

Carbon storing Miombo Woodlands

Research shows that miombo woodlands, which cover large parts of sub-Saharan Africa, store 1.5 to 2.2 times more carbon than previously thought. Named after the Miombo trees, they are a vital ecosystem that directly feed many millions of people, regulate climate and water resources, provide habitats for plants and animals and have cultural and spiritual significance. In the last 40 years, deforestation has reduced these forests from 2.7 to 1.9 million km², an area three times the size of the United Kingdom. 11 countries are trying to halt the destruction of the vast but shrinking Miombo Biome and save the Zambezi Basin. They signed a transnational concept for the sustainable management of the African miombo woodlands, the *Miombo Initiative*. 12.07.2024

Namibia: Conservation and trophy hunting

Namibia stands to lose more than R13.6 million annually in potential revenue from the hunting industry as the ruling UK Labour Party has decided to introduce a law against trophy hunting. According to Namibia *Professional Hunting Association* (Napha), trophy hunting accounts for about 3 % of tourists but 20 % of tourism revenue. More than 6 000 people are employed in rural areas to manage the wildlife population. Sustainable hunting is a key element of conservation in Namibia. The revenue from conservation hunting is used to preserve the habitat, uphold human rights and maintain the thriving wildlife economy through photographic and hunting tourism. 11.07.2024

Rwanda: No repayment

The new Labour government in the UK cancels the Rwandan deportation programme. Rwanda is not obliged to repay the €5bn already paid under the Rwanda-UK Migration and Economic Development Partnership Initiative. Kigali said it remained committed to finding solutions to the global migration crisis. 10.07.2024

Visa requirement for South African travellers

Irish Justice Minister Helen McEntee has announced that nationals from South Africa and Botswana will now require a visa to travel to Ireland; a transit visa will also be required. The decision was prompted by the increase in asylum seekers from both countries, both of which are considered safe and are the only countries on this list that do not require visas, according to a statement. Mr McEntee said the decision had been carefully considered to bring Ireland closer to the Schengen area's approach and also align with the UK's stance. 10.07.2024

Disputes over sexuality and theology

The United Methodist Church has about 5.4 million members in the United States and 4.6 million in Africa, Europe and the Philippines. The Ivorian branch of the United Methodist Church, which has more than 1.2 million members, has left the union after a long-standing ban on LGBTQ+ clergy was lifted. In May, delegates at the church's first legislative assembly in five years voted overwhelmingly to lift a rule prohibiting "avowed practicing homosexuals" from being ordained or appointed as clergy. In Zimbabwe, hundreds of members of the United Methodist Church in Harare gathered last week to protest the decision to accept LGBTQ+ members. They sang hymns and held up signs declaring

that homosexuality is a sin and an abomination. "Africa is not for sale. No to homosexuality," one sign read. 10.07.

Morocco: More efficient cork harvesting technology

Morocco, which produces around 6% of the world's natural cork, is changing its harvesting methods, moving away from the axe to a smarter and more efficient method. The industry is introducing a new, lightweight, battery-powered saw that calculates the depth of the cork bark. A pilot program to train cork technicians is currently underway in the Rabat-Salé-Kenitra region with the aim of introducing the new method throughout Morocco by 2025. The cork industry has already been battling a relentless drought for two years. 10.07.2024

Zimbabwe: Sangomas go to TikTok

A new generation of healers (sangomas) are sharing sacred African spiritual practices on social media, but critics say the two don't mix. According to traditional beliefs, sangomas play a crucial role by acting as intermediaries between the spiritual and physical worlds. There are around 65,000 sangomas in Zimbabwe. The traditional healers are often the first port of call for many seeking help with physical and spiritual ailments. Several sangomas are now conducting consultations, healing sessions and cleansing ceremonies on TikTok and Facebook with live audiences from around the world. On TikTok, they receive gifts that they can exchange for cash. They also conduct virtual one-on-one sessions via Zoom or WhatsApp and receive payments via Paypal, Western Union and MoneyGram. At the same time, they conduct face-to-face consultations at home. 10.07.2024

Liberia: Voluntary salary cut

President Joseph Boakai has announced that he will cut his salary by 40%. His annual salary is 13,400 dollars. The cut will reduce it to 8,000 dollars. Boakai is following the example of his predecessor George Weah, who cut his salary by 25%. Government salaries have come under intense scrutiny recently as Liberians complain about the rising cost of living. Around one in five people in the West African nation have to get by on less than \$2 a day. President Joseph Boakai promised to tackle corruption and financial mismanagement. Since taking office, he has not only disclosed his assets, but also ordered an audit of the presidential office. 09.07.2024

Madagascar: High above Antananarivo

From the beginning of 2025, a cable car will transport up to 75,000 passengers a day 12 km above the capital city of 3 million inhabitants. Reducing the number of buses and cars on the roads should prevent traffic jams and improve the city's air quality. There are sensors and generators to protect against problems and power cuts. Residents of the city are critical: a regulated electricity and water supply is more important than a cable car. The construction loan of €152 million increases the debt to the former colonial power France. The tickets were also far too expensive. President Rajoelina defends the project: you have to dare to do something to improve your country

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