

INTERNATIONAL

Africans die early, westerners live longer

Special to Sentinel-Voice

The average African continues to die relatively young while most Westerners live much longer, according to a new U.N. report. If you were born in Rwanda, chances are, you will survive only until 23, but if you were born in Europe or Japan, you may live to 75 years of age or more, says the new U.N. study, "The World Social Situation."

The report points out that the lowest life expectancies are in Africa, while the highest are in Europe, North America, Australia, Japan, and New Zealand. Rwanda, which experienced genocide in 1994, saw life expectancy decline from 46.3 years in the period 1980-85 to 22.6 in 1990-95. Life expectancy is 34.4 years in Sierra Leone, 39.4 years in Liberia, and 41 years in Uganda. The highest African life expectancies

are in Botswana (54.3), Kenya (54.1), Cote d'Ivoire (52.1), Congo (51.5) and Togo (51.0). According to the report, the average person in Japan lives the longest, reaching up to 79.5 years, followed by Iceland at 78.8 years, and Canada at 78.5 years.

The overall figure for Africa is 51.8 years, for Asia 64.5 years, for Latin America 68.5 years, North America 76.2 years, Europe 72.7 years and Oceania 72.9 years. Although there is no gender breakdown by country, the study says that on average women can be expected to live about four years longer than men.

For the world, life expectancy for men is 62.2 years while that for women is 66.5 years. In the more developed regions, this male-female disparity is as high as 7.6 years, whereas in the (See Africans, Page 14)

Nigeria

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difficulties that our State Department and Security Council apparently choose to ignore and do not understand," Mrs. Leavell said.

Dr. Russell Odom, Special Projects director for the 8.5 million member, National Baptist Convention USA, Inc., which is participating in the petition drive, said "in addition to supporting the petition, the drive is being used to educate African Americans about Africa as a whole. Nigeria, specifically, has, does and will continue to play an important role in the development of Africa as a continent and Black Africa as a whole."

Delegate member, the Rev. Albert R. Sampson, who is chair of the National Clergy Task Force On Africa said representatives of the Black

church and the Black Press will travel around the country in the coming months because "we want to dispel the myth" about Nigeria.

"We want President Clinton and the Congress to keep their hands off Africa until they talk to Black leadership," he said.

Ugandans want rapists castrated

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Women's groups in Tanzania have called for the adoption of urgent deterrent measures such as the castration of culprits or life imprisonment, to stem the alarming increase in cases of rape in the country. This is contained in a declaration made by representatives of women's groups in the north-eastern region of Kilimanjaro, to commemorate International Women's Day. A total of 2,094 women were sexually assaulted in the past year.

The women said that the sentence of 20 years imprisonment, handed to those who rape women or defile children, was not enough to discourage the habit. Tanzania's first lady, Anna Mkapa made a similar appeal Friday at an exhibition marking women's day in Dar es Salaam, when she urged the womenfolk to unite and ask for heavy punishment to be imposed on rapists.

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more light and sunshine on the African continent than on any other land mass on this planet. Africa is much more than a story of tragedies," he said.

While conceding that post-independent African leaders had made mistakes, he said it was folly to blame Africa's backwardness on bad governance. "Today Africa is indeed pulling out of the dark age, an age of unreason, cruelty and irrationality. But it is a dark age into which it was plunged by others, not by itself. We go into history to learn and not necessarily to apportion blame. A proper appreciation of what happened will instruct our steps today and so help us avoid the pitfalls of the past."

Mugabe's vision of a new Africa

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Africa is poised to become the world's new region of opportunity and the continent's major priority is to create durable democratic systems in which pluralism is fully entrenched, Zimbabwe president Robert Mugabe said recently.

Addressing academics, politicians, journalists and leading personalities at a colloquium organized by Harvard University and the Irish Times newspaper, Mugabe said despite negative international media reports, Africa was taking measures to create peace, stability and economic prosperity on the continent.

"Africa's Recognition of its Past and Remedies for Its Future," was the theme of Mugabe's lengthy address which traced Africa's history and presented realities of the continent.

"Africa has been dubbed the dark continent in spite of the fact that there is probably

development would improve. Lack of major industries in most countries remained the major obstacle to development and the main reason for Africa's rising indebtedness, he said, adding that international terms of trade, despite the successful Uruguay Round negotiations which led to the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO), remained biased against Africa.

He said by stressing the opening up of all markets while seeking to protect information and knowledge, particularly intellectual property rights and technology, the WTO exposed Africa to exploitation.

"Just as I believe inequality and unfairness can engender political instability at the domestic level, so do we view inequality and unfairness at the international level as making for instability and injustice in international relations," he said.

It was for that reason Africa was pushing for the democratization of the United Nations by including African and Latin American countries in the Security Council.

Mugabe said the continent, with a few exceptions, had embraced democracy and that the genius of its people was once again being unleashed.

"Most of its governments are becoming more and more accountable to the people. It can already see an era of peace in the horizon and with it the flourishing human spirit. "The people of Africa have resolved never again to remain the object of history, but to transform themselves into its subject. It is they who shall determine the destiny of their continent and cooperate with others as equal partners. They were their own political liberators, they are sure to become their own economic liberators," he said.

Mugabe said as Africa sought more socio-economic ties, it was also looking at other developing countries in such regions as Asia and South America in the spirit of South-South cooperation.

He said under colonialism, ethnic African groups were kept apart and made suspicions of each other while during the cold war, leaders of independent African countries were either rewarded or punished by the two superpowers for their ideological preferences.

"The shift was costly for Africa because its most principled leaders, those who sought to retain the people as their constituency in defiance of outside powers, became the targets of deliberate destabilization policies, while those who collaborated as pliant clients often became blatantly corrupt dictators, now dependent on the might of their foreign masters to remain in power.

"Given what African leaders had to contend with, that the continent has held up the way it has, is itself a source of both wonder and satisfaction," said Mugabe.

He said as Africa took measures to ensure peace and stability through the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and regional organizations, the environment for investment and economic

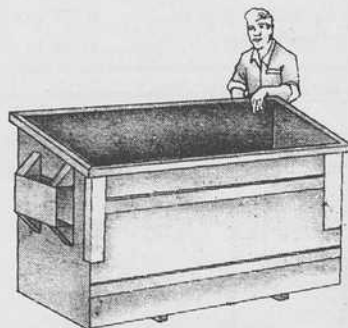
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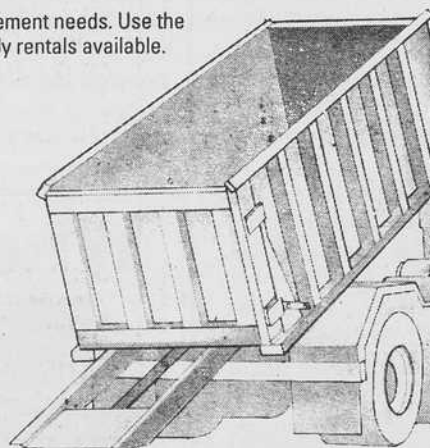
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