This has been the year of Ethiopia in my work. It ends as it started, in negotiations with the Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation (ETC) about the supply of broadband capacity. Among African countries, Ethiopia is one of the least connected, yet this position promises to dramatically change in the next year. Because of a $1.5 billion investment, the country is now 90 percent fiber-connected domestically. My company, SEACOM, possesses the missing link to the country’s needs as Ethiopia has for the first time internet connectivity without reliance on satellite-based systems.

Before I come to the real focus of this article, I should share more about my work in Ethiopia and on the SEACOM project. SEACOM is a privately capitalized company (www.SEACOM.MU), begun by American venture capitalists. I was a founding officer in our first major venture, Global Alumina, and remain a shareholder in that company. The holding company, Heracles Capital, has several major Africa infrastructure projects of which the Guinea Alumina refinery project and the Uganda Bujagali hydroelectric project are among the current largest ones. I have been associated with these projects since 2000, when I was asked to become part of the management team to provide our various initiatives with African expertise.

Because of the challenges that SEACOM experienced in concluding a nearly three-year-long negotiation process with ETC, I was asked to join the SEACOM
“Green Morocco” Plan Presented to CCA Members

CCA’s November Agribusiness Breakfast Forum featured Morocco’s Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Aziz Akhannouch, who presented his country’s “Green Morocco” plan. The 10-year initiative supports sustainable agricultural growth in Morocco’s sixteen regions. Citing as challenges the historical emphasis on low value-added subsistence crops and fragmented arable land, Akhannouch said that Morocco’s leadership is dedicated to revamping the country’s agricultural sector. “Green Morocco” rests on two pillars: modernizing and diversifying its agricultural sector and alleviating poverty through social investment. To support the first pillar, the Moroccan government plans to invest between $11 billion and $15 billion in increasing the production of higher value-added crops. To promote the second pillar, $1.5 billion to $2 billion will be invested in supporting smallholder farmers through partnerships between cooperatives and microfinance institutions. Additional elements of the plan target the improvement of institutional frameworks and investment climate, fostering productive long-term partnerships, the creation of “agropoles” and training centers, crop conversion and diversification and increased productivity. Myriad incentives will be offered to the private sector to help catalyze this initiative including exempting corporate and income tax until 2013 and minimizing and exempting some import duties and VAT.

and Renewable Energies (ITER), located in Southern Tenerife, exemplifies these advances in research and development of solar photovoltaic and wind technologies as well as collocated renewable energies test houses. The International Business Partnership Conference will allow participants to:

- Obtain information on opportunities for market access in Africa
- Network with key African, U.S., E.U. and Asian private sector and government representatives
- Explore new business opportunities in the ICT and renewable energy sectors
- Meet and vet potential partners
- Discover the latest business success stories and best practices

The International Business Partnership Conference will allow participants to learn more about key growth sectors in Africa, opportunities, challenges and possible solutions in doing business in Africa, and various public and private sector perspectives on Africa’s business climate, while meeting potential business partners from across the globe through an array of networking opportunities.

Plenary Sessions and Workshops will address:

- Public-private partnerships
- Renewable and sustainable energy projects
- Information and Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure development, including undersea fiber optic networks and mobile banking services as well as ICT applications in healthcare
- Joint ventures and strategic alliances
- Opportunity to meet and interact with members of the Africa Cost to Europe (ACE) consortium.
- New generation of satellite communications

The Conference will also include the participation of leading financiers in the “Vault”, providing ample opportunity for companies interested in accessing funds.

Site visits will include:

- The Port of Santa Cruz de Tenerife www.puertosdetenerife.org/inicio.asp
- The Institute of Technology and Renewable Energy (ITER) a cutting edge center of research and development for solar and wind power generation, bioclimatic housing, and secure information data center. www.iter.es

Trade Missions:

European-led trade missions to African countries will be organized to provide individualized agendas for each participating company in the conference. Trade missions will provide individualized agenda to cater to each participating company.

Each mission will be supported by the World Bank Private Sector Liaison officer Network

Target Audience:

- US, EU and African businesses involved in ICT and renewable energy
- Representatives of African, US and EU governments
- Members of CCA sister organizations
- Members of the ACE (Africa Coast to Europe) Consortium

Registration fees:

- Business representatives: $750
- Early Bird rate $650 deadline January 31, 2011
- Government representatives: $400
Africas North-South Trade Corridor to Open Markets

According to a 2009 World Bank report, it takes an average of 40 days for exports to cross African borders, in stark contrast to Latin America’s 22 days. These factors, coupled with high transportation costs, are prompting African countries and donors to focus attention on regional integration and, specifically, on the north-south trade corridor. The corridor, once completed, will consist of a network of roads, ports and railroads linking eight participating countries: Botswana; Democratic Republic of Congo; Mozambique; Malawi; South Africa; Tanzania; Zambia; and Zimbabwe.

On November 30, CCA’s U.S.-South Africa Business Forum organized a briefing on the north-south corridor for CCA members. The guest presenters were USAID Senior Private Sector Advisor Jeffrey Jackson and South African Department of Trade and Industry Minister (Economic) Lerato Mataboge. Jackson framed USAID’s role in the support of sub-Saharan Africa’s transportation infrastructure as an extension of U.S. emphasis on agricultural development, which is embodied in the Feed the Future initiative. Jackson reconfirmed that USAID is no longer in the business of directly investing in projects but advised that there would be related tender opportunities for American businesses through the Feed the Future process.

Mataboge informed the audience that the South African government’s support of the north-south trade corridor is a manifestation of its commitment to regional integration. Mataboge described how the corridor will connect Durban to Dar es Salaam, intersecting a variety of existing corridors such as the Maputo, Beira, Trans Kalahari, and Durban corridors. A second component of the corridor will connect Mombasa, Kenya, to eastern DRC, passing through Rwanda and Uganda. Mataboge also explained that participating states are responsible for financing and delivering support projects along their section of relevant trade corridors. For those seeking additional information, the NEPAD Business Foundation maintains a list of these projects.
Cameroonian Delegation Updates CCA Members on Investment Climate

On November 18, CCA hosted a lunch briefing on investment opportunities with senior representatives from Cameroon. CCA Member AES Corporation sponsored the luncheon and opened the discussion by describing its successful energy generation project in Cameroon. Benefitting from the Cameroonian government’s efforts to privatize the energy sector, AES has installed more than 1,000 megawatts of electrical power capacity and serves in excess of 700,000 customers. The Cameroonian delegation cited the AES partnership as a marquee example of the opening up of the national market to outside investors and encouraged CCA members to follow suit. The delegation touted political stability, transparent elections, plentiful human resources, and a welcoming business environment, including the recent launch of a “one stop shop” for investment, as further reasons to invest in the country. The audience was assured that the Cameroonian government is dedicated to tackling issues of corruption and impediments to investment, including a burdensome taxation system and high costs of starting a business. In response to this latter issue, an investment promotion agency has been launched to attract foreign capital to Cameroon’s agriculture, tourism, fishing and forestry sectors. The delegation closed the discussion by inviting CCA members to join Cameroon’s “Vision 2035”, which needs partners and focuses primarily on investments in agriculture and infrastructure development.

Using Mobile Technology to Improve Health

Last year the Rockefeller Foundation, the United Nations Foundation and the Vodafone Foundation - three of the leading foundations involved in global health, technology and humanitarian assistance - banded together to create the Mobile Health Alliance.

Karl Brown, associate director of applied technology at the Rockefeller Foundation, leads its electronic health and mobile health work. He recently spoke with AllAfrica about the Mobile Health Alliance, Rockefeller’s contribution, and the foundation’s other health initiatives in Africa.

What are your thoughts about the mHealth Summit that was held in Washington in October? Achievements?

For me one of the key things that came out of it was [that] the growth of this space was even bigger than any of us have thought. There were 2,600 people there, hundreds of posters and hundreds of booths and technologies. The excitement was one of the things that took me a little bit by surprise. One of the things I’m worried about is that it might be in a hype cycle.

So the question is: how many of the companies entering this space are going to survive in the next five years? And that often happens in new technology domains. Lots of people rush in and start developing technologies, but at some point there’s a process by which the victors emerge and the rest fall to the side. So far that hasn’t happened. It just keeps growing and growing.

I think everything about mobile always ends up surprising everybody. The growth of mobile money has surprised people; just the growth of mobile phones has surprised people. So I think the future of mobile health is still very, very unclear. But in the past when I’ve heard people talk about mobile health, it was talked about in isolation from other things in the health system. It was this cool little pilot or this cool technology that people were doing something interesting with.

But now people are starting to see mobile health as part of a wider ecosystem of eHealth. People are starting to talk about how does it integrate to the back end, how does it connect with databases, how do you make sure that mobile health is really, really helping to track outcomes? So I think the level of the conversation has gotten more serious and more complex because people are starting to wrestle with how the mobile integrates with the rest of the health system rather than being a fancy add-on to it.

To read this interview in its entirety, click HERE.

This excerpt was provided by CCA member allAfrica.com. AllAfrica Global Media is a multi-media content service provider, systems technology developer and the largest electronic distributor of African news and information worldwide.
The South African government is driving the transformation of the South African economy by encouraging the growth and development of empowered and/or wholly Black owned businesses in sectors as diverse as automotive, wine, mining and tourism. The USAID funded SAIBL program supports this goal through the development of the South African Supplier Diversity Council, and the use of targeted interventions to improve the competitiveness of South African small to medium sized businesses that fit our empowerment criteria. SAIBL might cost-share the modifications necessary to achieve relevant industry certifications (ISO, HACCP, Fair Trade, etc.), conduct export readiness assessments, assist exporters to prepare and exhibit at major U.S. trade shows, or, in this case, highlight some of our export oriented clients in a product catalogue intended for both consumers and industry professionals. More information on SAIBL can be found on our blog.

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**Foreign Minister Briefs Nigeria Working Group**

Nigeria’s minister of foreign affairs, Henry Ajumogobia, was the honored guest at a meeting of CCA’s Nigeria Working Group on December 10. The minister spoke extensively about Nigeria’s national elections, scheduled to take place in April 2011. Ajumogobia was optimistic about the elections and detailed steps being taken by Nigeria’s federal government to ensure credibility in the electoral process. Nigeria’s National Assembly elections will take place April 2; the presidential election on April 9; and state elections on April 16. In addressing Nigeria’s business climate, the minister underscored data to highlight the country’s massive economic potential. Of Nigeria’s approximately 150 million people, 50 percent are under 30 years of age. Urbanization is bringing the majority of the population to cities. Only 30 percent of Nigeria’s 500,000 university graduates each year are employed, making economic growth a priority for the government. The minister said that the Nigerian government seeks to encourage large-scale commercial farming. Nigeria, once a net exporter of agricultural goods, now has an annual food import bill of $3-4 billion.

Another challenge is securing the Niger Delta region, where the private sector needs its assets and local infrastructure protected. Ajumogobia described the power sector in Nigeria as a huge opportunity for the private sector. He cited the telecommunications sector as a precedent for opportunity in the power sector, reminding CCA members that the number of telephone lines in the country increased from 500,000 to over 70 million in just six years. To support increased power production, the Nigerian government is planning to privatize the energy sector. Generation and production will become privately controlled, while transmission will remain the purview of the government. Nigeria currently produces only 4,000 megawatts (MW) of electrically annually. The country seeks to increase output to 30,000 MW to meet demand.

Other highlighted priorities of the government include air safety and financial reform. Citing improvements in Nigeria’s business climate, a number of airlines, including U.S.-based carriers Delta and United, have recently launched service to Lagos. Financial reform has been tackled with new regulations, stock market oversight and the unprecedented prosecution of corrupt government officials.

Ajumogobia described hesitancy to invest in Nigeria as a matter of perception and urged those in attendance to rethink the country. The minister invited CCA members to propose to the Nigerian government business ideas that are mutually beneficial and results-oriented.

The minister, who had met earlier during his U.S. visit with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, also briefly described the role played by Nigeria as leading power in the ECOWAS region. He said that Nigeria recognizes Alassane Ouattara as the rightful president-elect in Côte d’Ivoire.

**About SAIBL:** SAIBL is supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The program is implemented by the Corporate Council on Africa, ECIAfrica and the National Business Initiative under a strategic partnership agreement with the Department of Trade and Industry. In addition, the U.S.-based National Minority Supplier Development Council has signed an agreement with the National Business Initiative to provide technical assistance and support to the South African Supplier Diversity Council.
CCA Staff Profile: Theo Wellington

Theo Wellington joined CCA in September 2010, on secondment from CCA Member Shell Oil. He serves as a senior advisor in support of CCA’s mission to promote trade and investment ties between the United States and the nations of Africa.

Theo first joined the HR function of Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria in 1993. Until March 2000, he was senior human resources adviser to several of Shell’s surface and sub-surface engineering and asset teams.

He became head of Community Relations in April 2000 for Shell Nigeria’s Eastern Operations in the Niger Delta, where he interfaced with local communities to build relationships and enhance company reputation, community development and conflict resolution. From 2005-2010, he served as government relations manager, community content implementation manager and manager, government and community relations, for Shell Operations in Nigeria.

Theo’s communication and strategic relationship building and management skills were instrumental in Shell’s efforts to forge improved relationships and managing interactions with governmental structures and agencies, as well as with NGOs and the media, during very challenging times in the Niger Delta. He championed the development of several memoranda of understanding with local communities, as well as the deployment and implementation of global memorandum of understanding in communities to enhance mutually beneficial relationships with communities. He also developed key community content initiatives and business development models with critical stakeholders.

Theo is an accredited partnership broker with the Overseas Development Institute & International Business Leaders Forum (London) and has a diploma in International Public Relations Management. He holds Master of Business Administration and Bachelor of Laws (LL.B) degrees.

November Events


11/18: Security Working Group briefing on the referendum in Sudan by Dr. J. Peter Pham

11/18: Lunch discussion with senior representatives from The Republic of Cameroon

11/30: U.S.-South Africa Business Forum briefing on Africa’s North-South Transportation Corridor

Founded in 1992, GrainPro, Inc., Concord, Massachusetts, is the leader in the “Green Revolution - Phase II, The Safe Storage Revolution”, through its product line of patented hermetic (airtight), flexible storage systems. GrainPro achieves these benefits by developing and marketing post harvest technologies storage products for food grains and other dry food commodities. These GrainPro products are known as Cocoon™, SuperGrainbags™, GrainSafes™, Bunkers™, Collapsible Drying Cases™, TranSafeliners™, and PITS systems. GrainPro products are used in over 80 countries, and have capacities between 60kg and 1000-tonnes.

GrainPro’s on-farm and village-level hermetic storage units not only prevent post-harvest losses that often reach 25 percent but also prevents loss of germination capacity in stored seed.

GrainPro maintains sales offices in Africa, the Americas and Asia, to back its network of distributors.

GrainPro’s pesticide-free hermetic storage units provide long or medium term organic storage, eliminating the need for chemical insecticides and fumigants. Insect infestations are rapidly controlled without chemical insecticides. Fungi do not grow in the low oxygen atmosphere created and, therefore, harmful aflatoxins do not grow.

GrainPro’s portable storage systems can be used indoors or outdoors and be erected on any flat surface in minutes to hours, depending on the product.

For more information, visit www.grainpro.com or contact Philippe Villers, President GrainPro, Inc., 200 Baker Avenue, Ste 309 Concord, MA 01742

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A Letter from Addis ...continued from front page.

have an impact in a variety of ways in the country. While many Ethiopians in the Diaspora remain unhappy with the country’s politics, there are more than a few who have decided to return. There is a perceptible trend among some of the more successful Ethiopians living in the U.S. and elsewhere to join other foreign investors. Their impact is now being evidenced in Addis and other parts of the country. They have begun to

invest in a variety of new ventures. They are doing so, in my opinion, not only because of the country’s political stability but also because they don’t want to miss out on what has turned out to be the most market oriented government in the country’s history.

The second most impressive thing is the number of large scale investors currently in Ethiopia, led most notably by the Chinese and also including major players from India, the Gulf States and more recently Brazil. Ethiopia’s economy is now the largest in the East and Central African region, and its population of around 84 million is now Africa’s second largest, having surpassed Egypt this past year and now behind only Nigeria.

If Africa is now hip (and it undoubtedly is), then Ethiopia is very hip! The big secret is how attractive the country is for Europeans and others who find Ethiopian culture and people so attractive. My Peace Corps colleagues and I found this out nearly 50 years ago, but now everyone is trying to find a way and a reason to go and help “those poor Ethiopians”. Ethiopians are, in the process, having the times of their lives.

And so, when I found myself back in Ethiopia this year, celebrating the signing of the SEACOM-ETC agreement, a major effort for Ethiopia to improve its external communication capabilities, I was extremely moved as this represents both a personal and a professional triumph. I thought about how, nearly 50 years ago, we had to turn a crank on our telephone, managed by this same ETC, to place a call through a central switchboard in downtown Nazareth, Ethiopia, to get connected to the person who we were trying to reach. The telephone system was a throwback to the same system I had seen as a kid growing up in Griffin, Georgia!

It is a real thrill to witness a country you love as much as I love Ethiopia take a huge leap of faith in the private sector’s ability to make people’s lives better. But it is an even bigger thrill to watch a country make a huge leap into the future.

Haskell Ward is also senior vice president at SEACOM and previously served as deputy mayor of New York City.
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*As of 12/17/10*