecture to mark his birthday in Cape Town on 8 October, said that the government's decision was reminiscent of how blacks were treated under apartheid. The government denied accusations that it was bowing to pressure from China, its biggest trading partner, saying that the visa was still being processed.
- 10 The trial of two black farm workers accused of murdering Eugene Terreblanche, leader of the white extremist Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB), opened at a court in Ventersdorp, North West province. Chris Mahlangu, 28, a labourer at Terreblanche's farm, and a 16-year-old not identified for legal reasons, were charged with the murder in April 2010. Mahlangu pleaded not guilty to battering and hacking Terreblanche to death.
- 22 The Angolan government was accused of being in denial over a drought that had affected 1,8 million people because the crisis threatened to tarnish the country's image as a booming economy. Drinking water was a concern, particularly in Cunene and Namibe provinces. Cunene was the hardest-hit province, where an estimated 542 979 people (half the population) had been affected, especially farmers, including semi-nomadic communities, and children under five. Almost 1,2 million livestock were at risk.
- 24 South Africa's President Jacob Zuma dismissed two cabinet ministers and suspended South Africa's national Commissioner of the Police Service, after all three had been accused of involvement in corruption scandals. Sicelo Shiceka, Minister of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs since May 2009, was accused of using more than R10m in state funds on private first-class travel and sojourns at five-star hotels. Half of that sum was allegedly used to fund a visit to a convicted drug-dealing girlfriend in prison in Switzerland while claiming he was there on official business. Ms Gwen Mahlangu-Nkabinde, Public Works Minister since November 2010, was accused of unlawful conduct over the lease of a new police headquarters at grossly inflated prices along with General Bheki Cele, who had been

Commissioner of the Police Service since July 2009. All three denied wrongdoing. In a separate development, Zuma announced that same day that an independent commission that he had set up in September to re-examine a controversial multi-billion dollar arms deal agreed in 1999, would be headed by Willie Seriti, a judge at the Supreme Court of Appeal. Zuma only became president in 2009 after corruption charges relating to his alleged involvement in the deal to equip the country's armed forces were dropped.

- 27 The main opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) chose black woman Lindiwe Mazibuko, 31, as its parliamentary leader and effective deputy to its white overall leader, Helen Zille. With blacks now accounting for a fifth of the party's voters, the appointment was seen by analysts as a bid to break the widely held perception that the DA was a predominantly white movement
- 31 It was announced that the tiny mountain kingdom of Lesotho is to harness wind and water power in a \$15bn green project, the biggest of its kind in Africa. The Lesotho highland power project (LHPP) will generate 6 000 megawatts (MW) of wind power and 4 000 MW of hydropower, equivalent to about 5% of South Africa's electricity needs.

November

- 5 The UK's daily newspaper *The Independent* reported that soaring carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from China and the USA had driven the world's output of greenhouse gasses to its highest level in 2010. The report cited figures produced by the US-based Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Centre (CDIAC), which served as the primary climate-change data and information analysis centre of the US department of energy. The CDIAC concluded that much of the global increase was due to increased emissions from the world's largest fossil-fuel emitter, China, where emissions rose ten per cent to 8,15 billion tonnes.
- 9 The British daily newspaper *The Independent* citing a recent survey of 583 scientists published in the journal *Conservation Biology*, reported that a majority of professional conservationists agreed with the idea of 'species triage', whereby conservation efforts were concentrated on certain animals and plants that could be saved at the expense of species that were too difficult or costly to preserve in the wild.

The 2011 edition of the International Energy Agency (IEA)'s *World Energy Outlook* was released and concluded that the world had only five years to make a dramatic turnaround in policies if it was to avoid severe impacts of climate change. The report warned that civilisation could continue with 'business as usual' for only five more years before

- the total allowed budget of greenhouse gas emissions would be ‘locked in’. In that case, to meet the targets for warming, all new infrastructure built from 2017 onward would have to be completely emissions-free.
- 10 The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) published its 2011 ‘Red List’ of species in danger of extinction, the result of an assessment of 61 900 species. Despite the action of conservation programmes, some 25% of mammals were at risk of extinction. Reassessments of several Rhinoceros species showed that the subspecies of the Black Rhino in western Africa, the Western Black Rhino (*Diceros bicornis longipes*) had officially been declared extinct. The subspecies of the White Rhino in central Africa, the Northern White Rhino (*Ceratotherium simum cottoni*) was currently teetering on the brink of extinction, and was listed as ‘possibly extinct in the wild’. The Javan Rhino (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*) was also making its last stand, as the subspecies *Rhinoceros sondaicus annamiticus* was ‘probably extinct’, following the poaching of what was thought to be the last animal in Vietnam in 2010.
- 18 In a report released at its 34th session held in Uganda, the UN’s Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) urged countries to make disaster management plans to adapt to the growing risk of extreme weather linked to climate change. The report said that an increase in heat waves was almost certain, while heavier rainfall, more floods, stronger cyclones, landslides, and more intense droughts were likely across the globe in the 21st century as the earth’s climate warmed.
- 21-25 At the 23rd annual meeting of the Montreal Protocol ozone treaty in Bali, Indonesia, a strong majority of the 108 parties supported a plea by island nations to phase down highly potent hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). However, a small group of parties led by India and China asserted that HFCs could only be addressed as part of a wider climate treaty, and blocked the start of formal negotiations, thereby delaying action for at least another year.
- 21 The latest analysis of observations from the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) Global Atmosphere Watch (GAW), published in the *WMO Greenhouse Gas Bulletin*, concluded that the globally averaged mixing ratios of CO₂, methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (N₂O) reached ‘new highs’ in 2010.
- 22 The BBC reported that a new batch of emails and other documents from the UK University of East Anglia (UEA)’s Climatic Research Unit (CRU) had been released, a number relating to work with the IPCC. A similar release in 2009 triggered the so-called ‘ClimateGate’ affair and accusations of fraud by the CRU that inquiries later dismissed.

- 23 A new study released by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) offered a more positive assessment by claiming that it was ‘technologically and economically feasible’ to cut emissions by 2020 to a level that could keep a global, 21st century, temperature rise under 2 degrees Celsius. The study (*Bridging the Emissions Gap*) asserted that accelerated uptake of renewable energy, fuel switching, and energy efficiency improvements could deliver a large portion of the necessary cuts.

December

The corruption index 2011 (Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)) published by Transparency International (PI) showed North Korea to be the most corrupt country on the planet. The CPI scores countries on a scale of zero to 10, with zero indicating high levels of corruption and 10, low levels. North Korea had a score of 1 out of 10. According to PI corruption around the world remains a deeply entrenched, global concern. In 2011 two-thirds of countries covered by the index were given scores less than 5 – which meant they were considered significantly corrupt. According to the chairwoman of PI, Huguette Labelle, corruption persisted to be a major global issue. The planet’s least corrupt country remained New Zealand (for the fourth year running) with a score of 9,5 out of 10 while South Africa came in at 64th place with a score of 4,1. The highest-placed African country was Botswana with a score of 6,1.

- 1 On World Aid’s day (1 December), Dr Eric Goemaere, the Belgian Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) doctor who led the early battle against Aids in South Africa warned that a cut in grants from the Global Fund for Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria (‘unless it got more money’) would ‘turn back the clock in the battle against Aids’ and would threaten a decade of progress against the infection in Africa. He also said that ‘the new people [in power] want something with their name on it. You can put your name on bridges and monuments, but you should not play that game with people’s lives.’
- 9 It was reported that in response to public opinion, Malawi planned to review laws banning homosexuality. The move came just days after the United States announced it would use foreign aid to pressure countries to decriminalise homosexual activity. Malawi was condemned by US President Barack Obama and international activists in 2010 after it sentenced two men to fourteen years imprisonment for entering into that country’s first gay ‘marriage’. The Minister of Justice, Ephraim Chiume, reportedly said that the Malawian government would review the provisions of the penal code concerning ‘indecent practices and unnatural acts’. He also said that ‘[i]n view of the sentiments from the general public and in response to public opinion regarding certain laws, the government wished to announce to the Malawi nation that it

was submitting the relevant laws and provisions of laws to the law commission for review’.

- 22 It was reported that Portuguese Consul General to Mozambique, Graça Gonçalves Pereira, said that there had been a 30% to 40% increase in the number of Portuguese migrants choosing to move to Mozambique over the past two years as a result of the economic melt-down in Portugal and the rest of Europe. She added that the phenomenon was no surprise since ‘[i]t’s natural to look for something better, and Portuguese people always emigrate. It’s been a habit of ours since the 16th century.’