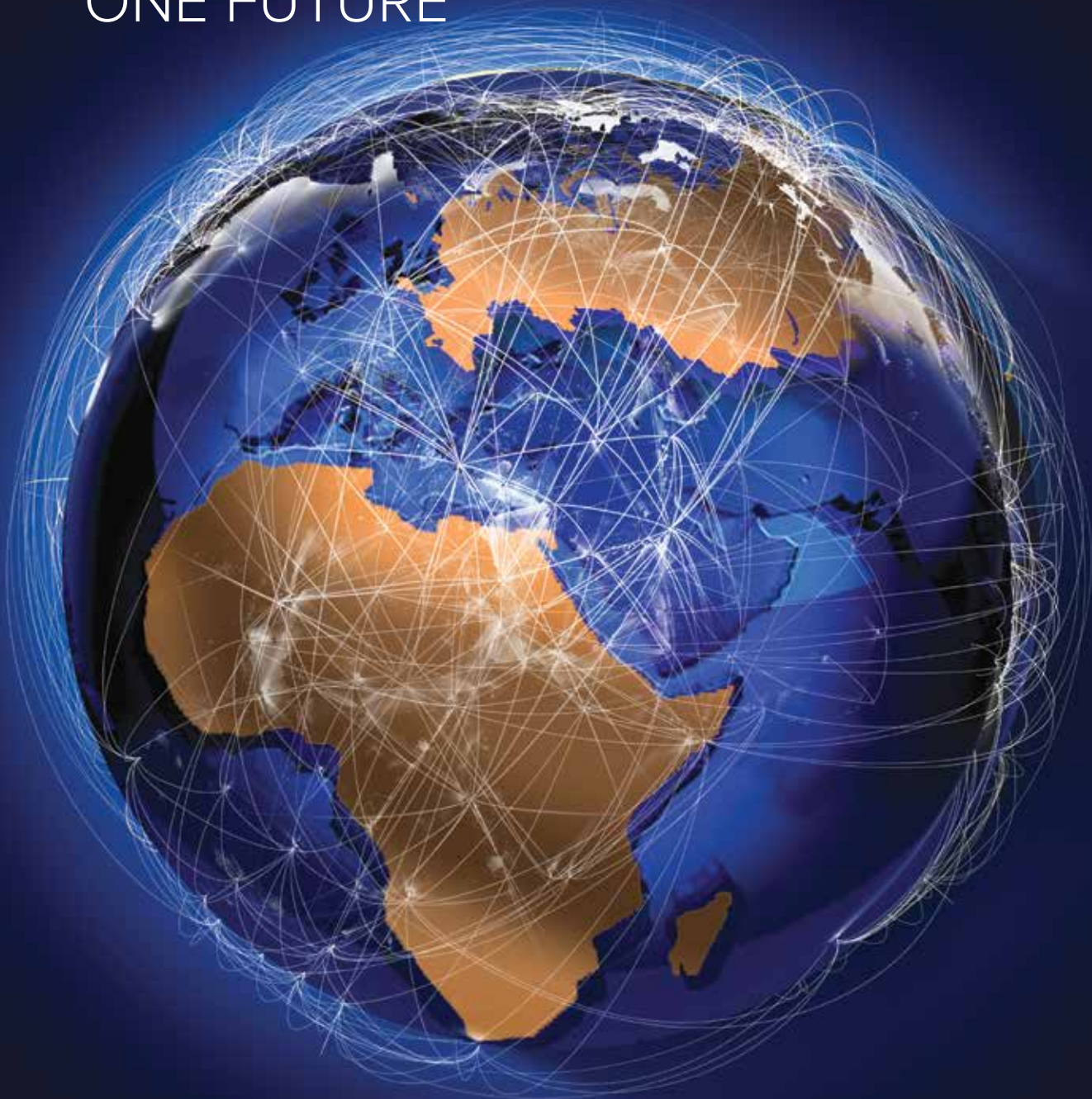


FOR PEACE, SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT

RUSSIA AFRICA

SPECIAL ISSUE

ONE PLANET,
ONE FUTURE



Special Issue

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MOSCOW OFFERS THE BEST

On the eve of the Russia–Africa Summit, Sergey Oposhnyansky, General Director of National Review, met with Sergey Cheremin, Minister of the Moscow Government, Head of the Department for Foreign Economic and International Relations of Moscow, and asked him to answer questions about the directions and prospects of cooperation between the Russian capital and the countries of the African continent.

Sergey Yevgenievich, today the African direction occupies a special place in Russia's foreign policy. Moscow, as the capital of the state, also demonstrates a high interest in cooperation with partners in Africa. How and when did this interest arise?

Unlike Western countries, Russia has never pursued a colonial policy aimed at ruthlessly exploiting the population and natural resources of African countries. This is clearly seen in the example of the USSR, which provided them with military-technical, material, humanitarian and diplomatic assistance in the struggle for independence and sovereignty. Over the post-war decades, hundreds of thousands of students from the poorest continent were educated in



our universities. It was the Russian Federation that made the unprecedented decision to write off the debt of African states, in the amount of more than \$120 billion.

Today, Africa is attractive for its colossal natural reserves and human potential, which make it possible to carry out large-scale infrastructural and socio-economic projects. Megacities are booming, attracting millions of new residents. This dictates the need to create a completely new urban environment, with modern transport, comfortable living conditions, good ecology, and inclusive services in the fields of education, healthcare, and security.

Moscow has taken a giant step forward in recent years. We receive the highest ratings for the development of transport infrastructure and the social sphere, and the introduction of digital technologies. Our experience is in great demand by urban agglomerations in Africa, so there is great potential for cooperation. For example, during the Days of Moscow in Algiers in March this year, a Memorandum of Cooperation between the two capitals, for 2023-2025, was signed for the first time. It involves the exchange of experience in the fields of urban planning, modernization of transport infrastructure, and the use of digital technologies in urban processes, as well as cooperation in the fields of health, education, the preservation of historical and cultural values, and the development of tourism.

"Russia has been and remains a strategic partner of Algeria. Our countries are connected by long-term friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation," said Abdennur Rabekhi, governor of the capital, at a meeting with the Moscow delegation. "The possibilities of implementing the most important infrastructure projects and using Moscow's best practices in key municipal sectors are of particular interest to us."

On the African continent, where more than one and a half billion people live, there is an active process of urbanization. Many African cities see Moscow as an example of the harmonious implementation of modern technological approaches, and this is not surprising – the Russian capital is an ultra-modern city, where all spheres of management are well set up. We can be rightfully proud of excellent transport, logistics solutions, and advanced technologies in the fields of urban economy, IT, healthcare and education. This is huge export potential for our companies.

With which countries is cooperation developing most successfully?

In recent years, relationships have been established between Moscow and Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Tu-

nia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Mozambique, South Africa, and the Republic of Rwanda. I am sure that this list will continue to grow. We plan to organize business missions to Angola, Tanzania, and Nigeria.

In what areas is interaction developing most rapidly?

First of all, I would like to highlight trade and economic agreements. The time of challenges dictates its own conditions: we are in search of new partners, markets and logistics opportunities. Increased interest in the African direction is shown not only by state leaders and government officials, but also by the business community. Moscow products are supplied to 49 African countries. The direction is promising because the African continent will be the leader of world consumption: according to experts, by 2030 the population of African countries will increase to 1.8 billion people, and by 2050 it may reach 2.4 billion people. We provide comprehensive support to city companies wishing to declare their presence on the African continent. This includes, among other things, the promotion of products to the markets of African countries, financing participation in industry exhibitions, and organizing business missions. The round table meeting "Directions for the Development of Trade and Economic Cooperation between Russia and Africa" was held by the Moscow Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Experts have unanimously expressed the opinion that it is necessary to create trading houses for a permanent presence in key African countries.

What goods from Moscow are in demand in African markets?

Most of the capital's exports to Africa are industrial products. Moscow enterprises export radio navigation instruments, measuring equipment, and engineering products.

African governments have set themselves the task of improving the quality of life of the population, so there are requests for the purchase of medical equipment. For example, Morocco needs to purchase X-ray machines for patient screening, and the supply of equipment by the Moscow company Amico has been established. There is active promotion of Russian vaccines against poliomyelitis, yellow fever, hemorrhagic fever, and other dangerous diseases.

In June 2023, the Moscow Government took part in Africa Health ExCon 2023, one of the largest exhibitions in the field of healthcare, which was held in Cairo. A collective Moscow stand brought together 15 research organizations and companies in the

medical industry. Members of the Moscow delegation visited clinics specializing in innovative methods of treatment, as there is also a lot to learn from our African partners.

Our agro-industrial complex is also successfully showing itself. After a break, the supply to Benin of poultry by-products and meat was resumed. The capital's ice cream producers export it to Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Chocolate from Moscow factories is very popular in Libya.

African states are interested not only in Russian goods, but also in services, especially in the field of education. In the 2022–2023 academic year, more than 20 thousand students from Africa were studying at Moscow universities. I would like to note a landmark event: the name of Patrice Lumumba, an outstanding fighter against colonialism, was recently returned to the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia. This symbolic act reflects the recognition of the priority of our cooperation with Africa.

What is the place of cultural cooperation programs with Africa in Moscow's policy?

We have extensive experience in holding events dedicated to foreign countries - India, Thailand, Indonesia, Latin America. I think now is the best time to demonstrate the customs and traditions of African countries to a wide audience within the framework of thematic festivals and forums. On the part of Muscovites, there is demand for acquaintance with authentic African culture and unusual African cuisine. By the way, the guests of national festivals then enthusiastically talk about their stereotypes that were destroyed in one day in relation to a particular people or state.

There are many plans. The Moscow Government will continue to actively work on the implementation of projects that benefit both Muscovites and residents of the largest metropolitan areas in Africa. At present, the Moscow Government has reached agreements on the development of cultural ties with the mayors' offices of Johannesburg, Algiers, and a number of other major cities on the continent.

This year you had a lot of foreign business trips, including to Africa. What do you particularly remember?

I will highlight, perhaps, a trip to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria in March 2023. We had fruitful negotiations with the authorities of the capital, with the Secretary General of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, local self-government bodies and the development of the territory of Algeria, A. Hamimid, the Minister of Industry A. Zagdar, and the Minister of Culture S. Mouludji. The Russian delegation included

representatives of large companies – Mosinzhproekt, Transmashholding, Intermobility, Rosatom, etc. Important infrastructure projects were discussed: about the construction of a new railway station, a light surface metro, the expansion of the city tram network, the localization of the production of Russian diesel locomotives, the supply of housing and communal equipment, information technology, the organization of recycling and disposal of waste, the reclamation of landfills. As part of the cultural program, a performance of the Moscow State Academic Dance Theater "Gzhel" took place, which was enthusiastically greeted by the audience.

In June 2023, in one of the squares in the center of Moscow next to the Institute of African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, a solemn event was held in the presence of the President of Algeria dedicated to naming this place after the national hero of Algeria, Abd al-Qadir.

Are there any difficulties in cooperation with African countries?

Of course any entrepreneur, even a very experienced one, is alarmed by novelty. Sometimes it is not easy to get out of the so-called comfort zone, and in this case, to reorient from the usual European markets to the African direction. There is a lack of knowledge and information. There are problems with making payments. It is not always clear in which currency to pay – access to the dollar is limited, and national means of payment do not inspire confidence. However, I think we will soon be able to overcome these difficulties. It will require the consolidated work of the government and the business community; we need to search for compromises and solutions to problems. Logistics is built in different ways: it is easier to deliver goods from Russia to North and West Africa, but it is more difficult to trade with the South and East. The political pressure of the West on the governments of African states should not be underestimated. But we are looking ahead with optimism. I am confident that the holding of large-scale events, such as the Russia–Africa Summit, will ensure the progressive development of Russian-African relations.

What personally "hooked" you on Africa?

Usually, when we talk about Africa, we consider it as a single space. However, there are 54 states on this continent, where hundreds of nationalities and ethnic groups live. Such a variety of cultures, languages, and religions is truly fascinating. And the awareness of the tragic colonial past of the African population, as well as the inexhaustible desire of the people of Africa to live and create, to be free and independent, touches the depths of the soul ■

Oleg OZEROV, Ambassador-at-Large of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Head of the Secretariat of the Russia–Africa Partnership Forum

COOPERATION WILL EXPAND AND GAIN MOMENTUM

High-level contacts between Russia and African countries, with the participation of heads of state, government agencies, business, and public organizations, are becoming a regular practice. The second Russia–Africa Summit and Economic Forum will be held in St Petersburg. What has been done on the African agenda since the previous meeting, and what significant results can be noted in this area? At our request, this and other questions are answered by Ambassador-at-Large of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Head of the Secretariat of the Russia–Africa Partnership Forum, Oleg Ozerov

The "reset" of Russian-African relations began after the first Russia–Africa summit, unprecedented in the history of our country and the African continent, held in October 2019 in Sochi. It was attended by representatives of all 54 African countries of the continent, 45 of which were at the level of heads of state and government, as well as by the heads of executive bodies of 8 regional organizations. The Economic Forum, organized on the sidelines of the summit, was attended by over 6,000 participants.

The development of relations with African countries has been defined by the leadership of our country as one of the most important tasks of Russian foreign policy – and this is entirely justified, since in the context of the emerging new world order, the importance of the African macro-region in the system of international relations is rapidly increasing. Another factor is also important: despite the enormous pressure from the West, the conscious decision of Africans in favor of developing long-term relations with Russia confirms the reputation of our country, which has been tested

for decades, as a reliable partner of the continent. In different parts of Africa, the role of the USSR in the national liberation movement, its decisive contributions to the formation of statehood, the economy, and combat-ready armed forces, are well remembered. Russia in Africa is deservedly respected and can count on the expansion of multifaceted and equal cooperation.

The above-mentioned unprecedented sanctions pressure, and the information war unleashed against our country by the United States and its satellites, can slow down, but not change the trend towards the development of our cooperation – and are not able to prevent it from being filled with the current substantive agenda. This can be confirmed by the fact that the vector of comprehensive development of relations following the results of the first Russia-Africa summit was maintained even in the face of large-scale restrictions in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic. So, by the end of 2021, it was possible to compensate for the drop in Russian-African trade caused by the pandemic and return to the level of 2019: \$17 billion.



New formats and directions for our joint efforts with Africans are now being created. Among the promising areas are energy, oil and gas, transport infrastructure, aircraft and automotive, computer and telecommunication technologies, and agriculture. In Africa, markets for Russian non-resource and non-energy exports are expanding, followed by a growing demand for various services. And here we have something to offer our African partners: our country has broad competencies that range from agriculture to engineering. Russian companies are showing increasing interest in working in Africa. Among them are exporters of agricultural products, fertilizers, engineering products, equipment for the mining industry and metallurgy – and this list is far from exhaustive. In turn, the growing demand in Africa can become a catalyst for the diversification of Russian exports and the growth of the production of highly processed goods. In counterbalance to Western restrictions, solutions are being developed related to ensuring interstate trade and economic cooperation, and reforming our export-import and investment operations, which will have substantial resilience to any form of external pressure.

The issues of establishing specialized mechanisms to assist domestic business to enter the markets of the African continent and certify Russian goods are currently being translated into practice. Progress is noted in the implementation of the project of the Russian industrial zone in Egypt. The processes have been launched for creating an African-oriented leasing company and a comprehensive digital platform for the business community, as well as a specialized investment fund for participation in financing foreign energy projects, within the framework of which the continent has been selected as a pilot direction. There has been an increase in the number of visits to the continent by Russian representatives, including the head of the Secretariat of the Russia-Africa Partnership Forum, as well as events aimed at developing Russian-African relations at Russian international forums – primarily SPIEF, but also through the Federation Council, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, United Russia, the Institute for African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, key Russian universities, and public organizations.

One of the dynamically developing areas of our policy on the African track is the development of relations with the African Union. The gradual build-up of efforts in this area of cooperation culminated in the signing of memorandums of understanding between Russia and the African Union, and between the EAEU and the AU Commission, at the 2019 Russia–Africa Summit in Sochi. The volume of interaction with BRICS – in which one of the largest players on the continent, South Africa, plays a significant role – is increasing. Finally, African countries account for almost half of the seats in the Gas Exporting Countries Forum and OPEC. Together with Africans, we can bring forward an agenda in these organizations that includes support for domestic consumption, as well as reformatting the global hydrocarbon market and existing pricing mechanisms.

In addition, tangible progress in the humanitarian sphere has been made for Africa. In particular, we refer to doubling the quota of state scholarships for applicants from Africa, returning the name of Patrice Lumumba to the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, launching the process of forming a comprehensive network of open education centers in the Russian language in 28 countries

of the African continent, and programs in 2023–2025 to assist African countries in the prevention and control of infectious diseases.

Today the Russian Foreign Ministry continues to take active steps to build mutually beneficial full-scale cooperation between our country and African states, including with a view to creating a reliable social and economic infrastructure, and ensuring food, energy and other dimensions of security for the countries of the continent.

In response to the unfriendly actions of Western countries which are reducing the number of our diplomatic missions, the Russian Foreign Ministry has announced its intention to strengthen its diplomatic presence on the African continent. How are these plans being implemented?

We are actively working on issues related to the opening of new embassies and trade missions, which are designed to consolidate the development of our ties and provide the necessary political, diplomatic and expert support for promising projects on the continent. We hope that a number of our plans will be implemented this year. Without the opening of new embassies, it will be more difficult to do this.



In Africa, in addition to the former colonizing countries, other external players are working over the long term. What place does Russia occupy among them? What are the specifics, and perhaps the advantages, of Russian policies?

At the moment, Russia can offer something that no other leading state or international organization is yet able to provide. We are talking most of all about our unique opportunities to strengthen almost all the components of their national sovereignty.

Today as in the past, African countries can count on Moscow as an ally in the fight against manifestations of neocolonialism and postcolonialism, in solidarity with them in creating self-sufficient economic potential, obtaining modern technologies, and preparing the personnel and scientific groundwork necessary for an economic and technological burst forward. The Russian Federation is ready to work in concrete areas, including food assistance, the implementation of energy projects, technology transfer, educational programs, and the strengthening of national security.

In the modern world, the very concept of "security" has undergone significant changes. If until recently it was almost exclusively about the military component of security, now this term includes many areas. Russia offers Africa its knowledge in strengthening various aspects of the comprehensive security of states. In particular, we are talking about ensuring information security, combating terrorism, and training specialists for the effective work of specialized structures: customs, tax and other bodies.

For our African friends, reliance on Russia in a political sense means, among other things, the opportunity to significantly strengthen their position as an authoritative participant in the international legal space. A striking example of this is the Syrian Arab Republic, which in close partnership with us has preserved its statehood, despite the efforts of the West, and is returning to regional and global politics.

Russia began its full-scale return to the continent relatively recently, but the pace of our interaction is rapidly gaining speed. The second summit in St Petersburg is an important milestone that will undoubtedly give a serious impetus to our multi-vector cooperation in the long term with our African friends.

What initiatives and proposals for African countries does Russia bring to a new stage in its international policy? What are the priorities?

The core idea of the upcoming large-scale meeting in the "northern capital" is Russia's readiness to contribute in every possible way to strengthening the sovereignty of African states. It is this message that is relevant to the current situation in the world, against the backdrop of the West's tough confrontation with those who do not intend to fit into its value system and neocolonial paradigm.

In a continuation of support for the anti-colonial struggle of African peoples, Russia is ready in every possible way to continue to help Africa, where the USSR's contribution to its liberation and independence is well remembered. My country firmly supports Africans in their quest to complete the decolonization process which a number of states are involved in, including the smallest ones, such as the Union of the Comoros and Mauritius.

Our main difference from the West is that Russia does not see the countries of the continent as the raw material base of its own economy. Our interest lies primarily in promoting the development of local energy and electricity markets, where we have a significant groundwork, primarily in the field of peaceful nuclear energy. This approach is in accordance with the interests of many African states, which no longer want to remain raw material appendages of the West – and thus would like to use their resources for their own development, rather than for the replacement of Russian hydrocarbons in Western markets (to which they are now actively being pushed by Washington and its allies).

In addition to the transfer of technologies and knowledge, building the potential of the economies of the macroregion could be contributed to by infrastructure projects and by the systematic development of the legal and regulatory framework. In this regard, one of the priorities is the creation of capacities for processing energy resources for the needs of African countries, including for the production of fertilizers.

As a result of the St. Petersburg summit, it is planned to adopt a political declaration and an action plan for the period 2023–2026 on the main areas of cooperation in politics, economics and the humanitarian sphere. These documents are designed to set a long-term direction for the work of the Russia–Africa Partnership Forum. Further, such work will be based on the principles of ensuring the sustainable development of African states and promoting integration processes on the continent. ■

| Irina ABRAMOVA, Director of the Institute of African Studies

RUSSIA NEEDS TO SHOW MORE COURAGE IN AFRICA

"Despite the fact that in the 90s, after the Soviet Union ceased to exist, in fact we curtailed our activities in Africa – Africans do not hold a grudge against Russia. They remember that it was our country that made a decisive contribution to the liberation of Africa from colonialism and stood at the foundations of the creation of the national economies of many states of the continent," says Irina Abramova, director of the Institute of African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences.



Africa today is an extremely tasty morsel for which a serious struggle has flared up. The fact is that during the time that we "forgot" about the continent after the collapse of the USSR, many competitors appeared on it. Along with the old players – the United States and the European Union – there is China, and India, and Brazil, and Turkey, and the states of the Persian Gulf. In short, Moscow now needs to work hard to build new links of connection with all African states.

Such a keen interest of various players in Africa is understandable. Africa includes 54 states, so it accounts for 25% of the votes in the UN. Further, in 15–20 years almost a third of the world's population will live on the continent, according to experts. Already, 60% of its inhabitants are people under 25 years old. Today, Africa's consumer market is growing by leaps and bounds. It doubles every five years. That is, in the coming years, world trade flows will need to be significantly reoriented to the interests of Africans.

Today, in the context of the restructuring of international economic relations and the weakening of the role of the dollar, particular value is attached to real wealth, such as raw materials. And the African continent has colossal reserves of natural resources, the cost of extraction of which is extremely low. For a number of them, Africa ranks first or second in the world. This includes cobalt, without which military production and the "green economy" will not be able to develop, manganese, bauxite, chromium, copper, platinum and gold; in its depths there are significant reserves of lithium, tantalum, niobium and other elements that are extremely important for modern high-tech industries.

It is not surprising that the trade turnover with African countries of the European Union, for example, is currently about 300 billion dollars, and of China – more than 250 billion. The United States, by the way, did not pay due attention to Africa for a long time, but now under Joe Biden, they have become very active. The main task of the United States in Africa remains to counter the "harmful activities" of Russia and China on the continent. At the last US-Africa Summit, which took place in December 2022, Biden announced the allocation of \$54 billion to Africa over 3 years. At the same time, money will be given only to those countries that behave "correctly," i.e. follow Washington's instructions in everything.

Against this background, the trade turnover between Russia and Africa looks much more modest. Its peak came in 2018, when it was \$20.4 billion. Now it has dropped to 16–17 billion dollars. We mainly supply non-resource, non-energy export goods to Africa: various types of equipment, wood, chemical prod-



ucts, fertilizers, grain, sunflower oil, corn. Mainly agricultural products and textiles, as well as some types of minerals, are brought to us from Africa.

All this, of course, is minuscule, since the potential of our trade and economic ties is enormous. Now, when the vector of Moscow's foreign economic activity has changed due to Western sanctions, we need to radically reconsider our attitude towards Africa, to seriously deal with this continent – where out of 54 countries there is not a single one who would treat us badly.

Yes, in the 90s, after the Soviet Union ceased to exist, in fact we abandoned the Africans. But believe me, they do not hold a grudge against Russia. Actually, it is surprising that after more than 50 years, Africans still have a fresh historical memory of what a huge contribution the Soviet Union made to their achievement of political and economic independence in the 60s. They remember that it was our country that stood at the foundations of the creation of the national economies of many African states.

In this sense, we can say that in the struggle for Africa, Moscow today has a clear advantage over Brussels, Washington, and all other competitors.

After all, the way the West is acting now in Africa is nothing more than a new colonialism. It wants to turn Africa into its raw materials appendage, to support a minimum standard of living there but to maintain technological dependence on the United States and Europe.

We really invested quite a lot in Africa, but did not have time to receive the dividends, because the 90s fell upon us. At that time, we completely reoriented ourselves to the West, and our assets – including our

industrial enterprises, infrastructure facilities, scientific and cultural centers – everything was at the mercy of the West.

Indeed, despite the continuing positive attitude towards Russia, today we will have to fight for Africa. Today, Africans are waiting for us to be more active on the continent, and not just to declare our desire to develop relations with Africa.

The fact is that clearly Russia has lacked assertiveness so far in defending its interests. We need to be more courageous. Because of all this, we often lose not only in Africa, but also in other regions of the world. Washington promised to provide economic assistance to Africa in the amount of 54 billion dollars – so be it. And why doesn't Moscow declare that we will give more: 60, or even 70 billion dollars. But – from the Russian gold and foreign exchange reserves frozen by the West. Let Africans on all international platforms – in the UN, in the IMF, in the WTO, in the World Bank, in the EU – demand that sanctions be lifted from Russia and that its reserves be unfrozen. If they do, we will immediately provide the promised amount to Africa. Why not make such a sensible PR move?!

Today Africa expects from Russia not so much finances and loans, as technologies – including high-tech equipment, localization of Russian production and training. On the continent they have known and loved our equipment since Soviet times; it is in great demand there. Africans, for example, are happy to drive Russian UAZ vehicles and use our KAMAZ trucks. But they want us not just to supply them – but

to localize our production on the continent and train professional personnel, to build factories for the production of vehicles, mining complexes, and factories for the processing of raw materials and fuel. Cooperation in the energy, agricultural, space and information spheres can also be very promising.

During recent visits to Africa, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov frankly asked his colleagues: what do you expect from Russia, what development of relations, what is the theme? And Africans identified four main areas in which they want to cooperate with our country: security in a broad sense (including food, military and economic components), technology transfer, education, and health

I repeat, today Russia needs to resolve all these specific issues not with words, but with deeds. After all, the decisions of the First Russia-Africa Summit and Economic Forum, held in Sochi in 2019, have not yet been fully implemented. Of course, we can say that COVID-19 interfered, but unfortunately this would not be the whole truth. Do not deceive yourself. And you can't just tell Africans all the time that they are important to us, we will support them in the anti-colonial struggle – but at the same time, not giving them anything. It won't work that way.

In short, given that Africa is the fastest growing market in the world and the fastest growing population in the world, we need to actively engage with them now. Otherwise, it will be too late – and however ridiculous it sounds today, in 30 years we will turn into the younger brother of Africa. So let's not miss our chance. ■



NUMBERS AND FACTS



Africa is home to 60% of the world's uncultivated arable land.

If agricultural productivity is increased, experts say African countries will be able to produce 2–3 times more grain, fruit and vegetables, and livestock products.

Africa is now experiencing a real population explosion: in the coming years about half of its population will be people under 25 years old.

Africa now has a population of 1.44 billion people. And in 30 years, according to forecasts, this figure will grow to 2.4 billion people. Today it is 16% of the world figure; in 2050, it will already be 25%.

With this explosive demographic growth, according to analysts, the average age of citizens is decreasing. Approximately half of the 2.4 billion population in the coming years will be under the age of 25. Consequently, experts conclude, there will be a large modern workforce in Africa.



Africa needs at least \$127 billion in investment per year to modernize the energy network, land and water transport networks, water pipelines, and sanitation.

By 2025, this figure will grow to more than \$200 billion. In Africa, it is also profitable to invest in the construction of ports, railways and roads. In addition, data center services, financial and logistics services, and online stores are in demand in the countries of the continent.



Sub-Saharan Africa has 10% of the world's oil reserves, 40% of gold, and 80% of platinum.

However, one should not overestimate the role of natural resources in the future prosperity of the continent. According to a 2019 report by Goldman Sachs, commodities have accounted for only about 30% of Africa's GDP growth since 2000. McKinsey & Co reports that the aggregate GDP growth rate of African oil-producing countries in 2010–2015 decreased by 3.3% compared to 2000–2010, while for the rest of the continent this figure increased by 0.3%.



THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATIVE CONTENT IS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN THE BUILDING OF RUSSIA–AFRICA RELATIONS



Ivan POLYAKOV,
Chairman of the “TV BRICS”
international network

The BRICS association sees the development and strengthening of a new architecture of international relations – a multipolar world – as one of its priority tasks. Since the first BRICS summit in 2009, the role of BRICS has increased and strengthened. It is obvious that the formation of the institutional foundations of the BRICS association required Russia and its partners to strengthen the international and global information dialogue.

In 2017, at the BRICS summit in Xiamen, China, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the initiative, supported by the other BRICS leaders, to create a common TV channel for the five countries. This is how the international network TV BRICS appeared, the key goals of which were to build and strengthen relations with the national audiences of the BRICS, create a single window of access to the leading media of the BRICS countries to promote a unified agenda, distribute content in the national languages of the BRICS in a multi-platform format, and form a positive image of the association and each country individually. The thematic content of TV BRICS was based on international and economic relations, and scientific, technical, cultural and humanitarian cooperation.

African countries are among the most active players in the TV BRICS content exchange system. Against the

backdrop of the rapid transformation of the architecture of international relations, TV BRICS initiated large-scale humanitarian and educational/informational work to promote Russian culture in Africa, in the interests of establishing stable and trusting relations between Russia and African countries. The list of key partners of TV BRICS includes the largest media of South Africa: African News Agency (ANA), Moja Media Group (BRICS TV, ROOT TV, TELESUR Africa), and the DURBAN TV channel. African colleagues make a significant contribution to the creation and strengthening of a unified communication space, and participate in the formation of a common agenda in the interests of global stability, security and innovative growth. In turn, TV BRICS integrates South African content into the media context of the BRICS+ countries. The BRICS+ format involves the



Vladimir Putin took part in the XIV BRICS Summit via videoconference

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consolidation of the BRICS countries with the states that are members of the regional unions of the EAEU, MERCOSUR, ASEAN, etc. Due to the well-established mechanism for exchanging content, viewers from Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa and other countries have the opportunity to watch news, programs and films created by African directors and journalists.

Among the African partner countries of TV BRICS (outside “the five”) are TV channels and digital platforms of Zimbabwe and Mozambique. For example, the Mozambican channel Televisãode Moçambique (TVM) is very successful in promoting the image of its country in the international media space. The information exchange between TV BRICS and TVM allows us to tell an international audience about the opportunities that Mozambique is ready to offer to the world community. And taking into account that the audience coverage of TVM is a third of that country's population, TV BRICS successfully promotes the unified agenda of the BRICS+ countries in the Mozambican information field.

On the TV BRICS channel, you can see auteur cinema from Egypt or learn, for example, about the current work of the African National Congress. We try to cover significant events of the entire African continent, and interact with a number of African diplomatic missions in Moscow. Along with shared content, TV BRICS demonstrates in its programs and special reports an unprecedented example of high-quality joint production of information and analytical content. We are talking about the creation of such projects as the first international documentary film of the joint editorial office of TV BRICS, "Dostoevsky Intercontinental," or a television film about the cooperation of the

BRICS countries in the field of peaceful space exploration, "BRICS Space: For sustainable development – both on Earth and beyond."

An example of TV BRICS activities in promoting Russian culture is the regular publication in the leading media of the five countries of the materials of the Russian edition on the historical and cultural heritage of Russia, contemporary art, folk crafts, and the national identity of the peoples of Russia, as well as on major international cultural events with the participation of Russia. The international network is also engaged in the promotion of Russian as a foreign language in universities, educational and cultural centers of the BRICS countries, and is working on the festival distribution of Russian film and television production. Among the latest projects on the African track are: screenings in South Africa of films from the BRICS countries at the One People Film Festival and of films about travel in Russia at the International Tourism Film Festival Africa, and the photo exhibition “Fragments of Russia: Through the lens” in Stellenbosch, South Africa. Representatives of cultural, scientific, public and diplomatic circles of Russia and Africa were involved in these projects. The work they have done undoubtedly contributes to the strengthening of relations between Russia and African states, and brings our peoples closer together.

We hope for a further progressive expansion of cooperation between Russia and the countries of the African continent in the media sphere. We intend to continue to develop concepts, standards, criteria, and information approaches to solving the key tasks facing our countries. ■



Alexander VORONKOV,
Regional Vice-President and Director for the
Middle East and North Africa, Rosatom

A NEW NUCLEAR POWER PLANT WILL PROVIDE EGYPT WITH CLEAN ENERGY

The construction of a nuclear power plant, led by the Russian corporation Rosatom, began in El Dabaa a year ago. What is the significance of this project for Egypt, and what prospects does it open up for its energy market and the country's economy as a whole?

The project of the nuclear power plant in El Dabaa is nothing less in terms of importance than the open-

ing of a new page in the history of Russian-Egyptian interstate relations. This will be the first nuclear power plant on the continent with generation 3+ technology, making Egypt a regional technological leader – the only country in the region with a nuclear power plant with the most modern safety systems. The share of energy from the El Dabaa nuclear power plant in the country's energy balance will be about 10%. According to our calculations, about 20% of the country's population (20 million people)



can be provided with electricity thanks to this station. It will be a source of stable, environmentally friendly electricity, since there are no harmful CO2 emissions during operation. The commissioning of the nuclear power plant will allow Egypt to increase its share of low-carbon electricity generation to 21% and significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, by 15 million tons annually, which is important for Egypt's successful implementation of climate policy.

The construction of the nuclear power plant is already having a significant positive effect on the country's GDP. The revenue of local contractors and subcontractors involved in construction is growing. There is also an indirect effect, thanks to new orders for enterprises in related industries. Suppliers of materials, construction equipment, utilities and other services provided by local companies to project participants also benefit. According to our estimates, during the construction of the El Dabaa NPP, the added value to the GDP of the Arab Republic of Egypt from the implementation of the project will be about 4 billion US dollars, or about 1% of Egypt's GDP. Finally, the long-term effect of using nuclear technologies to improve the quality of life should be noted, since in addition to energy, they are used in many important areas, such as medicine and agriculture.

At what stage is the implementation of the project now??

The project is moving forward in accordance with the directive schedule. Last year, two power units entered the stage of full-scale construction. In March of this year, a license for the construction of power unit No. 3 was obtained, and in May work began on its construction. We are waiting to receive the license for the construction of the fourth unit. Thus, construction work will be carried out on all four power units this year.

The El Dabaa NPP project is of interest to the international market. In August 2022, a contract was signed with the Korean company KHNP for the construction of turbine islands for all four power units of the El Dabaa NPP. In the near future, preparatory work will be launched on this section of the station site, and a key event is planned for October: the beginning of pouring the concrete of the foundation slabs of the turbine building of the first power unit.

In March 2023, the first large-sized equipment arrived at the port of the construction site: a melt localization device ("melt trap"). This is one of the main elements of the passive safety system which is part of all modern nuclear power units with gen-

eration 3+ VVER-1200 reactors. It represents the unique know-how of Russian nuclear scientists, ensuring safety for the environment and humans in any scenarios of nuclear power plant operation.

Under what conditions is the project being implemented? What are the responsibilities of the Russian side and its Egyptian partners?

In accordance with the intergovernmental agreement signed by Russia and Egypt in 2015, Russia provides a loan that will be used to finance 85% of the entire project of the construction of the nuclear power plant. Egypt is obliged to pay the remaining 15% of the cost of the station. The construction of the nuclear power plant is carried out in accordance with the package of contracts that entered into force on December 11, 2017. According to contractual obligations, the Russian side will not only build the station; it will also supply Russian nuclear fuel for the entire life cycle of the nuclear power plant, as well as assist Egyptian partners in training personnel and support in the operation and maintenance of the plant during the first 10 years of its operation. As part of another agreement, the Russian side will build a special storage facility and supply containers for storing spent nuclear fuel.

How will the training of personnel for the El Dabaa NPP be organized?

This work is already underway. One of the sites is organized at the St. Petersburg branch of the Technical Academy. From September to March last year, classes were held there for the first group of Egyptian specialists, who studied the Russian language. In April 2023, another group received certificates of the successful completion of the Russian language course. After going through language practice and adapting to their new socio-cultural conditions, the Egyptian specialists began the technical part of the training. As part of the implementation of the project through 2028, Rosatom State Corporation will train about 1700 specialists of the El Dabaa NPP. The future personnel of the Egyptian nuclear power plant will not only receive theoretical knowledge, but also undergo practical training and internships at Russian nuclear power plants.

Overall, work on training personnel for the nuclear industry of Egypt has been carried out since 2015. The Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, at the request of Rosatom State Corporation, annually allocates quotas at Russian specialized universities for the training of Egyptian students in nuclear specialties. In total during this time, about 100 specialists have been



trained through Rosatom. Currently, 45 students from Egypt are studying nuclear and other specialized fields at Russian universities through Rosatom quotas.

Africa has a wide range of resources for generating electricity, including not only solid fuels and hydrocarbons, but also renewable sources. If we consider these areas as a kind of competitive environment, then what are the advantages of nuclear energy?

Rosatom has a clear position on this issue: there should not be competition between nuclear and renewable energy, as the main task of mankind today and in the future is to significantly reduce CO₂ emissions. If we are serious about tackling climate change, then nuclear energy together with renewables must be the foundations of a future low-carbon energy mix.

The experience of some European countries shows that a transition only to renewable energy sources leads to an increase in electricity tariffs and volatility in the energy market, and the lack of stable energy supplies creates serious problems for the population and industry, sometimes forcing them to resort to the use of "dirty" energy resources such as coal. Given the scale of total energy consumption in the world and the growing demand for energy, especially in developing countries, it is necessary to understand that the problem cannot be solved with the use of wind turbines and solar power plants alone. That is, further growth in the number and capacity of fossil

fuel power plants would be very likely, leading to an increase in CO₂ emissions with corresponding consequences for the climate.

Nuclear power, in this sense, is one of the most environmentally friendly ways to produce electricity. Nuclear power plants do not emit pollutants or greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, and in this respect they are "allies" of renewable energy. The two tracks should complement each other, not compete. This is the only way the world community can achieve our climate goals.

That is why we at Rosatom promote the concept of the "green square," which means the accelerated development of energy based on four low-carbon sources: hydropower, wind and solar energy, and nuclear energy. And we consistently follow through on this principle when it comes to investing in clean generation sources. Rosatom, represented by its wind energy division, NovaWind JSC, has commissioned 880 MW of wind power capacity. In total, by 2027, Rosatom will commission wind farms with a total capacity of about 1.7 GW. We also offer turnkey implementation of wind energy projects abroad, and see interest in this from partners.

There are many factors that make one technology more profitable under given conditions than another, and vice versa. We stand for a smart mix of low-carbon technologies. The future of the energy sector lies in a diversified balance that ensures affordability, security of supply and minimal environmental impact. ■



TO SUCCEED, YOU NEED INTERESTING PROJECTS AND PERSONAL CONTACTS

The Association for Economic Cooperation with African States (AECAS) was established in 2019 to promote Russian business on the African continent in pursuance of the decisions of the Russia–Africa Summit. Leading companies, scientific and financial institutions are represented in this organization, implementing complex investment projects in the most important sectors, including the oil and gas industry, energy, transport, agriculture, etc.

Alexander SALTANOV, Chairman of AECAS, informed us about the current activities and prospects of Russian business in the African direction

What today can serve as the most striking example of business cooperation between Russia and Africa?

Currently, the largest Russian project in Africa is the construction of a nuclear power plant in Egypt, which is being carried out by the Rosatom corporation. This project is unique in many ways and surpasses much of what has been done so far on the African continent with Russia's participation.

Who is more active now in the African direction - the state apparatus or private business? What is the role of the state in general?

Apart from the above-mentioned project of the state corporation Rosatom, the greatest promotion of Russia's economic interests on the African continent is provided by private business. Participation on the part of the state takes place by supporting exporters through the Russian Export Center (REC). Constant work is also ongoing within the framework of intergovernmental commissions, political and diplomatic negotiations.

Where exactly do we manage to be successful and ahead of other major players?

Russia wins the competition on the African continent in those industries where it is traditionally strong, namely in the export of mineral fertilizers



and grain, in the mining industry and nuclear energy, and in the field of space industry services (remote sensing of the earth's surface and satellite communications). If we talk about the regional aspect, then Russia is working most successfully in the countries with which we have historically developed strong ties. Among them are Egypt, Angola, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, and some others.

What do its African partners expect from Russia? What are their main requests?

African countries expect Russia to participate in the creation of new industrial production that will provide new jobs and added value. They are interested in direct investment in infrastructure projects and industries that increase employment

among the local population, where (among other) local youth who have received secondary specialized and higher education in Russia can find qualified work. They are also interested in projects ensuring the food and energy security of their countries.

What recommendations could you give to those entrepreneurs who are going to develop the African market? What kind of help can they expect? Do we have structures similar to Soviet trade missions and foreign trade associations today?

There are currently no specialized state foreign trade associations that would work on the African continent. Entrepreneurs who are going to enter the African market can count on the assistance of Russian embassies and trade missions in those countries where they exist. Today, there are four trade missions - in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, and South Africa. In the near future, it is planned to open two more - in Ethiopia and Nigeria. For risk insurance and export financing, the assistance of the Russian Export Center can be counted on. But the main recommendation for entrepreneurs is to actively travel to Africa themselves, participate in fairs and exhibitions, and meet with potential buyers and partners – business in Africa is possible only if there are direct contacts, which cannot be replaced by video conferencing and e-mail. Finally, there is AECAS itself, the very structure which has helped and is helping to establish and expand the ties of Russian business in African countries. ■



NUMBERS AND FACTS



African countries demonstrate the highest rates of urbanization in the world - 4.5% per year. According to McKinsey & Co, the urban population of the continent is increasing annually by 24 million people.

Thus, the cities of the continent are rapidly turning into economic centers with a relatively small area, but significant purchasing power.

By 2050, the population of African cities will grow by 950 million people, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The current economic growth rates in African countries allow us to conclude that by 2030, the poverty rate on the continent will be reduced to 23%.

According to the World Bank, the poverty rate (income less than \$1.9 per person per day) in Africa fell from 54% in 1990 to 40% in 2018. If the current growth rates of the economy are maintained, experts say that the poverty rate on the continent will drop to 23% in 2030.

According to analysts, the size of the middle class in Africa will also grow by 2030: by that time it will reach 580 million people. In addition, the number of the richest will increase by 116 million.



Mobile communication is developing rapidly in sub-Saharan Africa. While today it is available to 45% of inhabitants, \$52 billion in infrastructure investment will allow this figure to grow to 65% in four years.

Now 22% of people in sub-Saharan Africa have access to the Internet. But this indicator, according to experts, is growing as fast as the figure for the spread of mobile communications. Indeed, in 2005 only 2% of the continent's inhabitants had access to the Internet.

Vladimir PLATONOV:

OUR ENGAGEMENT WITH AFRICA IS INTENSIFYING

"Recently, the systematic immersion in the topic of Africa has gained a new impetus and has become more substantive," says Vladimir Platonov, President of the Moscow Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI).

The African direction is one of the priorities of the MCCI's international activities. The Chamber is actively working with the business community of many African countries, actively interacting with the countries of both the Maghreb – North Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco) and the center and south of the continent (Nigeria, Cameroon, Gabon, Chad, Ghana, Benin, Zambia, Mozambique, South Africa, Uganda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Central African Republic, Congo, Tanzania and others). The Commission on Foreign Economic Cooperation with the Business Circles of Algeria and the Commission on Foreign Economic Cooperation with the Business Circles of Sub-Saharan Countries are successfully functioning in the Chamber.

Over the past two or three years, our cooperation with Africa has been constantly intensifying. We have organized business missions, and country and industry round tables. In order to assist Moscow businesses in entering African markets, the Chamber held an online Moscow–Africa International Teleconference on behalf of the Moscow government. More than 1500 participants discussed the prospects for exporting to the African market the capital's industrial products, including pharmaceuticals and medical devices, as well as agricultural products.

Speaking about Moscow entrepreneurs who work closely with Africa, it should be noted that as a rule, these are technology and service firms. A couple of years ago, Moscow's share in Russia's total non-energy exports to Africa

was 22%, and it is steadily increasing. Most of Moscow's production was purchased by countries such as Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Sudan and Morocco.

Recently, the systematic immersion in the topic of Africa has gained a new impetus and has become more substantive. Moscow companies strive to present and promote their products and their technologies to the African market, to take part in the modernization of infrastructure and industrial facilities in African countries, to organize guaranteed tourist routes, and to develop partial localization of production and service support of technological products.

The MCCI actively interacts with colleagues from various departments and divisions of the Moscow government, and participates in the work of the Expert Councils at the Headquarters for the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Investment and Business Entities of Moscow, the Mosprom Center, and the Moscow Export Center (MEC). In autumn alone, the MEC plans two business missions of Moscow companies, to Egypt and Kenya.

We constantly organize events aimed at acquainting Moscow business with the prospects for cooperation with partners in Africa. Numerous meetings with trade representatives of African states, governmental, parliamentary and business delegations were held on our platform – and not only there.

The forum "I Want to Work in Africa," organized jointly with the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, meet-



ings with representatives of African diasporas in Moscow, and trips to Algeria, Nigeria, Chad, South Africa, Cameroon, Kenya, Mozambique – both individually through our commissions and as part of delegations of the Moscow government – invariably arouse great interest among the capital's entrepreneurs. Moreover, our colleagues work not only with Moscow businesses, but also provide support to companies from other regions.

This interest is mutual, as can be seen from the activity of businessmen from these countries and from the interest shown by trade missions and diplomatic missions in Africa. African companies today have a fairly wide range of offers from different countries, so there is serious competition on the continent. A number of countries, using their long-term presence in the region, use rather unscrupulous methods against our firms. However, the governments of African countries take a balanced, nationally-oriented position – assuming the widest possible involvement of Russian companies and their integration into the economic space of the African continent, as well as the expansion and diversification of supply chains and financial mechanisms. There is a process of reciprocal interest of African countries in the BRICS+ format.

There is another very important and necessary position: the promotion of Russian education, and with it Russian culture, on the African continent. We hear about this at meetings from many African colleagues. The project which we intend to present at the upcoming Russia-Africa Forum is particularly related to this.

Today there are associations of graduates of Soviet and Russian universities in dozens of countries of the African continent, uniting people who know our language, culture, traditions, and peculiarities of business relationships. We propose to use this tradition to develop economic ties, but without waiting for students to finish their studies and leave for their countries. We want to provide interested students from foreign countries with the opportunity to learn the peculiarities of doing business with partners in our country. The Russian system of Chambers of Commerce and Industry unites more than 170 chambers in all constituent entities of the Federation and a large number of municipalities, thanks to which we have the opportunity to quickly contact any region of the country and quickly obtain any necessary information.

This would be an opportunity at the same time to acquire entrepreneurial skills and study the specifics of the work of the Russian foreign economic sphere – but most importantly, to establish contacts with Russian business. Thus, without interrupting their basic education, young Africans studying in our country will be able to become a type of business representative in Russia of companies in their countries, and subsequently comfortably do business with our country (and not only ours).

Therefore, at the upcoming Russia–Africa Forum, the MCCI plans to hold a briefing on the “International Employers' Club” as a tool for developing human resources in the interests of interaction between Russian and African companies. The forum is also expected to organize

speeches by representatives of the MCCI on the topics of industrial and trade/economic cooperation; the topics of fintech and the agribusiness sector will also be touched upon.

In my opinion, the most promising areas of cooperation now are, first of all, the food industry and the agro-industrial sector: grain and fertilizers, storage technologies, food supplies to Africa, and reciprocal imports of exotic fruits and seafood. Of course, energy, including alternative energy projects, is also important. Other interesting areas include: transport and its infrastructure, new building materials and technologies for the rapid construction of facilities, IT solutions both for service systems and for industrial facilities, security systems (including industrial security), education (especially professional), tourism, environmental solutions (including closed-cycle production), healthcare and pharmaceuticals, and much more.

Today, Moscow is an extremely modern city with excellent transport and logistics solutions, advanced technologies in the field of municipal services, and the use of artificial intelligence. And the Russian capital can offer all of these technological solutions and opportunities to African megacities experiencing a period of intensive urbanization.

Of course, there are risks in trade and economic relations with Africa. These are traditional for recent times, when foreign sanctions complicate logistics, the system of mutual settlements, and supply chain insurance. With the intensification of cooperation, issues of the harmonization of standards and technological regulations always come to the fore. Finally, in our turbulent world, we should mention security issues.

In conclusion, I need to say that work with Africa is close and understandable to me personally, as a graduate of the Peoples' Friendship University named after Patrice Lumumba. A large number of public and political figures, scientists, and businessmen from various African countries have come out of its walls – with many of whom we maintain warm collegial relations even after many decades.

I spent six years within the walls of RUDN, continuously communicating with students from all over the world. After all, in those days, 75% of the university students came from abroad. Even in the dormitory, we were accommodated according to a strict principle: in each room there was one student each from the USSR, Africa, Asia and Latin America. We lived together, studied together, and worked together in university construction teams. This helped to quickly overcome the language and cultural barrier, and became the foundation of long-term friendships. It is no coincidence that even now, when I come abroad – in particular to Africa – I often meet classmates; most of them have made excellent careers, hold high government posts, have succeeded in business and culture.

By the way, I shouldn't neglect to mention a landmark event that took place this spring: the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia regained the name of Patrice Lumumba (which had been removed from its name 30 years ago due to the political situation in the early nineties). Today, when we are rethinking many things, the return of the name with which the university was created is deeply symbolic. We are returning to old friends, to the correct humane policy. After all, Patrice Lumumba was not just a political leader of the Congo and a fighter against the Belgian colonizers; he symbolized the desire for independence and a decent life of all countries, and not only the African continent. ■



Anzhella ZAMOGILNAYA



AFRICA DOES NOT TOLERATE AMATEURISM

"In a rapidly changing world, it has turned out that now Russia is returning to Africa, which means that it is necessary to actively and progressively move forward in this direction. At the same time, Africa should be perceived as a worthy and equal partners," said Anzhella Zamogilnaya, representative of "Opora Russia" in the African region, in an interview with the magazine.



You have just returned from a long business trip to Africa. What countries have you visited?

This time, I visited the Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, formerly Zaire. Unfortunately, we sometimes do not per-

ceive them as two different countries – so just in case, I will clarify that the Republic of the Congo is a former French colony with the capital Brazzaville, and the DRC is a former Belgian colony with the capital Kinshasa.

We prepared a visit to these states by a delegation of the leadership of Opora Russia, which also included represen-

tatives of Rosselkhoznadzor and Roscongress. The trip exceeded expectations, and was extremely positive in every way. In the course of numerous meetings held by our business people in both countries, not only were contacts established and areas of interaction and mutual investments studied, but also specific projects were outlined. For example, protocols on cooperation with the ministries of agriculture of both countries were concluded.

Useful were both the official meetings, at the level of ministries, departments, and presidential administrations, and the contacts with business organizations operating in the Republic of the Congo and the DRC – investment promotion agencies and business associations, particularly the Federations of Businesses of the countries we visited – as well as with a wide range of business people in Africa. Substantive discussions took place on concrete topics, including certification of agricultural products and assistance to African colleagues in solving the problems of food security and the delivery of food, machinery and equipment, grain, and vaccines for farm animals, which are very relevant for the states of the continent. The issues of establishing new logistics corridors and financial instruments that would help our companies enter African markets were considered.

During the business mission, negotiations were also held with a Chinese bank on how best to structure new financial flows today in order to get away from mutual settlements in unfriendly currencies.

Due to well-known circumstances, traditional Russian markets are becoming a thing of the past. To what extent is the African market able to replace them?

To a large extent, no matter how strange that may seem. The fact is that African countries are growing very dynamically. They have a huge potential for the development of their infrastructure, industry, and agriculture. Africa has a young, fast-growing population.

It is important to note that the states of the continent that today import this or that product from Western countries have a very positive attitude towards replacing these goods, technologies and services with equivalent Russian ones, provided that they are at the same level in both quality and price. This applies to almost everything: food, IT technologies, industrial products, things related to mining, wood processing...

The only problem is that our business people often do not have a clear idea of how to take the bull by the horns, in other words, how to establish a dialogue quickly. We have repeatedly heard the idea that Asia and Africa are, they say, the markets of the future, but it was unclear how far away this is. But in a rapidly changing world, it has turned out that now Russia is returning to Africa, which means that it is necessary to actively and progressively move forward in this direc-

tion. At the same time, Africa should be perceived as a worthy and equal partner.

Are the states of the continent ready to accept investors, suppliers and buyers from Russia?

Of course they are ready. In Africa, they have a very positive attitude towards both Russia and Russian investors. The most important thing is that our companies that enter African markets be properly informed about these markets and ready to enter them. Moreover, African countries have created an effective regulatory framework and tools for economic development, by the way very similar to Russian ones. For example, free economic zones in Africa operate on the same principles as ours. There are also investment promotion agencies and other industrial associations. If we talk specifically about the Republic of the Congo and the DRC, they are also very advantageously located geographically, among other things. So in the Republic of the Congo there is a deep-water port at Pointe Noire with a developed infrastructure, which not everyone knows about. This port can become important for us in building new supply chains for the supply of grain, food products, and so on.

Why is Africa interesting for small and medium-sized entrepreneurs (SMEs) from the Russian Federation and vice versa - what can small and medium-sized businesses in Africa offer Russia?

Opora Russia brings together 440,000 small and medium-sized businesses that can offer Africa a wide range of products, technologies and services. After all, they produce literally everything - from grain to machinery and equipment, from organic fertilizers to IT. The business mission I mentioned was pleasantly surprised by the interest shown by African partners in developing cooperation with our country. During the meetings, agreements were reached on the supply of goods, and specific investment projects in various sectors of the economy were discussed. So we need to persistently look for ways to develop interaction, professionally with applied knowledge of the matter; otherwise it will turn out that we have a lot of theorists, but few practitioners.

It should also be understood that Africa is not one country, but 54 states. You need to know what is happening in them, what they can supply to Russia. This includes valuable woods, coffee, wonderful exotic fruits that are harvested there all year round, fish (since many countries have access to the ocean), and other food products.

Is Africa terra incognita for Russian SMEs, or do they already have positive experience?

There has been positive experience. Although it has often been believed that large companies come to Africa first, then bring SMEs with them, I have a different point of view. I am guided by the "port principle": there are large



Entrepreneurs of "Opora Russia" on a business mission in Congo

ships, and there are pilots – pilots who lead the ship behind them. Don't be afraid to become a pioneer. In Angola, for example, the diamond mining company ALROSA has been operating for a long time, but many Russian SMEs engaged in both imports and exports have also located there on their own. In Uganda, there are not only enterprises of the mining industry, but also agricultural cooperatives, while actively promoted in the Republic of the Congo are both a project to build a refinery for the processing of petroleum products, but also industrial aquaculture farms for raising fish (tilapia and African catfish).

Is it obvious that the creation of the necessary structures would contribute to support for Russian SMEs in Africa?

In the time of the USSR, trade missions were widespread, and played an important role in trade and economic relations between Moscow and African countries. At present, analyzing the situation in conversations with representatives of Russian business and African colleagues after various events, we have come to the conclusion that often issues of project implementation are complicated by the complete lack of permanent organized structures on the African continent that could serve as a kind of catalyst to support projects from birth to successful implementation.

It is certainly necessary to think about the creation of Trading Houses of Russia in Africa, which would take on both representative and trade functions. They could demonstrate various goods - food, machinery, industrial equipment – so that African entrepreneurs would have the opportunity to get acquainted with them, get their hands on them, as they say, and most importantly, order or purchase trial batches of goods or services they are interested in. In the course of the recent business mission, by the way, Opora Russia held talks on the creation of a Russian trading house in the Republic of the Congo.

In addition, in Africa there are national investment promotion agencies, structures for the development of public-private partnerships, and various business associations. Their counterparts in Russia should also actively engage with them. Then there will be a result.

What hinders the development of Russian business in Africa and how can these obstacles be overcome?

I never tire of repeating that Africa does not tolerate amateurism. In many ways, business is hampered by a lack of understanding on the part of Russian companies of the specifics of working on the continent – to be honest, a not quite serious attitude towards Africa. After all, it is not limited only to the resorts of Morocco or Egypt. A lack of necessary information on potential projects in African countries, and an underestimation of opportunities, also interfere. Often, projects where Africans are ready to invite Russian business simply do not catch our attention. And the proposals of Russian companies potentially interested in working in Africa face a lack of understanding: to whom to turn with their ideas? Moreover, all these problems concern both the Russian and African sides.

Africans historically have interest in cooperation with Russia, and many of them regret that there are very few Russian companies in Africa. Therefore, more synergy and coordination of joint actions are required. This needs to be actively and persistently addressed.

Moreover, I emphasize once again: our African partners are interested in cooperation with Russia. We are confident that with the right approach, all today's talk – about the possibility of promoting the interests of our companies in Africa, about expanding Russian-African trade, and economic, scientific, technical and humanitarian cooperation – will not be limited exclusively to statements, but will be implemented in practice. ■

MONETARY CHALLENGES IN BRICS SOUTH AFRICAN AGENDA

This year, South Africa holds the BRICS presidency for the third time. The country was the last to join this interstate association in its current composition, but it was in South Africa 10 years ago that it was decided to establish its leading outreach group – the BRICS Business Council.

10 Years in BRICS

The eThekweni Declaration, adopted by the BRICS leaders in Durban on March 27, 2013, completed the first cycle of BRICS summits. Here, the process was launched of establishing the New Development Bank (NDB) and creating a financial safety net – the Contingent Reserve Arrangement of 100 billion dollars. Support was expressed for the reform of the international monetary system and discussion of the role of the Special Drawing Rights (SDR) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). They also welcomed the conclusion of the Multilateral Agreement on Cooperation in cofinancing sustainable development projects between the export-import banks of their countries and development assistance banks.

Monetary and financial issues were considered in BRICS before the establishment of the Business Council. But the summit in Durban marked the beginning of a systematic involvement in the study of such issues by business circles of the "five." These issues were included one way or another in the agendas of almost all nine working groups formed by the Business Council for key areas of economic cooperation;

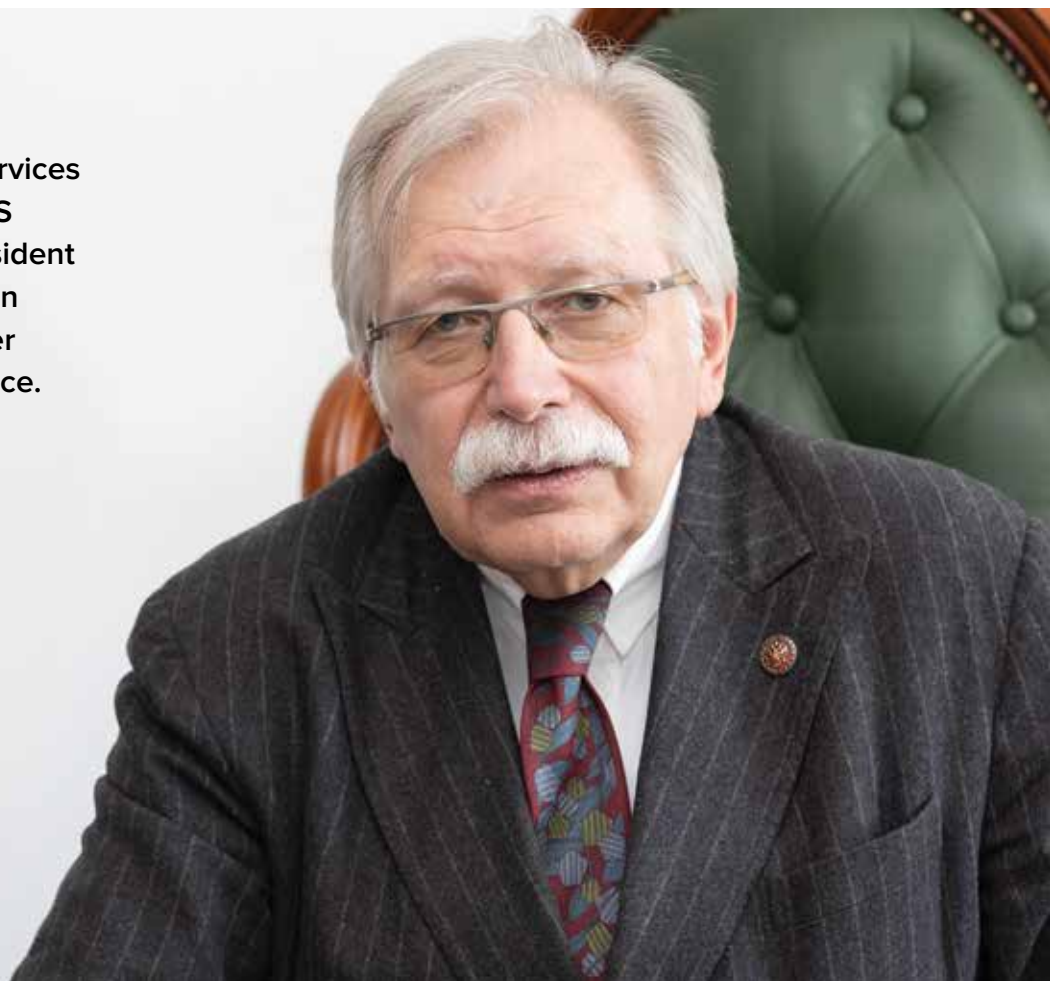
but the central place in the development of monetary and financial topics, especially in breakthrough areas, was taken by the Financial Services Working Group (FSWG).

The Business Council approached South Africa's chairmanship of the next round of BRICS summits with serious groundwork in such areas as insurance and reinsurance, credit ratings, partnership with the New Development Bank, financial support for small and medium-sized enterprises, and the formation of a New International Payment System (NIPS). Of the 13 areas of activity identified by the Fifth BRICS Business Council Annual Report as overall priorities, about half belong to the financial sector. Five of the seven highlighted as the most promising and important strategically are from this area, and among them is the establishment of the NIPS!

The work of the business community under South African chairmanship of the second cycle of the BRICS summits culminated in the BRICS Business Council Midterm Meeting (with its working groups) in Johannesburg in April 2019. In its documents, the setup for the formation of NIPS took the form of specific recommendations. The specialized task

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force created by FSWG for its implementation concluded that the first step towards the establishment of such a system should be the launch of the BRICS Pay commercial project, as a co-operation mechanism for ensuring seamless cross border card and mobile payments across the BRICS nations. And it was recommended that the Newinterfin AG, based in Liechtenstein, is used as a "special purpose vehicle" (SPV) for the management, development and promotion of the BRICS Pay project.

Main Components of the Monetary and Financial Order of a Multipolar World

By the beginning of the current South African presidency, the previously created by BRICS elements of the alternative monetary and financial system, if not fully operational, had been brought into working condition. This applies to both the Contingent Reserve Pool, and the activities of the NDB – whose original five founders have been joined by Bangladesh, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt, and Uruguay is next in line.

The main efforts of the NIPS/BRICS Pay Task Force were aimed at strengthening the weakest link in the new system, which is cross-border payments and

settlements. It is already clear that the transition to settlements in the national currencies of the "Global South" instead of traditional reserve currencies does not solve all the problems. Therefore, the members of the group focused on the twofold task: finding a new generally acceptable currency unit, and an adequate infrastructure for cross-border settlements in a multipolar world.

The essence of the current results obtained is as follows:

1. As a principle scheme for the organization of international settlements in the new realities, a network of several regional monetary and financial institutions equal in function and status is seen, rather than unitary interstate institutions such as the Basel Bank for International Settlements.
2. The central element in the NIPS/BRICS Pay project is the use in payments and settlements of a New Unit of Account (NUA), a collective digital currency or stablecoin. There are a number of options for its contents, but the project participants recommend using the simplest and most

convenient: to slightly correct the basket used for SDR. The formula for this basket is fixed for a five-year period and is well known, and the SDR exchange rate against the 47 currencies used in international payments is published by the IMF secretariat every working day. The over-estimated share, according to many experts, of the US dollar in the SDR calculation formula is proposed to be brought into line with the changing role of the US currency – namely, to reduce it by 10 percentage points, filling in the resulting "gap" with gold. Such a currency unit will be more stable than any of its components, and under certain circumstances can become a full-fledged digital currency with reliable collateral and a balanced emission mechanism.

3. The construction of the new system is planned in stages, starting at first with external settlements for the retail purchase and sale of goods and services and private cross-border transfers, with subsequent addition of the corporate level of foreign economic turnover between legal entities, and interstate settlements in the BRICS-SCO-EAEU + space, at the final stage.

The profile group of the Business Council considered it expedient to start the deployment of the NIPS with the commercial project "BRICS Pay," which provides

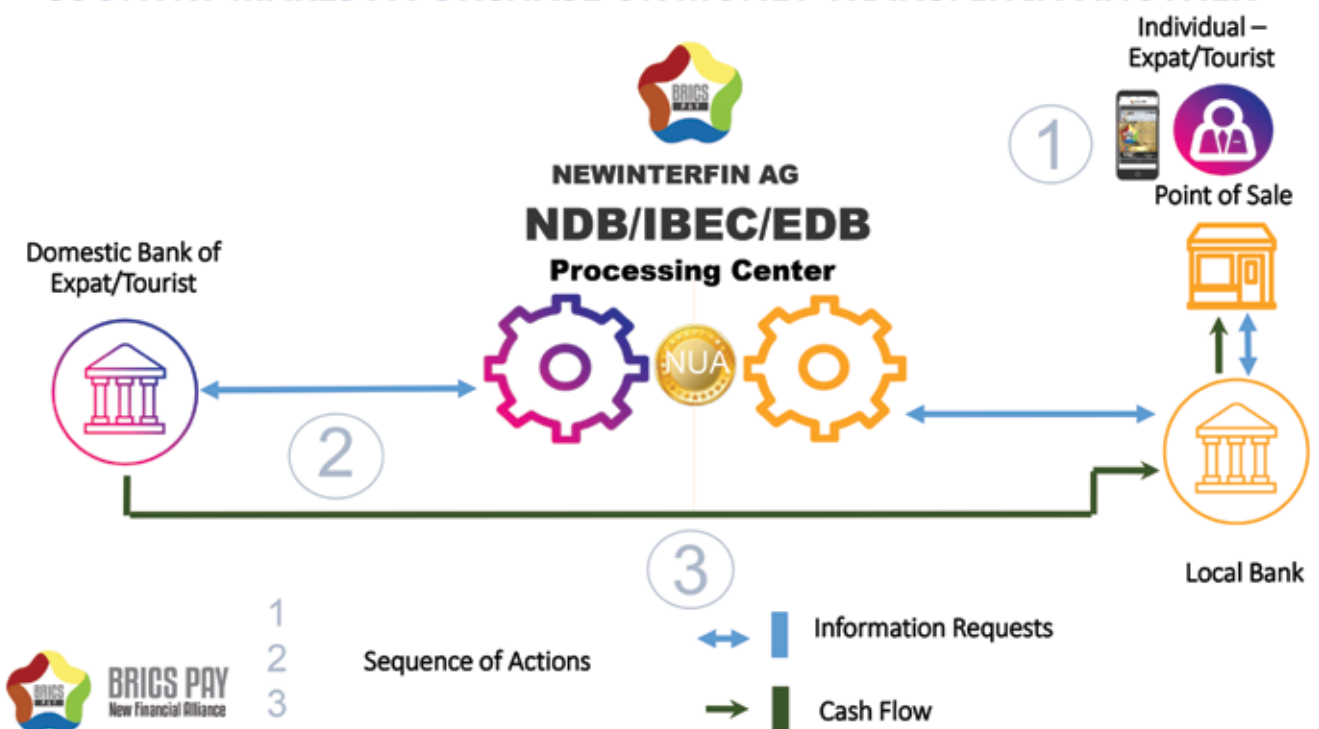
for the issuing of a multi-brand payment card and the development of a universal payment application for smartphones using a QR code. Providing a seamless connection between the national payment systems of the BRICS countries and other interested states with the help of digital technologies, the project envisages building an innovative platform for cross-border payments outside national jurisdictions, while maintaining the integrity of the national monetary systems of the participating countries.

Such commercial components of the NIPS/BRICS Pay mega-project, as well as the project of establishing a new commodity exchange using the NUA for market quotations and settlements between buyers and sellers, do not exclude – but on the contrary, assume – their implementation in the format of a public-private partnership.

Some Features of the New Stage of the South African BRICS Presidency

In preparation for their current chairmanship, our South African colleagues conducted a comprehensive study – a "10-year reflective survey" of the BRICS Business Council's activities, engaging over 70 active participants from all five countries. The survey participants considered the most valuable in the work of the Business Council to be the op-

GENERAL SCHEME OF BRICS PAY FUNCTIONING: A RESIDENT OF ONE COUNTRY MAKES A PURCHASE OR MONEY TRANSFER IN ANOTHER



MULTI-BRAND PAYMENT CARD AND BRICS PAY DIGITAL WALLET IN A SMARTPHONE



opportunities to receive information about promising international projects, establish contacts with representatives of foreign business circles, and participate in a dialogue with the authorities of the BRICS countries.

It is hard not to agree with desires such as “to improve dialogue and track recommendations to leaders and governments,” to promote projects and implement recommendations, to develop interface with intergovernmental bodies and other business associations, or to improve the effectiveness of face-to-face meetings. However, about the proposal to consider the expediency of keeping on the BRICS agenda those projects that have not yet met with full consensus in their working groups, not everything is clear. After all, under the heading "Issues under Consideration" are such projects as: "BRICS Rating Agency," "Green Financing," "Financial Support for SMEs," "Insurance and Reinsurance," as well as the project "NIPS/BRICS Pay - BRICS Pay Payment Service."

Our South African colleagues have embarked on an experimental merger of the BRICS Pay Task Force and the Task Force on Financial Technologies. They see the main result of the activities of this hybrid not in the promotion of the NIPS project on the basis of previous achievements, but in the preparation of a kind of "White Paper" with "the outlines of a potential common platform for the stablecoin of the BRICS countries."

De-dollarization is now widely discussed, both by experts in numerous forums and in the massmedia. The intention to create a single currency for mutual settlements was announced at the beginning of the year by the leaders of Argentina and Brazil. China and Russia at one time officially advocated the transformation of the SDR into a world currency. The ideas of de-dollarization of external payments and national foreign exchange reserves are now heard throughout the "Global South."

The BRICS leaders are unlikely to lose sight of the development of mutual settlements and the establishment of a collective currency. Before the XV Summit in Johannesburg – and even more before the end of the South African chairmanship of BRICS – there is still time in which a lot can be done. And starting next year, the chairmanship will be taken on by Russia, no less interested than other BRICS countries in the launch and successful operation of an alternative monetary and financial system.

Russia's BRICS priorities for 2024 have yet to be determined, but they are unlikely to be limited to ensuring the continuity of the existing agenda. Most likely, we will put forward important new initiatives to strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation in the BRICS-SCO-EAEU format – with the possible involvement of the G20/B20, which India currently chairs – and the work will continue under the leadership of the BRICS countries for another two years. ■



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THE DIVERSITY OF AFRICAN REGIONALISM

Africa is perhaps the continent with the largest number of integration groupings. The Organization of African Unity, the African Union (AU) and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) for Africa have long stimulated

the creation of sub-regional integration associations,¹ believing that they could become the basis for the formation of a pan-African political and economic association. At some point, however, the number of groupings came to significantly exceed the number of subregions



Table 1. Regional Economic Communities in Africa

N°	Name	Abbreviation	Date of Establishment, Headquarters	Region
1	East African Community	EAC	1967/ 2000 Arusha	Eastern Africa Middle Africa
2	Economic Community of West African States	ECOWAS	1975 Abuja	Western Africa
3	Southern African Development Community	SADC	1980/1992 Gaborone	South Africa Middle Africa Eastern Africa
4	Economic Community of Central African States	ECCAS	1983 Libreville	Middle Africa
5	Intergovernmental Authority on Development	IGAD	1986/1996 Djibouti	Eastern Africa
6	Arab Maghreb Union	AMU	1989 Rabat	North Africa
7	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa	COMESA	1994 Lusaka	North Africa Eastern Africa Middle Africa South Africa
8	Community of Sahel-Saharan States	CEN-SAD	1998 Tripoli	North Africa Eastern Africa Western Africa Middle Africa

Source: compiled by the authors

Note. EAC existed from 1967 to 1977 and was then reconstituted in 2000, SADC was called the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) from 1980 to 1992, and IGAD was called the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) from 1986 to 1996.

(North, East, West, Central and Southern Africa), and they have continued to multiply. In 2006, at the summit of the African Union in Banjul, a moratorium was introduced on the recognition of new Regional Economic Communities (RECs) beyond the eight already created (Table 1).²

As can be seen from Table 1, only ECOWAS, ECCAS, IGAD and AMU operate in only one subregion, while the activities of the remaining groupings cover two, three or even four out of the five subregions. Most African states, with rare exceptions (Algeria, Mozambique), are part of several regional integration communities at once (Fig. 1). While overlapping membership can be costly (as a rule, financial discipline in most African subregional organizations leaves much to be desired), membership in some organizations functionally complements membership in others.

In the economic sphere the RECs were given the task of forming free trade zones and customs unions as an intermediate stage on the

way to building an African economic union. The level of a free trade area has been achieved within the frameworks of COMESA, EAC, ECOWAS and SADC (the EAC partner countries participate in all except ECOWAS), and a customs union exists within the framework of the EAC. IGAD does not set the task of forming a free trade zone or a customs union. (CEN-SAD experienced a deep institutional crisis after the overthrow of Gaddafi, and was partially revived only in 2013.)

In the field of security, it was planned to create five standby forces in the five subregions, within the framework of the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture. Thus, it was planned to create a North Africa Regional Standby Brigade (NASBRIG), the East Africa Standby Brigade (EASBRIG), the Multinational Force of Central Africa (FOMAC), the South Africa Standby Brigade (SADCBRIG); and the ECOWAS Standby Brigade (ECOBRIG). As can be seen, the REC on the basis of which the brigade was to be formed was clearly defined only in the cases

Table 3. Planned stages of the formation of the African Economic Community

N°	Integration phase	Duration / Planned year of completion ³	Article number
1	Formation of RECs in subregions where they have not yet been established	No more than 5 years / 1999	6.2a, 28–29
2	Stabilization of tariff and non-tariff barriers, customs duties and internal taxes	No more than 8 years / 2007	6.2b, 30–38
3	Creation of free trade zones and customs unions in each of the RECs	No more than 10 years / 2017	6.2c
4	Coordination and harmonization of tariff and non-tariff systems between RECs	No more than 2 years / 2019	6.2d
5	Establishment of the African Common Market	No more than 4 years / 2023	6.2e
6	Establishment of the Pan-African Economic and Monetary Union	No more than 5 years / 2029	6.2f
TOTAL		Not more than 34 years old	

Source: compiled by the authors on the basis of Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community, 1991. – <https://au.int/en/treaties/treaty-establishing-african-economic-community>

of SADC and ECOWAS, and to a lesser extent in the case of ECCAS.

The "ideal scheme" of relying on RECs turned out to be too far from reality both in the economic and security spheres. Thus, within the framework of ECOWAS and ECCAS, there are the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU/UEMOA)⁴ and the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), respectively – which with the support of France, have had a higher degree of integration since colonial times, including a single currency, the CFA franc. The situation is similar with SADC, where a customs union – the SACU – has also existed since colonial times (since 1910).

In ECOWAS, and indeed in Africa as a whole, there are strong disagreements between French-speaking and English-speaking countries, skillfully fueled by the former colonial powers. In the context of Bernard Lugan's theoretical work, French neocolonialism appears more "humane" than the "soulless British."⁵ As a result, linguistic identity (Francophones vs. Anglophones) becomes stronger than regional solidarity (West Africans). As can be seen from table 3, only four subregional organizations have reached the level of free trade zones. Thus, relying on CEN-SAD or IGAD, for exam-

ple, would hardly yield any practical results in building the African Economic Community.

In the field of security, the process of forming reserve brigades is proceeding with varying degrees of success; in the meantime, ad hoc initiatives that are entirely outside the REC architecture have been created for new security challenges. These include the Sahel Five to fight Islamists in the Sahel zone (with political integration since 2014 of Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Mali, Niger and Chad, and military integration since 2017; however, Mali left the group in 2022), and the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) composed of Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon and Benin to combat Boko Haram on the shores of Lake Chad. In both cases, the potential of ECOWAS, as well as CEN-SAD and ECCAS, was untapped. ■

¹ In the documents of the African Union, subregional economic groupings are called regional, and regional (i.e. within the whole of Africa) are called continental.

² Decision on the Moratorium on the Recognition of Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Doc. EX.CL/278 (IX). African Union, 2006. – <https://archives.au.int/handle/123456789/938>

³ The treaty came into force in 1994.

⁴ Degtarev D.A. West African "Eight" Is Gaining Momentum, Asia and Africa Today, 2003. N° 12. pp. 28-31.

⁵ Platonova D. Pan-Africanism Today: From neocolonialism to multipolarity, Katehon, 02.02.2022. – <https://katehon.com/ru/article/panafrikanizm-segodnya-ot-neokolonializma-k-mnogopoljarnosti>



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SINO-AFRICAN INTERACTION THROUGH THE PRISM OF "BIG DATA"

“The world is on the verge of change” – is a banal thought. Obviously, changes are already taking place. The question is how to capture them, measure them, and finally evaluate them. You can't do that without a scientific approach. Readers are offered material based on the long-term research work of the Arabist and culturologist Evgeny Zelenev, and the sinologist and Tibetologist Maria Soloshcheva, both representing the Higher School of Economics.

The current stage of China's multi-level and multifaceted cooperation with African countries dates back to the first China–Africa Cooperation Forum, held in 2000 under the auspices of the then Chairman of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, Jiang Zemin. Initially (2000–2006), Sino-African cooperation had a pronounced economic character. In 2007–2013, large-scale investment of Chinese capital in the African economy began to play a leading role in promoting Chinese interests in Africa – along with trade, services and construction. Finally, since

2013, after Xi Jinping came to power in China, and especially after summing up the results of the XX Congress of the CPC held in October 2022, a new task for the integrated development of Africa has been set.

China has created a workable doctrine to strengthen its political, economic, cultural, ideological and military influence in Africa. There are signs that a stratagem approach has been developed, the meaning of which is not only to strengthen the Chinese political and economic presence on the continent, but also to familiarize

Table 1. Rating of African countries by their geopolitical attractiveness for China

1	Nigeria	6	Angola	11	Ghana
2	South Africa	7	Tanzania	12	Sudan
3	Egypt	8	Morocco	13	Zimbabwe
4	Kenya	9	Ethiopia	14	Tunisia
5	Algeria	10	DR Congo	15	Côte d'Ivoire

Africa with Chinese plans for the global reconstruction of the world.

This article is devoted to analysis of the Chinese potential in the African direction with the help of strategic measurements. We address the geopolitical, trade, economic, financial, investment and military dimensions, and their implementation in the analysis of Sino-African policy.

The tables presented in this article show the first 15 countries of each ranking. Complete lists for all 54 countries and quantitative indicators for each of the parameters of all the measurements of influence can be found at the link:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1-PR9N-pUzVYU4UPWE9iL3Sb-bHPZgIvDvCizveGKtwm0/edit>.

THE GEOPOLITICAL DIMENSION

According to the final documents of the XX Congress of the CPC (2022), the PRC is entering a new stage of ideological development: the transition from regional leadership to the struggle for global leadership. Ideologically, this transition is based on the concept of a common destiny for mankind, the meaning of which is the creation of a "new form of human civilization."

According to one of the luminaries of Chinese social thought, Liang Shumin (1893–1988), the core culture around which the future universal culture of mankind should be formed will be Chinese culture, revived in the context of the socialist social system. The practical embodiment of this ideological goal is the increase in the geopolitical factor in China's foreign policy.

China's geopolitical interests in Africa include the following basic parameters: population, area of the country, population density, whether or not the country has access to the sea, location on strategically important transcontinental logistics routes, the size of the Chinese diaspora in the country and, of course, a friendly atti-

tude to China of the country's political leadership and main political elites. As a result, African countries are ranked in descending order of their geopolitical importance for China as follows (Table 1).

THE TRADE, ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL AND INVESTMENT DIMENSIONS

Without aspiring to a detailed analysis of the trade, economic, financial and investment aspects of Chinese policy in Africa, to which many studies are devoted, we will limit ourselves only to giving a rating of African countries according to their trade, economic, financial and investment attractiveness for the PRC (Table 2).

The rating of trade and economic attractiveness is based on the following indicators: the volume of imports, exports and total trade, the share of Chinese goods in the total imports of an African country and the share of goods exported to China in the total exports of an African country, the volume of energy imported by China, the presence of a surplus in trade with China by an African country, and the existence of natural resources that have a high share of imports by China.

The rating of financial and investment attractiveness is based on a comparison of the following indicators: the book value of FDI, the amount of borrowing, China's income from construction projects in African countries, the country's debt to China, its ratio to the country's GDP, and some others.

THE MILITARY DIMENSION

The most important argument in favor of the thesis of the strengthening the geopolitical vector of Chinese policy in Africa is the creation of a multi-functional Chinese military base in Djibouti, today the only official military base of the PRC abroad. In no other region of the world has China declared such a strong readiness to defend its geopolitical interests by all available means, including the military. From 2017 to 2023, China rapidly increased

Table 2. Rating of African countries by their trade, economic, financial and investment attractiveness for China

Rating of trade and economic attractiveness				Rating of financial and investment attractiveness			
1	Angola	9	South Sudan	1	Angola	9	Sudan
2	DR Congo	10	Zambia	2	Ethiopia	10	Cameroon
3	South Africa	11	Sudan	3	Kenya	11-13	Ghana
4	Gabon	12	Guinea	4	Zambia	11-13	Congo
5	Ghana	13-14	Ethiopia	5	Nigeria	11-13	Tanzania
6	Congo	13-14	Cameroon	6	Egypt	14	Uganda
7	Nigeria	15	Kenya	7	South Africa	15	Mozambique
8	Libya			8	DR Congo		

the presence of its armed forces in Africa. We should clarify: official Chinese statistics on the size of the PLA contingent in Africa are not freely available. However, according to estimates disseminated in the world media, the Chinese military presence is steadily increasing.

There are still relatively few Chinese troops in Africa: 2.5–3 thousand at the military base in Djibouti and about the same number as part of the armed forces of UN special operations. However, there is another very important category: armed citizens of the PRC, specially prepared for actions on the African continent. We are talking about a large contingent of employees of Chinese private security companies (PSCs), many of whom perform the functions of private military companies (PMCs). According to estimates, today there are 10 Chinese PSCs in Africa, the number of employees of which may exceed 2.5 thousand people.

Let us single out the following parameters for measuring Chinese military influence: the numbers of PSCs operating in the country and representative offices of the PSCs, the presence of a Chinese military contingent (including a UN contingent) on the territory of the country, the presence of a military base of the PRC and related logistics routes,

the presence of ports serving the PLA Navy, logistics hubs that provide international air and rail transportation among other things, the volume of arms trade, and some other factors. As a result, a rating in this area is formed (Table 3).

Let's combine the ratings of geopolitical, trade, economic, financial and investment attractiveness into a common rating, which we will also adjust taking into account the rating of the military attractiveness of African countries for the PRC. This approach is completely new, since a few years ago there was no talk of any military presence of the PRC in Africa. Although this factor does not fundamentally change the overall picture (the list of the two dozen leading "follower countries" of the PRC in Africa is relatively stable), today it is increasing its importance, and as a result, the rating of the attractiveness of African countries is in flux. As an example, the 15 countries that are most important from the point of view of geopolitics and economics are given, as well as the correction of this rating as a result of taking into account the military dimension (Table 4).

The above data allow us to begin a serious analysis of which of the "follower countries" of the PRC gradually but steadily find themselves under the strategic geopolitical guardianship of China to the

Table 3. Rating of African countries according to their military attractiveness for the PRC

1	Djibouti	6	Ghana	11	Mali
2	Kenya	7	Ethiopia	12	Mozambique
3	South Africa	8	South Sudan	13	Egypt
4	Nigeria	9	Uganda	14	Gabon
5	Sudan	10	Madagascar	15	Zambia



extent that it would allow for the protection of Chinese interests in these countries comprehensively – that is, not only politically and diplomatically, but if necessary by military means.

The growth of China's military-political potential in Africa cannot but worry other major powers. A high-ranking US military official, General S. Townsend, even indicated that the confrontation between the United States and China in Africa should be considered as neither more nor less than the initial phase of the Third World War. Moreover, China was declared a likely military adversary of the United States, along with Russia. It should be noted that this happened much earlier than the aggravation of the military-political situa-

tion in Eastern Europe in connection with the start of the Russian special military operation on the territory of Ukraine.

Conclusion

So far, Chinese military-political bloc diplomacy in Africa is taking its first steps, and until recently this process was hidden for the uninitiated. One thing is indisputable: after the stages of colonization then decolonization in the era of the bipolar world, which ended in the 1990s with the collapse of the USSR, the African continent is again beginning dynamic geopolitical movement, the trigger of which is the policy of the PRC in this part of the world. ■

Table 4. **Comparison of the ratings of the attractiveness of African countries for China, taking into account and without taking into account the military factor**

Rating of the attractiveness of African countries for China without taking into account the military dimension				Rating of the attractiveness of African countries for China, taking into account the military dimension			
1	Angola	9	Zambia	1	South Africa	9	Zambia
2	South Africa	10	Sudan	2	Nigeria	10	DR Congo
3	Nigeria	11	Tanzania	3	Kenya	11	Mozambique
4	DR Congo	12	Cameroon	4	Ethiopia	12	Gabon
5	Kenya	13	Algeria	5	Ghana	13	Djibouti
6	Ethiopia	14	Congo	6	Sudan	14	Algeria
7	Egypt	15	Mozambique, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire	7	Angola	15	Uganda
8	Ghana			8	Egypt		

Olga DEDOVSKAYA, editor, *National Review*, graduate of RUDN University named after Patrice Lumumba



A SUBWAY AS A SIGN OF URBANIZATION

A subway can be considered as one of the indicators of urbanization. It significantly speeds up makes more convenient the movement around a city, and in large metropolitan areas you simply cannot manage without one. It is also a symbol of prestige which many cities dream of having.

In Russia, a clear criterion has been developed under what conditions it is necessary to build a subway: this issue begins to be discussed if the population of the city reaches 1 million people. Today, subways operate in 7 Russian cities, with the largest network of underground lines, of course, in Moscow. The Moscow subway is one of the largest, and indeed is considered the most beautiful in the world. The first line was opened in 1935, and since then the construction of the subway in Moscow has not stopped. It went on even in the most difficult years of the Second World War.

The Moscow subway has been growing especially fast since Sergei Sobyanin became mayor of Moscow. He considers the development of the urban transport system to be one of the main tasks of the Moscow government. Under his leadership, the construction of the subway in the Russian capital has reached a record pace. Since 2011, 223 km of subway lines have been laid and 109 new stations have been opened. The Big Circle Line of the subway was built, with a circumference of 70 km. This project is the largest in the history of subway construction not only in Russia, but in the world, and was implemented in just 10 years.

Moscow is one of the fastest growing megacities in the world. In 2012, its area was increased by 2.5 times. The new borders, along with large settlements, included sparsely settled areas. Their

integration into the overall transport network also required non-standard solutions. As a result, today a unique transport framework is being created and developed in Moscow; along with new expressways and subway lines that now go far beyond the former city limits, it includes modernized railways passing through the whole of Moscow, the Moscow Central Diameters, uniting the center and districts of the Moscow region.

Thanks to the formation of a system of modern and comfortable transport hubs, transfers between all modes of transport have become more comfortable and safer, and the time of movement around the city has been significantly reduced. For example, the largest transport hub, "Nizhegorodskaya," unites two subway lines, ground transport stops, an intracity railway platform (Moscow Central Circle) and a suburban railway platform. It can serve about 600 thousand passengers per day.

According to the Department of Foreign Economic and International Relations of the Moscow Government, the best technologies, approaches, and vast experience in the construction of the subway can be provided to African partners, who are already showing interest in them.

In June 2023, Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki, who arrived in Moscow on the first official visit in the history of the two countries, went down to the Moscow subway and inspected several stations. The engineering education of the distinguished guest allowed him to appreciate the

There are more than 50 countries in the world where a subway has been built. In Africa, so far only three national capitals have a subway: Cairo, Algiers and Tunis.



Cairo

The first subway line on the African continent was opened in Cairo in 1987. It consisted of 33 stations and included two surface lines connected by a large underground section. Two years later, a second line appeared. At this time new steps were taken in technical terms: the laying of the first tunnel under the Nile River, and the use of a contact rail – which is considered more complex technically than an overhead contact wire network, but at the same time a more progressive technical solution. In 1999, the third line came into operation. Today, the Cairo subway has a length of 88.5 km and includes 74 stations. It is planned to build three more lines with a total length of 63 km, most of which will be underground. One of the lines may be the first fully automated and unmanned line. Partners from France and Japan are helping Egypt in the development of the Cairo subway.

Algeria

Inaugurated in Algiers on November 1, 2011, the underground line marked the emergence of a second subway in Africa. But the history of the Algerian subway began much earlier. The first project appeared in 1928. For various reasons, it never saw the light of day, but they returned to this idea again in the 70s. The city authorities planned to build three lines, and the official start of the work was intended to be in 1982. German and Japanese specialists were invited to participate, and the possibility of participation of Soviet subway builders was also considered. Work progressed very slowly, and in 1988 the project was frozen. It was resumed in 2002, when French and Algerian-German companies took it on with the support of other foreign partners. After the opening in 2011, this first and only line was expanded, and today it has a length of 18.2 km and 19 stations.



Tunisia

Despite the presence of the word Métro in the name of the Tunisian “subway,” it is a different type of urban transport. In other megacities, such systems are called high-speed trams, light rail, or as in Moscow, “light subway.” In Tunisia, high-speed multi-car rail transport appeared in 1985. It consists of eight lines, with 66 stations over a total length of 43 km. Connected to this network is the TGM train, which serves the city and some suburbs.

Other projects

In Côte d'Ivoire, a 37.5 km (23.3 mi) rapid transit network is being built, which will cross the country's economic capital, Abidjan, from north to south.

In Nigeria, in January 2023, President Muhammad Buhari inaugurated the first phase of a new rapid transit project for

Lagos, two lines under construction. Over time, it is planned to build five more lines.

In Eritrea, a unique project for the construction of a subway is being considered with the participation of Russian specialists. If implemented, it will be the highest altitude subway in the world – as the capital of this country, Asmara, is located at around 2400 m above sea level, higher than a bird's flight.

Moscow “underground,” after which a sketch of the first three subway lines in the capital of Eritrea, the city of Asmara, appeared right at the Arbatskaya station. Moscow subway builders who have gone to Eritrea to carry out survey and design work consider this project very ambitious and unique in its kind, because Asmara is located at an altitude of 2400 meters above sea level. Thus the tunnels will be 1 km higher than in the highest mountain rail transport sys-

tem in the world today, in the city of Serfaus in Austria.

One of the largest and most experienced participants in transport infrastructure development programs in Moscow is Mosinzhproekt Engineering Holding. We asked this company to talk about its experience and share further plans, including possible participation in projects on the African continent.



In 2023, the company is celebrating its 65th anniversary. Since the late 1950s, it has been designing engineering systems, including underground ones. "We can safely say that modern Moscow stands on utilities systems that were once designed by the company's specialists," said **Yuri KRAVTSOV**, General Director of Mosinzhproekt Engineering Holding, Inc.

Another important area of work since the founding of Mosinzhproekt has been the design of roads. For example, in 1984 the unique Rusakovskaya overpass was built to the company's project, with a span length of 62.5 m without intermediate supports. This project still has no analogues in Europe. The company's specialists are currently involved in the construction of the Moscow High-Speed Diameter, a modern highway with a length of about 100 km and dozens of complex engineering structures, including overpasses and tunnels. It will connect areas with more than 5 million inhabitants and significantly improve the transport links of the capital.

Mosinzhproekt, as an engineering holding company that performs the full cycle of work, has been participating since 2011 in the Moscow Metro development program. The holding's specialists have gained unique experience in the construction of tunnels in a densely populated metropolis – next to residential buildings and business centers, architectural monuments, as well as numerous underground facilities and utilities. In 2016, Mosinzhproekt used giant tunnel boring complexes for the first time, in the construction of double-track tunnels on the new line of the Moscow metro. In 2020, a world record was even set for the number of tunnel boring complexes operating in one project: 23 machines were working at the same time.

For the construction of the Big Circle tunnels, Mosinzhproekt specialists organized a tunneling control center where all information was received in real time. This made it possible to manage the mechanized complexes promptly and, if necessary, adjust the actions of their crews.

"During the construction of the giant metro ring, in addition to the installation of the main struc-

tures, waterproofing, interior design, architectural decoration, installation of engineering systems, and many other works were carried out at each station," said Yuri Kravtsov. The number of people working on the construction of the Big Circle during peak periods reached 11.5 thousand people. To manage this number of personnel, Mosinzhproekt implemented a planning and monitoring system which helped to see the whole picture of the work and flexibly redistribute builders between sites when necessary.

Today, Mosinzhproekt continues its participation in the Moscow Metro development program. Soon one of its lines will reach Vnukovo International Airport, and it will be the first airport in Russia with its own metro station.

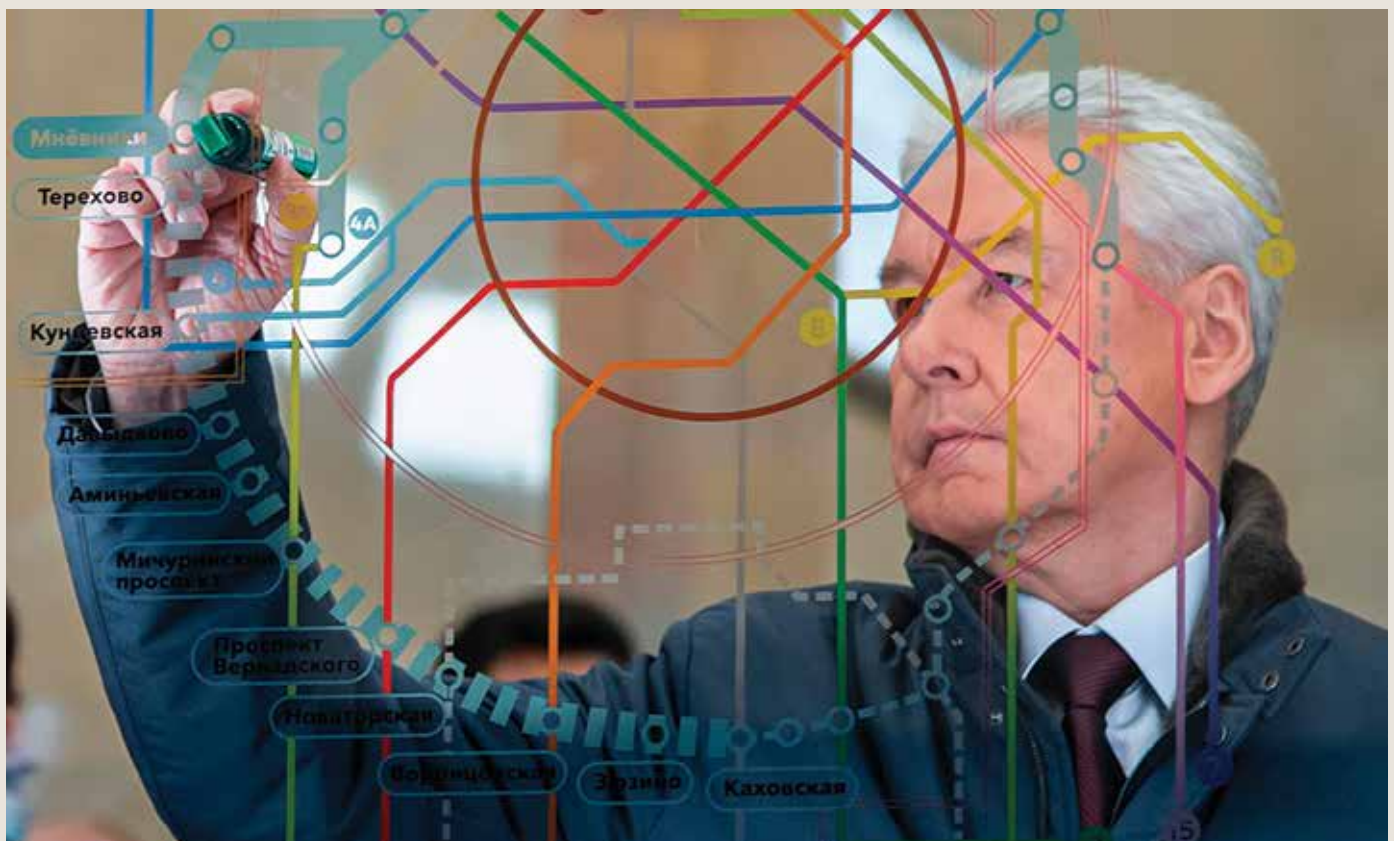
According to the UN, by the middle of the XXI century, African megacities will lead the ratings of the most populated agglomerations. This will require large-scale work on the development of public transport.

"The creation of transport facilities, including underground ones, their integration into the existing urban environment, and the provision of transport infrastructure for new urban areas



are the unique competencies of Mosinzhproekt specialists," said Yuri Kravtsov. The holding is aimed at expanding the geography of regional and international cooperation. It will be happy to share the experience and technologies gained in the implementation of unique transport projects, and is ready to support the initiatives of the government of Russia and the government of Moscow in this area. ■

Vladimir Putin and Sergei Sobyanin opened the Big Circle Line of the Moscow Metro



Sergei Sobyanin at the opening of the Big Circle Line of the Moscow Metro



Alexey VASILIEV, Honorary
President of the Institute for African Studies
of the Russian Academy of Sciences

To answer the question of the prospects of Africa and its future place in the world, it is necessary to look at the fate of this continent over time measured not in years, but in decades, says Alexei Vasiliev – well-known Africanist, Honorary President of the Institute of African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Head of the Department of African and Arabic Studies of the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia named after Patrice Lumumba.

A HARD ROAD TO PROSPERITY

In the second half of the XX century, beginning in the 60s and a little later, the whole of Africa began to free itself from colonialism. What did it come to decades after independence?

I always cite the example of Congo-Kinshasa (DRC), which for people of my generation has become a symbol of Africa's struggle for freedom. Until 1960, this huge country in the center of the continent was considered the personal property of the King of Belgium. More than 30 million people lived there, but only 8 indigenous Congolese had higher education – and these people, standing at the head of a young nation, were supposed to raise it up from slavery and poverty, lead it to

development and prosperity. Of course, the colonialists were not going to give up. We are well aware that the intelligence services of Belgium, Great Britain, and the United States acted against the new Congolese government, joined by the internal opposition. A military coup took place, and Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba was overthrown and killed. The Congo returned to submission to the West. Its stooge Mobutu, who was in power for more than three decades, plundered the country of many billions of dollars. To his people, he left poverty, lack of basic social guarantees, rampant corruption among officials, a split along ethnic lines, and incessant armed conflicts and wars with neighboring states, which cost the Congo itself several million lives.

Yet now we see that, despite all the tragedy of its history, the Congo is overcoming difficulties and moving forward. Its population exceeds 111 million people. The Congolese University produces several tens of thousands of graduates annually, and many Congolese youth are educated abroad – that is, there is an active process of formation of a national elite and a constant influx of educated personnel into the economy. Much in the education system, as in other important areas, is still far from perfect, but one cannot even compare the current situation with the plight in which the Congo found itself half a century ago.

The example of the Congo (and we can cite examples of the progress of many other African countries) allows us to look at the future of Africa with a certain degree of optimism. But to understand the processes taking place on this continent, one must not be an optimist or a pessimist, but a realist – that is, to see both strength and weakness, successes and problems, as well as the sources of both.

In the early years of independence, young African governments turned to the experience of other countries. Many were forced into the Western path of development based on so-called market principles and economic freedom, which implied the abandonment of state control in favor of private initiative. In fact, it all came down to giving freedom of action to foreign corporations, and further development proceeded in line with what was in its essence a neo-colonial model. At some point, this course was opposed by the Soviet Union, which assisted friendly African countries in creating their own industry. But in general, in sub-Saharan Africa (except for South Africa), the structure of the economy has retained its resource character. Africa still "feeds" the West, which robbed and robs it, pumping resources.

Africa inherited many other problems from the era of colonialism. After gaining independence, the former colonies were left with the borders established by colonial administrations, as a rule without taking into account local realities. But aware of the danger of any (even justified) territorial claims, the African Union – and after it other interstate associations – immediately agreed not to touch the problem of borders. However, it is not always possible to preserve the status quo. It was necessary to recognize the separation of Eritrea from Ethiopia, then the split into two parts of Sudan – supported by the West, which did not settle down and is pushing Sudan to further fragmentation.



Patrice Lumumba,
Congo Prime
Minister

At the official level, African states have repeatedly stated their rejection of coups d'état, but they still occur. It is not possible to avoid inter-ethnic conflicts, which in Africa are partly for objective reasons. Look at the natural factors: the Sahara is expanding, and the nomads have no choice but to leave the arid lands and move south with their herds, where they encounter sedentary peasant farmers. If we talk about the difficulties of combating Muslim terrorist organizations, then we must take into account that they are engaged not only in murder and hostage-taking, but also in charity, and therefore they enjoy the support of a certain part of the local population – and these well-armed and trained groups are opposed by detachments of sometimes half-starved and poorly-paid government troops which have somehow been assembled.

Therefore, it is premature to think that Africa has embarked on the main line of development and has cloudless prospects ahead of it. Coups, outbreaks of extremism, armed conflicts, as well as crises and corruption of elites, are inevitable. In Africa, the complex process of changing social relations continues, and the development of state forms and structures that correspond to the local traditions of African peoples is underway. Under these conditions, imposing other people's rules and recommendations on them may be counterproductive. Africans them-

selves, taking into account the specifics of their civilization (or, more correctly, civilizations), will be able to find solutions to their problems. And they, of course, will prefer to focus on those partners who, while helping them, do not interfere in their affairs.

In this respect, Russia has an obvious advantage. The role of the Soviet Union in the decolonization of Africa is well known, and although in the West this role is hushed up and diminished in every possible way, Africans themselves perceive it as an integral and important part of their history. Of course, there were also controversial moments in it, such as for example the postulate of the need to choose Marxism and the course of building socialism, right up to copying Soviet structures, which was not always beneficial. But the countries that adopted the Soviet model have achieved impressive success in the development of education, health care, industry, and the possibility of social lifts for the general population. An example of this cooperation is the polyclinic in Addis Ababa, built with the assistance of the Soviet Union, which has become one of the most modern medical centers on the African continent – and where today, together with the Russian Academy of Sciences, scientific research is conducted on the basis of biotechnology.

Unfortunately, there was a period of decline in our relations. After the collapse of the USSR, Russia de facto withdrew from Africa – although many of us tried as best we could to counteract this situation. At one of the meetings chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, A. Kozyrev, I took the floor as the director of the Institute of Africa and shared my thoughts on the difficulties of further work in the African direction, stressing that we will have to enter into fierce competition, and perhaps confrontation with the West. Kozyrev didactically replied: “Here we are faced with representatives of the old thinking. They do not see that we have a growing mutual understanding with the West, growing cooperation, etc.” Well, what can I say – there was such a minister then, and Russia experienced such a difficult time in its history.

This difficult experience in some ways even brought us closer to Africa. I remember that during meetings with representatives of African states held at our institute, we talked about our own colossal difficulties in the post-perestroika period, in particular the fact that there was an endless outflow of capital from Russia, on a huge scale. According to our calculations, 1.5 trillion dollars “leaked” to the West (some of my academ-

ic friends believed that it was even more), which explained many of Russia's problems. When the African colleagues heard this, they exclaimed: “Oh, welcome aboard! Join our club!” The outflow of capital from Africa during the years of independence amounted to more than 1 trillion dollars – that is, the West pumped out even those relatively moderate incomes that African states managed to earn in the post-colonial period, which of course greatly hampered the process of their socio-economic development.

While Russia was absent from the African continent, other players, especially China, strengthened there. If in 1990 the trade turnover of the Soviet Union with Africa was several times greater than that of the Chinese, today China has become the largest trading partner of Africa, with a turnover of 230 billion dollars. Of course, Chinese investments were directed primarily to industries for the extraction of the energy and mineral resources which China needs to develop its own industry. But we must give credit to the Chinese: they are well aware of the needs of African countries and flexibly adapt their programs to changing conditions.

When in order to demonstrate its support for Africa, the United States decided to remove import duties on goods, most of the value of which is created on the African continent, the Chinese saw this as their chance and began to invest in the construction of corresponding production facilities – so both Africans and Chinese together can enter Western markets. Or take the problem of growing debt. Realizing that not all countries are able to pay their accumulated debts, China is restructuring some of them and forgiving some of them. Such losses are not critical in light of Chinese financial power, but this step is highly appreciated by its partners, which strengthens the atmosphere of trust.

According to some reports, about a million Chinese are already working in Africa. There may be some friction between them and the local population, especially since Western propaganda is making efforts to discredit China. To avoid the growth of anti-Chinese sentiment, China obliges its representatives to be attentive to the traditions of African countries and respect their customs.

Russia is very slowly beginning to move. For a long time there was talk that Africa for us, and we for Africa, are very important partners – but practically nothing has been done. But now we are getting a historic chance and we can make



a breakthrough in the African direction. The Russian leadership is ready for this, and this is awaited in Africa – where they, I repeat: a) remember Soviet support, b) know that Russia does not interfere in the internal political affairs of other states, and c) appreciate our respectful and equitable approach to cooperation, without a mentoring tone or imposing our rules. And what we should pay more attention to are the fundamental processes maturing in Africa that will change the whole picture of the world.

Today, very little is said about the phenomenon of explosive population growth on the African continent, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. For example, Nigeria, not the largest country in terms of territory, already has 214 million inhabitants. This is slightly less than the combined population of Germany, France, England and Italy. The fertility rate (number of children born per woman) of Nigerian women averages 5.5. It is easy to calculate that if this trend continues, in two or three decades Nigeria will have a population equal in size to the population of the whole of Europe.

Together with the famous scientist Pyotr Kapitza, we once estimated what the world's population would look like in the middle of the XXI century, and came to the conclusion that humanity awaits the biggest revolution in the history of Homo sapiens. The number of inhabitants of the Earth, having reached a peak of about 8–9 billion, will begin to decline. Today, signs of an approaching reversal are already visible. With Europe, it's clear, and unfortunate-

ly Russia also cannot count on correcting the demographic situation. In the United States, the population is maintained solely by immigration. China has stopped: in 2022, 1 million fewer inhabitants lived there than a year earlier. India is also close to a tipping point. Against this background, Africa retains a huge demographic potential. In 30–40 years, one in five (and maybe one in four) people on Earth will be African – and according to the laws of economics, an increasing share of production will begin to move from regions experiencing a shortage of labor resources to where there is a surplus of labor, that is, to Africa.

The American elite has already slept through the rise of China, which will become the most powerful economic player by the end of this decade (by 2030), according to an IMF forecast. Taking into account purchasing power parity, India will be in second place in terms of GDP, the United States will be in third place, Indonesia in fourth, and Turkey or Brazil will be fifth. Among African countries, Egypt and possibly Nigeria – which also has a chance to enter the world top ten – will have good positions.

In recent years, a number of African countries have been ahead of the West in terms of GDP rates, and in the foreseeable future, we may witness the rapid rise of Egypt, Ethiopia, South Africa, and a number of other African states. This will be their contribution to changing the global balance, to building a fairer future. Therefore, our realistic approach will take on an increasingly optimistic hue. ■

MEETING



Oleg Nikolaevich, how was the visit of your delegation to South Africa prepared?

For me, this trip came as a surprise. The decision to send a delegation and my appointment as its head were made by President Boris Yeltsin. In the government, I was responsible for a wide range of industrial sectors, from energy to mechanical engineering. All of these areas could be interesting for negotiation; the Russian Ministry of Defense showed especial perseverance. Apparently, it had already established channels of interaction with its South African counterparts and saw opportunities for broad military-technical cooperation with one of the strongest countries on the African continent in this regard – which had its own air force and even had a cosmodrome built with the assistance of the Americans.

In South Africa at this time, the powers of the government headed by Frederick Willem de Klerk were ended, and Nelson Mandela took up the duties of the head of state. A new era was beginning. The country was changing its political course, and it was necessary to hurry. Our competitors in America were also well aware of this. A visit of US Vice President Al Gore was planned, but Americans, as you know, are not particularly welcome in states that have chosen an independent path of development. We had an undoubted advantage in

this regard, since Russia has always enjoyed a good reputation in Africa.

What tasks were assigned to you as the head of the delegation? Who were its members?

The main task was to demonstrate Russia's interest in cooperation with the new government and readiness to provide the republic with the widest possible support. Based on the assessment of South Africa's current and future needs, a number of possible areas of cooperation were identified, and the composition of the delegation was formed with this in mind. It included six ministers and a number of other high-ranking government officials, as well as representatives of Russian business. The economies of our countries have a lot in common, and this was also taken into account. In particular, it is known that Russia and South Africa occupy key positions in the fields of mining of diamonds, gold, and platinum group metals. The Chairman of the Russian Committee for Precious Metals and Precious Stones, who took part in the trip, held successful negotiations with the management of DeBeers, which at that time was a monopolist in the diamond market. Together, they laid the foundation for the stable development of this market for years to come and provided conditions for the sustainable work of mining companies.

What interested you and, perhaps, surprised South Africa?

WITH NELSON MANDELA

There are many interesting events in the history of cooperation between Russia and Africa, but one of them is particularly worth highlighting. It relates to the period when almost simultaneously there were changes of the state systems in Russia, which survived the collapse of the Soviet Union, and in the Republic of South Africa, where the apartheid regime collapsed. Before that, there were no official relations between our countries – we, like many in the world, refused to deal with a racist state. And now it was time to turn a new page. In November 1995, a government delegation went to South Africa, headed by First Deputy Prime Minister of Russia **Oleg SOSKOVETS**.

As a professional metallurgist with extensive production and management experience, I was especially interested in this area. South Africa, despite all the difficulties associated with restrictions on its activities due to apartheid, had made great strides in the production of special stainless and alloy steel

grades and nickel ferroalloys. We also paid attention to its achievements in the field of coal processing – after all, Russia also has quite large coal deposits, but uses them mainly as a source of raw materials for energy and for the production of metallurgical coke, while our African colleagues had learned how





to obtain motor fuel and a wide range of chemical materials from coal – which partly compensated for the shortage of oil and gas, which South Africa does not have.

I was impressed by how far South Africa had advanced in the development of science and technology. We once again recognized that this is not just a storehouse of iron ore, copper, chromium, diamonds and other minerals, but a country with a highly diversified and well-organized economy, with qualified personnel from among the local people. We discovered South Africa and made it clear to our future partners that Russia is committed to the broadest possible cooperation in various fields.

I was pleased with the friendly atmosphere that we felt from the first steps on African soil. The local press covered our visit only in positive tones, officials and representatives of the business community showed openness, and the public was very sympathetic. For our part, we stressed that we considered our visit as an important step for building relations with South Africa and, through interaction with South Africa, with all countries of the African continent.

The program of your visit probably included not only the business part?

The special part of the program included a trip to the island and the prison in which Nelson Mandela had been locked up for 27 years. Now it contains a memorial museum, but before it was a gloomy place, and made a depressing impression. We were filled with even greater respect for this man, who had stood up for the rights of his people. He had not committed any

crimes, but he was declared a criminal and punished very severely. Only under pressure from the world community and the demands of many states, including our country, did the former South African authorities agree to concessions, and Nelson Mandela was able to be released.

You had personal meetings with him. What impression did this person make on you?

On behalf of the Russian leadership, I personally presented Nelson Mandela with the Order of Friendship. For me, this was not only a responsibility and an honor, but also a pleasant mission. Despite the hardest trials of life, he did not look broken, and of course did not look like a fanatical extremist, as his enemies had portrayed him. He was calm, friendly, had an undoubted gift for conducting an interesting conversation, and not only spoke himself but also listened attentively. He had almost no idea of what Russia is like, and taking advantage of the opportunity to get first-hand information, asked about our country with great interest. I talked about what kind of social structure we have now, how the transition to market relations is going, how private entrepreneurship is developing, and of course shared the plans of our government to work at the international level and cooperate with South Africa. Nelson Mandela supported our efforts and instructed us to organize a trip to Cape Town, where the country's parliament is located. A group of Russian parliamentarians, members of the Federation Council and deputies of the State Duma, went there.

What results did your trip have for further relations with South Africa?

It was certainly successful and productive. We managed to make progress in many areas of cooperation and reach practical agreements. But unfortunately, the political culture of Russia at that time suffered from a lack of continuity and consistency, and this was the reason for many of our failures in the international arena. At the head of the delegation, I did not represent myself personally but the state – yet after my departure from the government, no one was engaged in the implementation of the agreements reached (or at least I do not know anything about such attempts). There has been a long pause in our relations with Africa.

Today, there are signs that Russia is finally truly turning to Africa. A summit will be held in St. Petersburg with the participation of heads of state and numerous delegations from African countries, followed by the BRICS summit in South Africa, where according to the Kremlin press service, "Russia will be represented at a worthy level." I would like to see that where almost 30 years ago we laid the foundations of our new relations, a serious impetus has finally been given to their development. ■

PUSHKIN IS PUSHKIN IN AFRICA TOO



The name of Alexander Pushkin is widely known outside of Russia, but he is especially revered in Africa, where they know that an ancestor of the greatest Russian poet was a native of their region. Who he was and where exactly he came from remained a mystery for a long time. An expedition organized with the active participation of Russian ambassador Valery Vorobyov helped to establish a number of important facts that allow us to find the answers to these questions.

Valery VOROBYOV – a well-known diplomat and scientist, professor, and doctor of law – has repeatedly traveled to Africa to work in diplomatic missions, including as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Chad and in the Kingdom of Morocco. He gladly shared with us his memories of the search for Pushkin's ancestral roots.



Valery Pavlovich, the organization of research expeditions is not included in the explicit duties of the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary. Why did you decide to take on this business and even take a personal part in it?

For me, as for any Russian person, the name of Pushkin means a lot – and when you work in Africa, where it is also surrounded by veneration, you realize even more his special significance for strengthening our ties. It is unlikely that any state aside from Russia can declare the existence between our peoples of such deep common historical and cultural roots. And to promote these ties with the general public is the direct duty of a diplomat. I won't even mention natural human curiosity – the opportunity to take part in such searches is a rare chance in life that few people are given.

We should probably describe how Pushkin himself treated the history of his African origin, and what had been established by further research about this?

As you know, Pushkin was very interested in the life of his African great-grandfather, spent a lot of time in the archives and even wrote the famous book, "The Arap of Peter the Great," which in Soviet times served as the basis for a film with the participation of popular actors. The movie turned

out to be entertaining, but far from Pushkin's book, and even farther from true history. However, even in serious studies that claim to be scientific, the established facts are often mixed with unproven versions and all sorts of speculation.

The general outline of the whole story is as follows. The Russian tsar-reformer Peter I (Peter the Great), while traveling in Europe – where he picked up a lot of useful knowledge for governing his own state – liked the custom of European monarchs to keep blacks at court. He also wanted to have in his entourage, as they said then, a little moor. Such a delicate assignment was carried out by S.L. Vladislavich-Raguzinsky, who temporarily served as the Russian ambassador in Istanbul. In 1704, through the mediation of the Grand Vizier, he purchased three Black boys who were kept in the seraglio and brought up as pages of the Sultan. One of them, Ibrahim, was baptized upon arrival in Moscow and received the biblical name Abraham. Then, for simplicity, they began to call him Abram.

And here it is worth emphasizing an important point. Unlike the European kings, who treated African children as entertainment, Peter accepted Abram Hannibal as a close member of his circle. He became the godfather of the child, and when he grew up, he appointed him valet, secretary, and keeper of the drawings, maps and books that were in the royal office. The king took Hannibal on military campaigns and foreign travels, and sent him to study in Europe for several years. In France, Hannibal was given the high rank of Captain of the Life Guards – and this at a time when many Africans were becoming slaves. Upon his return to Russia in 1723, he continued his career brilliantly, and eventually became the first engineer-general of the Russian army.

All these facts are quite well-known, but opinions differ about how the future Abram Hannibal had ended up in Istanbul. According to some assumptions, he had been kidnapped; according to others, the boy's father gave him to the Turks himself, either on account of debt, or for the sake of establishing peaceful relations with a powerful neighbor. It is unlikely that it will ever be possible to prove this or that version, but it was an entirely realistic task to establish the origin of Pushkin's ancestor.

How did the idea arise to look for the ancestral roots of Pushkin's ancestor in Chad and not in Ethiopia, or more precisely in ancient Abyssinia, as we were told in school textbooks?

It is often overlooked that in past centuries the contours of states were different, and the names of places themselves were often determined by people who had never been there. So Abyssinia for the Russians of that time was just something very distant in the depths of the African continent.

One of the first to doubt the "Ethiopian" version was the Russian writer Vladimir Nabokov. In 1964, he expressed the opinion that Hannibal's homeland should be sought south of Lake Chad. This hypothesis was developed by the French philologist of African origin Dieudonné Gnamankou: he identified as the place for possible searches the border area between Chad and Cameroon, where the Sultanate of Logon could be located. Indeed, in his petition in 1742 to Empress Elizabeth (daughter of Peter the Great) for approval of his family coat of arms, Hannibal himself had written: "I come from Africa, from the local nobility. I was born in the domain



of my father, in the city of Logon, which also had two more cities under it."

The idea to find the homeland of Hannibal inspired our researcher from St. Petersburg, Igor Danilov, during the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Pushkin in 1999. He appealed through the Foreign Ministry to the Russian embassy in Chad, with a request for assistance in organizing the expedition.

How did this expedition go and how did it end?

Igor Danilov himself wrote about it in detail in his most interesting book, "Pushkin's Great-Grandfather Hannibal," which has already become a bibliographic rarity. I will focus only on the most important points. First, we visited the city of Logon-Gana, which is located in Chad, and then Logon-Berni, located in Cameroon. Hannibal's birth certificates could not be found in any of them.

But the expedition continued – the discoveries followed a meeting with the elders of the Kotoko tribe. The fact is that the surviving wax seals of Hannibal were engraved with his family coat of arms, on which the outline of an elephant can be seen. Well, the elders clearly pointed out that the elephant is the patron and sacred animal of their tribe. And, even more interestingly, they explained the meaning of the word FUMMO inscribed on the same coat of arms, which until then no one had been able to decipher, because they believed that it was of European origin. When we uttered it in the presence of the elders, they immediately exclaimed: "In our language, this is how we say Motherland!"

We were completely satisfied with the results of our expedition, especially when we were once again convinced that Chad is well aware of Pushkin and regards Russians warmly. I must say that today Russian-Chadian relations are on the rise and have good prospects, which was reaffirmed by the President of this republic, Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno, who in his message to Vladimir Putin on the occasion of Victory Day expressed "joy at the state of the excellent relations that exist between our countries."

And what explains the stability of the "Ethiopian" version? What arguments do its supporters give?

Not so long ago, I came across information about two relatively recent works by Russian authors – "The Riddle of Pushkin's National Roots" and "Notes on the Biography of A.P. Hannibal" – who, in their opinion, most likely came from the Ethiopian Falasha Jews. Of course, the authors did not find facts confirming this version, but the arguments are surprising, to put it mildly. In their opinion, Hannibal had an "anthropological type" close to the Semitic and not to the African peoples, and besides, from childhood he showed himself to be a smart and educated child – that is, African children are denied such qualities.

Does that remind you of anything? I do not want to continue such discussions.

The Russian poet Marina Tsvetaeva, who possessed not only an excellent poetic gift but also a subtle sense of the world around her, said that Pushkin's genius destroys racism. And today we see how racism is trying to destroy Pushkin. In neighboring countries, which arrogantly consider themselves to be "civilized" European peoples as opposed to the surrounding "wild jungle," monuments to the great Russian poet are being demolished and the names of streets bearing his name are being changed. It seems that these people do not even realize that in this way they are revealing themselves to the whole world.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to ask a question about another direction of your work in Africa. You were ambassador not only to Chad, but also to Morocco, and this country is considered always to have been more oriented towards the West than towards Russia. What conclusions did you draw from your mission to Morocco?

"The art of the possible" is not about diplomacy. Diplomats continue their work even when political relations are at an impasse, and work precisely to create and preserve opportunities. I have repeatedly seen between states that the potential for interaction is much higher than the current situation. This is all the more true of Morocco, a country that is remarkably diverse and has a long historical tradition. The ruler of this country, King Hassan II, described it very well when he compared Morocco to a tree whose branches are in Europe and whose roots are in Africa.

I have worked twice in diplomatic missions in Morocco, for the first time as Minister-Counselor of the Embassy of the USSR. I will remember for the rest of my life the historically important audience which I witnessed, which Hassan II gave in 1991 to our ambassador Y.M. Rybakov. The King of Morocco said literally the following: "I ask you to convey my words to the President of the USSR, M.S. Gorbachev. Personally, I don't like communists, Americans are our friends. But it is necessary to preserve the Soviet Union by any means, and without the use of tanks. The world, like a human, must stand on two legs, and there must be a balance in world affairs." It seems that the relevance of these words in today's situation is only increasing.

As for the nature of our bilateral relations – not only from the standpoint of my own eight years of experience in this country, but also taking into account the entire history of Russian-Moroccan relations beginning three centuries ago – I can say with confidence that the Kingdom of Morocco has always recognized the importance of orientation towards Russia. This continues to this day, and is confirmed by the recent congratulations of King Mohammed VI to President V.V. Putin on the occasion of the state holiday of Russia Day, where he emphasized that "Morocco and Russia have outstanding relations based on strong friendship, constructive cooperation and mutual respect." ■

In September, starting with the new academic year, several Moscow schools will begin teaching African languages for the first time. How did this initiative come about? How will the learning process be organized? How do the students themselves feel about this?

Alexei MASLOV, director of the Institute of Asia and Africa at Moscow State University, told *Russia-Africa* magazine about this.



WITHOUT AN INTERPRETER

TEACHING OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES BEGINS IN MOSCOW SCHOOLS

I'll start with the background. At one time, when we proposed to organize the study of the Chinese language in schools, we met with resistance. The language is very complex, and most importantly, it was not clear why you need to master it if you are not going to become a sinologist or translator in the future. Despite the rapid economic growth of China and the successful development of Russian-Chinese relations, this area was not perceived as a priority. Our ties with Europe were closer, and world affairs were dominated by the United States and its allies.

A lot has changed since then. What we call the reorientation of Russian policy to the East is increasingly making itself felt. Not only has the state declared new goals, but under the influence of these processes, society is changing its views on the world around it. Now experts on China are in great demand. They get a lot of lucrative offers and have no problems with employment.

The same story could repeat itself with Africa. Parents who are seriously thinking about the future of their children, as well as students in grades 9–10 who are building career plans, see

that specialization in Africa is becoming more and more relevant – it is no coincidence that the Russia–Africa Forum is being held for the second time. And in the next decade, when today's schoolchildren enter active adulthood, Africa will undoubtedly play a crucial role in world development.

This raises a problem that, until recently, was not recognized. In Russia, there is an acute shortage of Africanists, especially those with practical experience. Yes, we still have a brilliant school of linguistics focused on studying the languages of the peoples of Africa, but at the same time there are no specialists who can work in the fields of business and investment, facilitate the process of negotiation, and participate in building bilateral relations with the countries of the African continent. A quick turn to Africa has immediately exposed the shortage of these personnel. In other words, the correctly and timely declared idea is not supported in the main thing: who and how will implement it.

It should be emphasized that the education system does not determine the personnel policy in the country. Of course, we perceive new

trends in society, but these trends themselves are formed outside of us. An appropriate signal is needed.

In this case, it came from the school level. When we first came to speak to Moscow schoolchildren less than a year ago, we believed (based on the results of a survey) that for them Africa is mainly associated with poverty, perhaps with some exoticism, and at best interesting as a tourist destination. After that, we began to have a more detailed conversation, and found that the first impression was deceptive. Our students, fortunately, turned out to be smarter – and showed a genuine interest in Africa. We also received support from their parents, who saw great promise in this initiative. A positive response also came from the Department of Education of the Moscow City Government. And so, inspired by this interest, we began practical preparation for teaching.

Our institute acts as a methodological center, while our undergraduates and graduate students will teach. It was decided to start with teaching the Amharic language, the language of Ethiopia. Our methodologists are now develop-



ing an Amharic textbook for schools. In addition, Swahili will be taught. Three Moscow schools have already expressed their readiness to open a course in teaching these two languages. Similar applications have been received from several other schools – not only from Moscow, but also from other regions of Russia.

As far as I know, Russia is the first country to introduce the study of African languages as foreign languages at the basic school level. Until now, there has been no such experience in the world. Of course, this is an experiment, and we are not talking about including our courses in the compulsory school language curriculum. Teaching will be organized as an elective. Students who choose an African language will continue to learn one or two other languages, such as English and Chinese. Each school will determine the acceptable format of education. There will probably be one or two lessons per week for two to three years.

It is clear that with such a low intensity, schoolchildren are unlikely to be able to sufficiently master the chosen language. But they will acquire some knowledge about Africa and perhaps will be motivated to study it more deeply – and in the future, on this basis, they will be able to successfully settle on a choice of professional activity. Some will go into diplomacy, some into business or science. Specialists in Africa will be in high demand and will be preferred when hiring for jobs in the most prestigious industries. They will be able to work in the space industry, in nuclear energy, in the oil and gas sector – requests are already coming from Gazprom, Rosatom and Roscosmos. The main thing that school graduates who have completed our courses will have is the understanding that Africa is not just a big piece on a geographical map, but a dynamically developing continent with a huge variety of regional characteristics, open to cooperation in all spheres of life.

Information about our project was published by African newspapers, and we are now receiving applications from Africa. Local experts write that they would like to teach African languages in Russia. And this is very valuable for us, since unfortunately some areas in African studies here have been lost or did not receive proper development – for example, the Yoruba language. And now the native speakers of this and a number of other languages, who have received philological education in Africa, are ready to come and teach them here. We have never seen such active support in terms of teaching languages by native speakers.

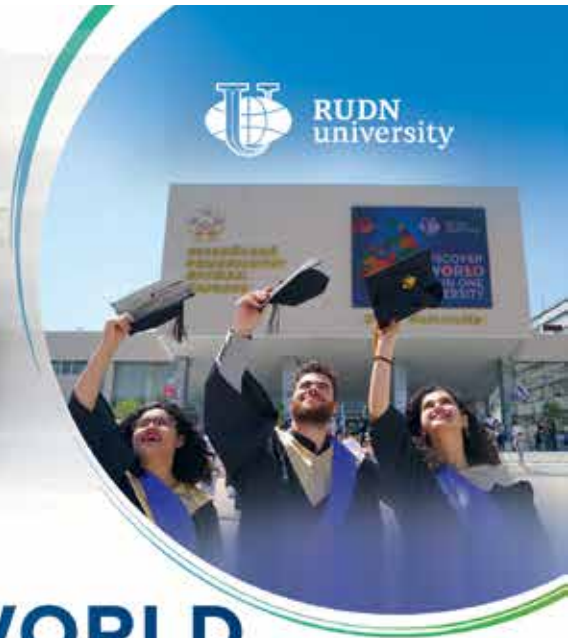
There is a certain inertia and persistent stereotypes. Many still believe that even in today's glob-

al world, it is quite possible to do without knowledge of African languages. There is English, and it is enough. But this is purely colonial thinking, the time of which is irrevocably ticking away. In any case, we will come to the realization of the need for a more in-depth language specialization. As the philosopher Wittgenstein said, "the boundaries of my language are the boundaries of my world." This means that if we want to understand the thoughts of the person we are speaking with – and in Africa they think in their native language, not in English, French, Portuguese, etc. – we will have to learn this language. This is not only a matter of respect for the country; it is a mentality that opens the way to the correct conduct of negotiations and the achievement of the agreements desired, based on the same understanding of their essence and details.

For Russia, African studies is not a new science. It originated within the walls of Moscow University in the middle of the XIX century, and at first was associated with the travels of our compatriots on the African continent. In the 30s of the XX century, courses on the history of Africa were taught in various departments of Moscow State University. However, this field developed especially rapidly in the 1940s and 50s, when the countries of Africa rose up to fight colonialism and began to free themselves from foreign domination.

The Institute of Asian and African Studies (IAAS) of Moscow State University is heir to a very powerful Moscow school of Africanists, which was based on philological education and assumed knowledge of traditions and culture along with the study of language. We have a unique Department of African Studies at IAAS. In contrast to the usual divisions into philology, history, political science, and cultural studies, our department is interdisciplinary and inclusive. It is headed by Professor N.V. Gromova, the author of the only textbook on the Swahili language in Russia. This department works with different regions of Africa, where our students go for internships. We work closely with the universities of Brazzaville and Dar es Salaam, and are constantly expanding the range of our interaction with colleagues from African countries.

This year, the IAAS has become the center for the elaboration of a new concept for the development of Asian and African studies, which will be adopted at the state level. We are doing this work under the leadership of the Ministry of Science and Education of Russia, and in cooperation with the Russian Academy of Sciences and St. Petersburg University. This shows that the awakening of Africa is now underway on Russian territory as well. ■



DISCOVER THE WORLD IN ONE UNIVERSITY

200,000
graduates work
in **170** countries



Larisa EFREMOVA, Vice-Rector for International Relations, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia named after P. Lumumba

THE PROUD NAME OF “LUMUMBEROS”

In the 1958-1959 academic year, 103 students from African countries arrived in the USSR to receive higher education, and a year later this number increased fivefold. The center of their training was the Peoples' Friendship University in Moscow, established on February 5, 1960, which was named after Patrice Lumumba on February 22, 1961.

The university soon became widely known in the states of the African continent, and since that time has been highly respected for its contribution to the education of talented African youth to work in many sectors of the economic and social spheres. Its graduates, especially those who studied there during the Soviet era, proudly call themselves “Lumumberos” (Spanish, meaning Lumumbians). They are recognized as the most well-trained and effective specialists.

The total number of African graduates from the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia named after Patrice Lumumba (RUDN) has already exceeded 14,000 people. Among them are the President of the Republic of Namibia (2005–2015), Hifikepune Pohamba; the Minister of the Environment of the Republic of Rwanda, Joan of Arc Muzhavamaria; the Prime Minister of the Republic of Chad (until 2010), Yusuf Saleh Abbas; and other statesmen and heads of ministries.

At present, RUDN University continues the best traditions laid down during its creation. As the official representative of the Russian Foreign Ministry, Maria Zakharova, noted in a special statement

on the occasion of the anniversary of the founding of the university, "RUDN University was established in a crucial historical period for world transformations, when the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America who had fought for independence overcame the consequences of colonialism and began to build their own statehood." And today, according to her, the university is actively involved "in the development of international educational and scientific ties, and the training of national personnel cadres in states friendly to Russia."

In the changing geopolitical situation, Russia is increasing its presence in Africa, including in the field of education. At the moment, RUDN University has 67 active agreements on coopera-



tion with 56 universities in 27 African countries, as well as with state educational authorities. 16 agreements on cooperation between RUDN University and associations in the countries of the African continent of foreign graduates of Russian/Soviet universities have been concluded and are in operation.

A landmark event was the return to RUDN University of the name of the first Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Patrice Lumumba. This initiative was supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Russia, and of course we heard warm greetings on this occasion from representatives of African countries who visited Russia at that time: the delegation of the Republic of Zimbabwe headed by the President of the Senate of the Parliament, Mabel Chinomon (March 2023), the parliamentary delegation of the Republic of Mozambique headed by the Chairman of the Assembly, Esperanza Laurinda Francisco Nyiuane Bias (April 2023), and others.

Currently, representatives of 162 countries of the world are studying at RUDN University. Among them are about 2500 citizens from 54 African countries, including Egypt (308 people), Nigeria (194 people), Zambia (138 people), Algeria (118

people), Angola (107 people), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (78 people), Guinea-Bissau (69 people), Rwanda (68 people), Chad (65 people), and Guinea (65 people). In high demand among African applicants are studies in the economic, medical and engineering fields. The most popular areas are medicine (Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Chad), oil and gas production (Cameroon, Chad), economics (Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria), management (Benin, Angola), construction (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad), programming and information technology (Angola), and international relations (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad, Republic of the Congo).

Within the framework of inter-university agreements, 4 pre-university training centers (Morocco, Namibia, Zambia, Nigeria) and 9 specialized classes (Angola, Gambia, Zambia, Cameroon, Namibia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Morocco, Tunisia) have been created with organizations in African countries; they are operating in order to increase the level of knowledge of candidates for admission to RUDN University in priority areas of training. There is also traditionally a preparatory faculty as part of RUDN University, part of the structure of the Institute of the Russian Language, which one can enter throughout the calendar year without passing entrance examinations.

In 2020, a new educational preparation project was launched and started working at RUDN University: a “Digital Preparatory Faculty,” which enables students to learn Russian and prepare for admission to Russian universities without leaving their native country. Methodology was developed taking into account country and regional specifics, as well as the development index of information and communication technologies in the countries of residence of students. Listeners have the opportunity to immerse themselves in Russian culture and language thanks to lectures conducted by experienced teachers, communication with tutors and Russian students, open conversation clubs, games and competitions. In 2023, students from 66 countries of the world are registered at this faculty, including Algeria, Benin, Guinea, Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, and South Africa.

It is worth noting another project implemented by the Institute of the Russian Language of the Peoples' Friendship University. In 2022, on the instructions of the Ministry of Education of Russia, more than 500 students and schoolchildren from Egypt were taught in digital courses. The Institute of Coptic Studies was inspired by the results of this program, and helped organize a much larger similar project – attracting more than 10,000 Egyptian students to study in our digital courses.

Since 2020, RUDN University has been developing at the national and international levels a “Cluster Approach” as a tool for exporting Russian education. This approach is being implemented in 46 countries, united in 11 territorial clusters, including in Africa.

RUDN University is the leading organization of the consortium of educational institutions for the joint implementation of the Cluster Approach in science, education, and industrial-scientific-educational partnership abroad, including on the African continent. Among the thematic clusters which play an important role in the professional training of specialists from African countries are "Engineering," "Agrotechnology," "Ecology," and "Medicine."

Since 2020, RUDN University has become the coordinator of the subproject of the program "International Cooperation in the Field of Nuclear Education," implemented by the Rosatom state corporation. The goal is to popularize educational programs in nuclear and related specialties, and ensure the recruitment of students from African countries. 18 African countries are platforms for the implementation of project activities: Algeria, Burundi, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Uganda, South Africa. In the 2022/2023 academic year, work is also underway with Russian partner universities to create an internet educational program for students from Namibia and Tanzania for a master's degree in geology and mining.

In addition, with the support of Rosatom, RUDN University holds the Youth Forum "Russia–Africa: Nuclear Education for Sustainable Development," the task of which is to motivate young people to receive education in this promising area and prepare a new cohort of specialists who can become the driving force of the socio-technological development of African countries in cooperation with Russian partners.

Dynamics of changes in the number of students (bachelors, specialists, masters, postgraduates, sub-faculty) by regional clusters in Africa

Regional Cluster	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Increase (2022 to 2015)
Angola, Zambia, Namibia, South Africa	246	371	367	381	291	317	345	296	20%
Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Senegal, Sierra Leone	124	117	120	99	104	110	143	147	19%
Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia	205	196	194	194	238	289	329	346	69%



All foreign citizens enter RUDN University on equal terms and receive full-time offline education, which provides high-quality training that allows them to become highly qualified specialists. In 2022, 992 people from African countries entered the university. As a rule, those wishing to study in Russia can come to study under a quota established by the decree of the Government of the Russian Federation on December 18, 2020, first having passed selection on the territory of their country and then the stage of consideration of candidates by Russian educational organizations.

In 2022, RUDN University received the right to conduct a selection process among foreign applicants for independent admission to study. For the 2023/2024 academic year, the places allocated for this purpose were awarded to the best candidates who successfully passed the competitive selection, the winners of the RUDN Open Olympiad for foreign citizens, foreign students from leading foreign and Russian universities, and representatives of foreign associations of RUDN alumni.

Foreign students are helped to get used to their new conditions and study successfully by curators and tutors, assigned teachers of the Russian language, student volunteers, and Russian-speaking students living with them in their dormitories. Par-

ticipation in cultural and sports events, excursions around the campus and educational facilities, and acquaintance with Moscow and its environs, as well as other cities and localities of Russia, help them to enter student life. Access to literature in their native languages is always available through scientific libraries or internet communication. Student self-government also acts as a factor in socio-cultural adaptation.

And of course it is difficult to overestimate the contribution of communal organizations. The Association of African Students has been operating at RUDN University since February 1996, and coordinates the activities of all compatriot organizations of African students of RUDN University. Small groups of students without a specific community are not ignored either. This year, the university has 44 organizations of the African continent: 37 from sub-Saharan countries and 7 communities of the Arab region (Middle East and North Africa). The Association and communities do a lot of work for the initial adaptation of new students, acquaint university guests with the culture, history, traditions and customs of their countries, and participate in conferences and meetings with political leaders and famous people. The "Festival of Folk Traditions" and "Planet South-West" International Festival, aimed at acquainting Moscow residents with the culture, history and traditions of the peoples of the whole world, are very popular. ■

AFRICA IN RUSSIA: NEW PERSPECTIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES



The first widely known "Russian black" was, without a doubt, James Lloydovich Patterson, Soviet submarine officer, poet and writer. As a child, back in 1936, he starred as a black baby in the film "Circus," which became a cult classic in the USSR. This melodramatic musical comedy tells about the fate of an American circus actress who found good friends in the USSR. What is the African diaspora in Russia today?

We talked about this with **Louis GOUEND**, a Russian businessman of Cameroonian origin.

How many people are united in the African diaspora in Russia? Is it possible to trace the dynamics of its development?

There is no exact data. But in 2009, the diaspora numbered about 100,000 people, half of whom lived in Moscow. However, about a third of them were in Russia illegally.

Migration from Africa to Russia is still insignificant, and its main channel is educational migration. In 2022, according to estimates by the Main Department of Internal Affairs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, 38,885 Africans legally arrived in Russia. Of these, 1338 had temporary residence permits, 1994 had permanent residence permits, 319 had work permits, and 874 received Russian citizenship. 34,360 Africans studied in Russia, most of them from Egypt (15668 people), Morocco (3438), Nigeria (1754), Algeria (1458) and Zimbabwe (1262).

In recent years, the number of African citizens in the Russian Federation has remained relatively unchanged. In 2022, the total number of the African diaspora in Russia was about 120,000 people.

Citizens of which countries are part of the diaspora?

It consists of representatives of almost all 54 African countries, but most numerous in Russia are those from the north of the continent, with Algeria and Egypt being the leaders. From sub-Saharan Africa, leaders are Ethiopia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Cameroon, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of the Congo.

What is their age and social composition, and where do they live?

Their ages vary, but most are students. There are also specialists who work in the Russian Federation under contracts, children from interracial marriages, university graduates who have received Russian citizenship and remained to live and work in Russia, professional athletes. More than half of Africans live in Moscow and St. Petersburg, while the rest live throughout Russia – especially in the South, where warm climatic conditions are favorable.

Can you name other famous African Russians, aside from yourself?

Of course – there are a lot of them, and from different spheres. For example: Anton Gidionovich Zaitsev is a Russian TV presenter; footballers Brian Idowu and Gaël Ondua; basketball players Walter Leroussat

and Joel Bolombay, Victor and Ekaterina Queyrou; Grigory Siyatvinda – Honored Artist of Russia; Victoria Pierre-Marie – jazz singer; Elena Hanga – TV and radio presenter; Jean Sagbo – the first black politician in Russia, deputy in the Tver region; Pierre Narcisse – Russian singer and actor, Honored Artist of the Republic of Ingushetia; and Leon Patrickovich Ngankam is the head of the neurosurgical department of the Children's Regional Clinical Hospital of the city of Tver.

Are there any public organizations and associations within the diaspora, and what do they do?

Yes, there are many of them throughout the country, and they are mainly engaged in protecting the rights, freedoms and interests of members of the African diasporas in the Russian Federation and their families; promoting the development of political, economic, humanitarian, and cultural ties between the peoples of Russia and Africa; and strengthening friendship between them. Particular attention is paid to the development of dialogue between civilizations, the promotion of knowledge and science, including through the creation of favorable intercultural relations, and the elimination of all forms of discrimination.

One of the key areas of activity is to create conditions for the development of a positive image of Russia in Africa in particular and in the world as a whole. Priority is given to the preservation and protection of the rights of children, including from mixed marriages, the legitimate interests of Africans studying in educational institutions of the Russian Federation, and the creation of conditions for the dignified return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their homeland.

One of these organizations is the Diaspocam Association, which you head. Tell us about it.

Our activities are very extensive, but if we talk about the main directions, they are primarily the promotion of the development of cultural and socio-economic relations of Cameroonian compatriots, the creation of conditions and the organization of events for their communication, broadening their horizons, and exchanging knowledge and experience for joint work and leisure. We develop and implement socio-economic programs and projects aimed at providing social assistance to Cameroonians in difficult life situations, and promote the development of Cameroonian-Russian trade relations through the promotion of Russian products in Cameroon and Cameroonian products in the Russian Federation.

Recently, contacts between Russia and Africa have intensified significantly. How important is this for both parties?



This is very important, because today Africa is the world leader in terms of consumption growth. Agriculture, the chemical industry and agricultural technologies, oil refining and mining, energy and peaceful nuclear technologies are rapidly developing on the continent. Most countries are interested in infrastructure development, and the demand for cars and special equipment is growing. In each of these areas, Russian business has something to offer.

What are the prospects for strengthening Russian-African cooperation in business?

According to the IMF, the combined size of the economy of African countries in 2021 was only \$2.7 trillion. Yet this figure is expected to grow to 8.5 trillion, and according to some forecasts even to 29 trillion dollars. The African continent is currently one of the most attractive markets. According to Irina Abramova, Director of the Institute for African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, in the near future – in 15-20 years – it is this continent that will determine the demographic picture of the world and influence the scale of global consumer demand.

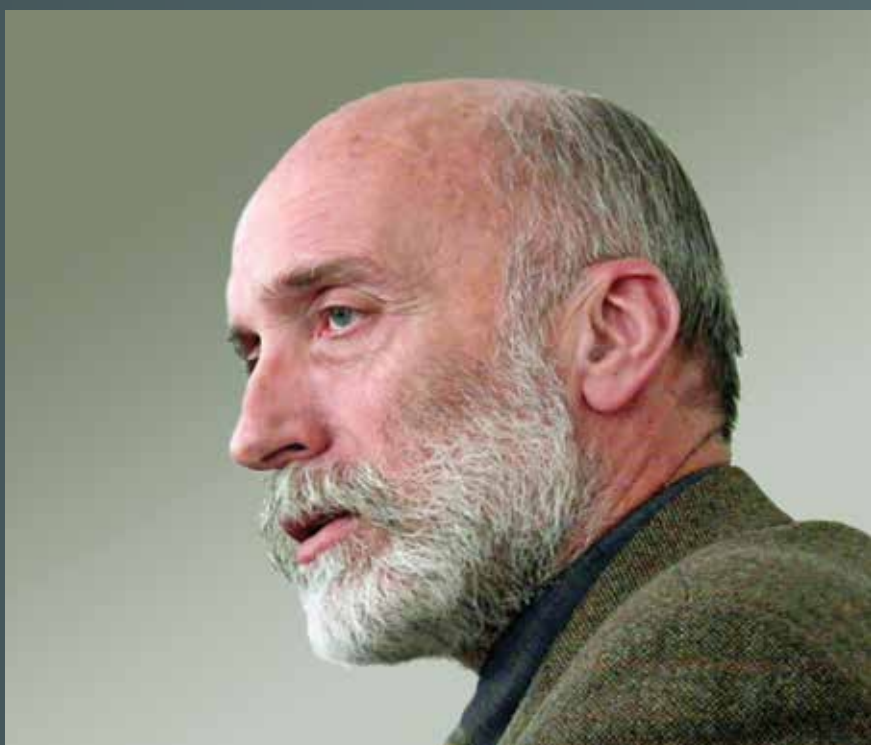
On the whole, Russia is ready to act as a partner for African countries in a number of areas. These are, first of all, the supply of grain; food products such as meat, fish, bread, milk and dairy products; medicines and medical equipment; and equipment for mining

and metallurgical enterprises. The development of the continent's transport systems requires airplanes, helicopters, and control and safety systems for various modes of transport.

In conclusion, a few words about yourself: how did you end up in Russia, how long have you been living in Moscow, and what are you doing now?

I was born in 1974 in Cameroon. I am from the Bassa people, the Bantu ethnic group living along the Atlantic coast of present-day Cameroon. I graduated from the prestigious high school Liebermann College with a degree in mathematics and physics. In 1993 I moved to Russia and entered the Lipetsk State Technical University. In 1998, I moved to Moscow, where I received master's degrees in technological sciences (from MSTU "Stankin" in 2000) and in economic sciences (from GUZ in 2003). I am fluent in French, Russian, English and Bassa, the language of the Bantu people. And now I am a Russian entrepreneur, founder of Helloafrica.ru magazine, an expert in the field of international business communication, a specialist in Russian-African relations, a member of the Council of the Russian-African Club, President of the Diaspora of Cameroon in Russia, a member of the Presidium of the Union of African Diasporas in Russia, and the official representative of Cameroon for economic cooperation with the Russian Federation. ■

At the end of July, Moscow and St. Petersburg will host the next "AFROFEST" International Festival of African Culture. Its goal is to broaden cultural horizons, destroy stereotypes, and acquaint Russian citizens with the history, customs and traditions of Africa. Yes, unfortunately, we know almost nothing about the culture of Africa – nor, indeed, Africa about ours. Why? **Nikolai SHCHERBAKOV**, a leading researcher at the Institute of Asian and African Studies of Moscow State University, PhD Candidate in Historical Sciences, discusses this in his article.



RUSSIA-AFRICA: DIALOGUE OF CULTURES

Africa began to send its complex cultural impulses, first to the countries of the Middle East and then to Europe and the New World, 300–400 years before the appearance of Huntington's synthetic theory of the "clash of civilizations." Streams of captured slaves from all African regions spread the influence of African cultures around the world. At present, we find traces of such influence in the dialects and cooking, beliefs and music, household traditions and family structure of the peoples of North, Central and South America, among numerous descendants of immigrants from the continent in the coastal territories of the Indian Ocean, and among the former European colonizers. Today, more than ever, the influence of this "soft power" is becoming significant.

Africa is large and the culture of African peoples is vast and extremely diverse. Unfortunately, in our country it has not been sufficiently studied. And it is impossible to know and love such an abstraction as "African culture." It's like considering a kokoshnik and bread and salt on a towel as a cultural tradition of all regions of Russia. In many ways, such a simplified perception of the culture of African peoples is explained by the fact that Russia has never had the experience of seizing colonies in Africa, African collections were not formed in museums, and the mutual cognizance of our country and African states really began only in the early 1960s as diplomatic relations were established.

For a long time, the perception of Africa in our country took shape with the help of propaganda



tools. The muscular freed African tore the chains of colonialism on posters, in verse it was romantically asserted that "Africa has the shape of a heart," and an unusually complex anti-colonial struggle was perceived through numerous theatrical productions of the hit "The Path of Thunder," where an armed struggle of unnamed Africans took place in an unnamed African country. And even earlier, at the beginning of the twentieth century, Nikolai Gumilev's cycle of poems "Abyssinian Songs" – the result of impressions from his several expeditions to Ethiopia – was taken to be a translation, and praised for its "bright colorfulness" and the "virgin simplicity" of its unknown African authors.

On the other hand, in contrast to modern culturologists who neglect genuine Africa, V. Markov's study "The Art of Negroes" appeared in Soviet Russia already in the 1920s, and was far ahead of its time. Today, this rare work with an intolerant name can serve as a model of art historical analysis based on the study of authentic artifacts of various African cultures.

Digitalization and the explosive development of new types of communications have led to the fact that the results of the African Film Festival held in mid-June 2023 in St. Petersburg were already being discussed in Dakar and Accra on the same day. The gala concert of graduates of the ballet school at the "Russian House" in Morocco was an occasion for professional analysis in the ballet circles of Moscow and St. Petersburg. There are many such examples. But, at the same time, there is a significant retardation in such an important matter as the formation of qualitative, reliable mutual ideas among Russians about Africa and among Africans about the development of Russia.

First of all, it is necessary to take into account an amazing feature of the development of almost all African countries, without exception (and there are more than 50 of them today): they are "outrageously young." Their population is young – in the vast majority of African countries, up to 60-65% of the population is under 25 years old. It is no exaggeration to assume that the culture of the majority of Africans today is youth culture.

In addition to the demographic features of the development of the culture of African peoples, there are also important geographical features. Most Africans are still non-urban dwellers. Their culture, their perceptions and expectations are determined by the traditional way of life.

Yet since the end of the last century, this situation has changed irreversibly. Without breaking with tradition, millions of Africans in all major regions of the continent are nevertheless persistently striving to become urban dwellers. One can imagine how the value system of these new townspeople is changing, albeit not immediately, and what aspects of what is for them a new culture, in the broadest sense of this concept, they now take as models.

Add to this the young age of a significant part of such newly-minted citizens, so susceptible to everything new and unusual, and you will understand what impact the culture of giant megacities can and does have on them. The world of movie heroes, until recently created by Bollywood and now Nollywood (the unofficial name of the giant film industry in Nigeria), the world of fashion and the habits of movie stars – all of this turns into alluring "big city lights" for quite poor boys, girls, and their younger family members, recently living in a village.

Like it or not, they need to switch to new standards in everything, including even their language – all African states inherited one of the languages from the colonial past: English, French or Portuguese. They are the basis of educational materials in primary and secondary schools, the main languages of office work, and have a significant share in the media. Today, on the one hand, it is they who help to quickly become familiar with the patterns and standards of modern globalized culture; on the other hand, they replace and thereby eradicate tradition on a large scale. Globalization and the reformatting of culture initiated by it are not so openly victorious in African countries, but a similar trend is inevitably growing in all regions of the continent. The famous masks used by many African peoples for predominantly ritual purposes are now being created as a business project and offered in souvenir stalls for tourists.

Returning to the language, it is important to take into account that in Africa, as throughout the world, there is a tendency by official state languages to displace small languages, reduce their role in the development of national cultures, and absorb their heritage. Nevertheless, the main African regions are relatively lucky – languages that unite tens of millions of people are continuing to successfully develop there. In some cases, there is even an expansion of such languages – for example in East Africa, where "Swahili civilization" is now being formed before our eyes, as Swahili is increasingly replacing English in all areas of oral and written culture.

At the same time, the most famous writers of the continent – Nobel Prizes winners Wole Soyinka,

Nadine Gordimer and J.M. Coetzee, Booker Prize laureate Chinua Achebe, and many other writers, journalists, publicists – prefer to work in European languages, well aware of the role of these tools of "soft power" for uniting a nation and for successful positioning in the international arena of achievements in the development of the cultures of various African peoples.

Speaking about the perception of the cultures of African peoples in our country, it is important to take into account that African studies in general and the study of African cultures in particular are very young sciences here. In addition, the study in our country of any aspects of the development of the African continent was under the conditions of the almost complete absence of field research, full-fledged expeditions, or live contacts with African peoples. Ideological obstacles to establishing direct ties with the continent have been replaced over the past three decades by economic obstacles. In the competition for funds for the study of Africa, "culture" loses.

Surprisingly, our "soft power" – designed to form ideas among African peoples about Russia, its place and opportunities in the modern world – also lacks the means to properly develop. It remains to be hoped that domestic African studies, called today to provide a large-scale and professional turn to a deep study of Africa, will have the urgently needed modern personnel to take the opportunity to grow. Then we will be able not only to discuss in depth the benefits of investing in the commodity markets of African countries, but also to finally fully enjoy cooperation with the richest cultures of the peoples of Africa. ■





Maya KOTLYAR,
travel industry expert,
founder and head of
MAYEL Travel

BOTH THE BEACH AND THE SAFARI

THE OPENING OF DIRECT FLIGHTS
CONTRIBUTES TO THE RAPID GROWTH OF
RUSSIAN TOURISM TO AFRICAN COUNTRIES

While Europe remains closed to Russian tourists, Africa is opening up to them more and more widely. More and more African countries are abolishing visas and offering interesting tours, and prices for hotel accommodation, trips and excursions show a pleasant downward trend as tourist flows grow. And most importantly, the African direction is attractive for its novelty. A traveler from Russia finds here everything he is looking for – from snow-white beaches to exciting safaris, and impressions of a huge range of natural beauty. The demand for tours to African countries is growing from year to year, and the tourism industry is trying to make Africa more affordable. There are opportunities, but there are also difficulties – starting with the question of how to get there ...

"Africa is a very interesting destination, but today such a vacation is considered exclusive. It all depends on the air connections. If they are established, then Africa will become the same kind of familiar route for Russian tourists as Thailand today, for example," comments Maya Kotlyar.

The air carrier Ethiopian Airlines has already established a foothold in the Moscow market. The increased number of flights of Ethiopian Airlines allows you to fly from Moscow almost daily. This company aspires to leadership in the transportation of Russian tourists to sub-Saharan countries. In 2022, according to Ethiopian Airlines, the flow of Russian tourists in this direction doubled. Most of all, they are attracted by the Seychelles, South Africa, Kenya and Tanzania. Of course, this is not mass tourism, but in the segment of independent travel it is a definite trend.

Flights from Russia to Zanzibar may begin soon. Direct flights are predicted for next autumn, by the beginning of the holiday season. According to experts, there will be many people who want to visit this exotic island, especially since flights can be set up not only from Moscow, but also from other Russian cities. In May, Azur Air received permits from the Federal Air Transport Agency for flights to Zanzibar from Yekaterinburg, Krasnoyarsk, Omsk, Perm, Ufa, and Chelyabinsk.

A popular choice among Russian tourists is South Africa, where beach holidays are combined with educational tourism and the opportunity to visit excellent natural national parks. According to the Ambassador of South Africa to Russia, Mzuvukile Maketuki, successful negotiations took place for the launch of four direct flights, to Cape Town and Johannesburg. The organization of these flights can be taken on by Nordwind Airlines. According to experts, the aircraft will be booked at near to capacity.





Kenya has become another key destination for Russians. In addition, as Maya Kotlyar noted, tours are purchased to Namibia, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Mali, Guinea, Angola, Ghana and Madagascar.

Russian tourists have long ago mastered the North African countries: Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco. There is also progress in these areas. In May 2023, direct flights between Russia and Morocco resumed. Additional direct flights have opened to Tunisia – Nouvelair Tunisie now flies there, and Russian airlines Aeroflot and Red Wings have received permission to fly from Moscow to Enfidha and the island of Djerba. In June, the new Egyptian airline Red Sea Airlines began charter flights from Moscow to Sharm el-Sheikh. Nevertheless, travel industry experts note the continuing shortage of direct flights. For example, flights to Morocco are only three times a week – on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays – and tickets for these flights are quite difficult to purchase.

For beach lovers, the Seychelles are of particular interest at any time of the year. There are direct flights operated by Aeroflot, but the demand significantly exceeds the supply – tickets are sold-out instantly, and many tourists have to travel with transfers. There is good

news – perhaps soon there will be another attractive and convenient destination: Mauritius. In addition to beaches, an abundance of seafood, and the luxury of tropical nature, there you have the unique opportunity to see the world's only underwater waterfalls. As the Ambassador of Mauritius to Russia, Heswar Janke, said recently about the long-awaited direct flights from Moscow, this matter is "practically resolved" and they will be launched in the near future.

Addressing the question of which African countries beyond Tunisia and Morocco can be visited without getting a visa in advance, Maya Kotlyar named South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Swaziland, Gambia, Cape Verde, and Djibouti. Mozambique also abolished visas in March 2023, but so far this country does not have a beach infrastructure of a suitable level. In addition, Namibia and neighboring Botswana allow free entry to Russians.

In general, the number of trips by Russians to key destinations sub-Saharan Africa is increasing by about 20–30% per year, which indicates a high potential for the development of tourism in Africa – and we are talking about sightseeing tours. After the lifting of quarantine restrictions from the Covid-19 period, Tan-



zania alone received 20–30 thousand travelers. If direct flights are established between our countries, then according to the expert's forecast, the number of trips will grow rapidly – and in the next five years may reach 100 thousand per year.

Today, the tourism market in Africa is represented by both large DMC companies with which Russian tour operators cooperate, and small businesses engaged mainly in individual tourism. The growth of air traffic will allow tourists to expand their choices, in favor either of a large operator or a small organizer of exclusive tours.

Maya Kotlyar notes the high marketing activity of African colleagues. According to her, Africa is strikingly represented at all tourism exhibitions in Moscow and is actively launching new products, which are becoming more and more interesting every year. The tourist infrastructure is developing dynamically, and regular group tours with Russian-speaking guides are organized in South Africa. "We are already going beyond the classic safari. Tours combining multiple African countries are gaining popularity – for example, Madagascar-Mauritius, South Africa-Zambia, or Kenya-Rwanda, a novelty for Russian tourists," continues Maya Kotlyar. "Such

a direction of combi-tours as the mainland plus a sea resort is also promising – for example, Tanzania–Zanzibar, or Kenya–Mombasa area. Such a tour allows you not only to go on a safari inland and see the "big five" animals, but also to relax by the ocean.

With the development of air traffic, ticket prices and the cost of the tourist product as a whole decrease. If not so long ago Africa was considered a luxury destination with a tour cost of at least 10 thousand dollars per person, now a week-long tour in mini-groups with accommodation will cost a tourist about 2500 thousand dollars.

The representative of the Zanzibar Tourism Development Association, Kais Ben Frange, noted that good times are coming for Africa, which is friendly to Russian tourists. With the development of air traffic, the distant continent is getting closer, which gives a reason to think not only about expanding the hospitality sector in Africa itself, but also about the possibility of organizing a counter-flow. For residents of African countries, not only the North, Baikal or Kamchatka, but even central Russia will seem as exotic as the jungle and savannah look for Russian tourists. This direction also has great potential. ■



Svetlana AKULOVA,

General Director of the Moscow Zoo, member of the International Board of Trustees “Species360,” President of the Union of Zoos and Aquariums of Russia and the Eurasian Regional Association of Zoos and Aquariums

CONSERVATION OF RARE ANIMALS IS A COMMON CONCERN

In the Moscow Zoo, many young of rare animals are born, which we are very happy about. Yet the question immediately arises: where to send them? After all, they need their own space, while you need to give them the opportunity to be among relatives and eventually produce offspring themselves. Each rare species that lives in a zoo has its own coordinator who knows where his wards are, monitors the conditions of their care, decides on questions of their movement, and controls that closely related animals do not breed. This is how the reserve population is maintained.

Our zoo has many species of animals that live on the African continent: giraffes, zebras, black antelopes, meerkats, honey badgers, potto (prosimians from the lori family), crowned cranes, and many others. We try to provide them with living conditions as close as possible to natural, for which we are constantly studying the experience of foreign zoos and centers for the rehabilitation and reintroduction of animals.

Our cooperation with our African colleagues has been going on for many years. Vladimir

Vladimirovich Spitsin, director of the Moscow Zoo in 1977–2013, established a friendly personal relationship with the directors of the zoos of Johannesburg and Pretoria, thanks to which the opportunities for working with South Africa and replenishing our zoo with representatives of the animal world of Southern Africa have significantly expanded. Four elephants from the Kruger National Park and four cheetahs from the De Wildt Cheetah and Wildlife Center came to us. For our part, we sent two Japanese cranes to South Africa for the Umgeni Bird Park, and the marmoset Diana to the Johannesburg Zoo.

In 1994, at the invitation of John Visserana, one of the leading herpetologists and naturalists, author of numerous books on poisonous snakes in South Africa, our employees carried out a number of joint works in several national parks and reserves of South Africa, and visited the zoos of Johannesburg and Pretoria, and the Transvaal Snake Park. The Moscow Zoo has received many species of endemic reptiles from South Africa, some of which (or their offspring) can still be seen in our zoo today.

Modern zoos cannot exist in isolation. Our main task is the preservation of rare and endangered species of animals – the creation of artificial reserve populations. It is impossible to ensure this only on your own. We constantly interact with our foreign colleagues. We discuss with them issues related to the comfortable raising and reproduction of animals in captivity, exchange experience, and conduct joint scientific and educational activities.



Cooperation has also been established with other African countries. In 1996, our herpetologists conducted fieldwork and research in several provinces of Guinea-Bissau, and as

a result a collection of rare species of snakes was collected. A cooperation agreement was also signed at that time with the Pasteur Institute of the Republic of Guinea for the harvest of





snake venom and the production of anti-venom serums. The director of this institute, Dr. Boiro Mamadou, has repeatedly visited the Moscow Zoo, and our specialists have visited Guinea. It is also important to mention the trips of the staff of our herpetology department to Swakopmund, Namibia at the invitation of one of the leading herpetologists and naturalists of that country, Tommy Collard.

Business trips to Kenya successfully established contacts with the herpetological center and laboratory of the Bio-Ken Snake Farm in Watamu and the National Museum of Wildlife in Nairobi, which donated two rare endemic vipers to the Moscow Zoo. This gift bore fruit in the literal sense: our specialists were the first in the world to successfully breed this species in captivity.

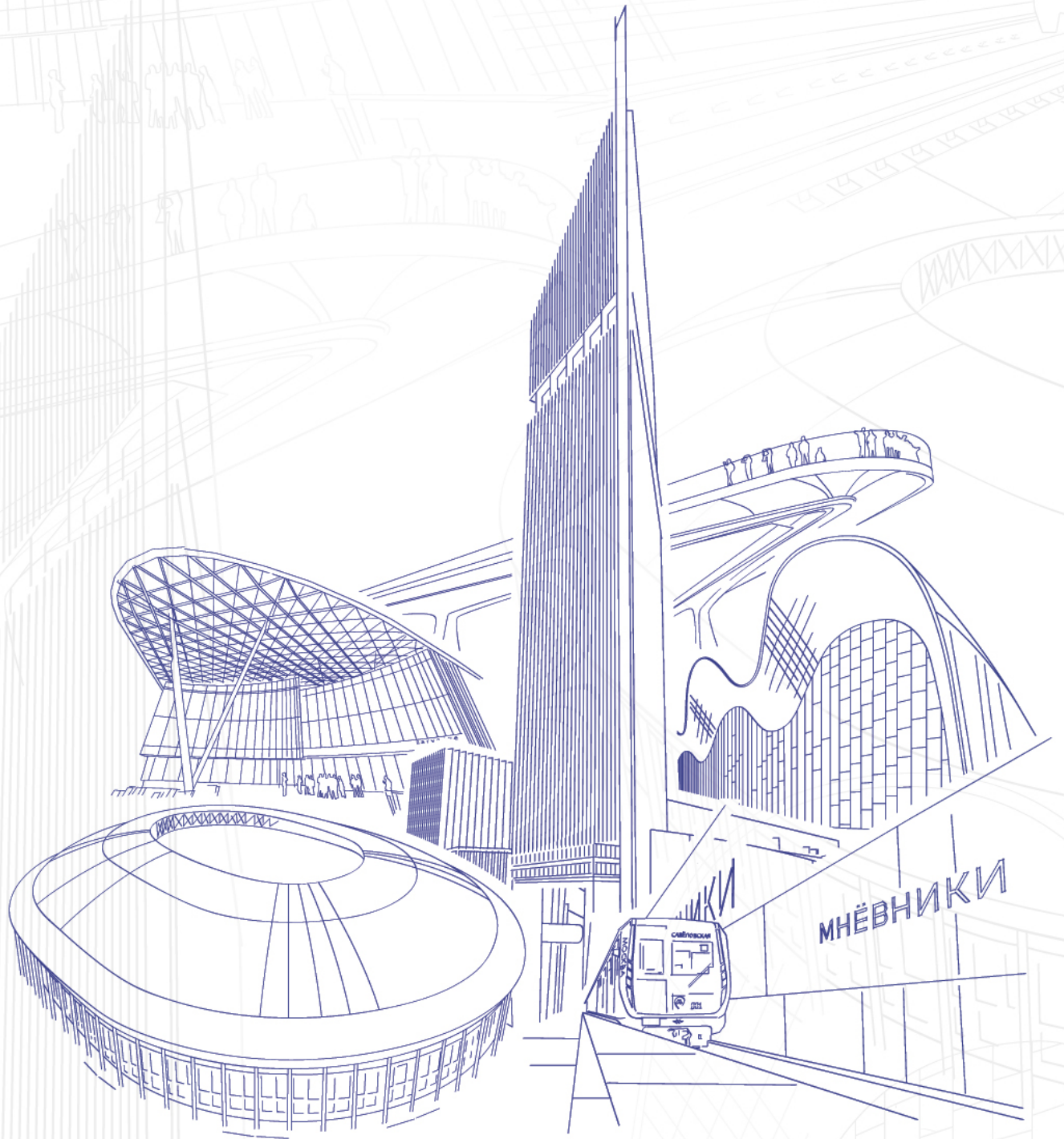


In 1997, Moscow celebrated its 850th anniversary. On this occasion, the government of the Seychelles made an unusual gift: our zoo received a pair of giant tortoises. The Seychelles giant tortoise is included in the “Red List” of endangered species of the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Its natural habitat is limited to the small island of Aldabra in the Seychelles group.

Extensive foreign contacts are also maintained by the Department of Ornithology. In 2018, its staff visited the South African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds (SANCCOB), based in the Rietvley Nature Reserve, home to colonies of South African penguins, and the reintroduction center of the Mabula Ground Hornbill Project. Here, birds are studied in their natural environment; weak and sick chicks are removed, fed and returned to nature. Our ornithologists have familiarized themselves in detail with this part of the work of their colleagues from South Africa, and a group of Kaffir hornbills now lives at the Moscow Zoo. Their maintenance and the creation of the conditions for reproduction are very difficult tasks. The trip to South Africa gave us the necessary experience, and was the beginning of close cooperation which continues at the present time.

Employees of the Moscow Zoo are always interested in the work of colleagues in Africa. We observe their activities, read their scientific works, and study their experience. Nature conservation is a common cause, and the key to success is broad cooperation on an ongoing basis. ■





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