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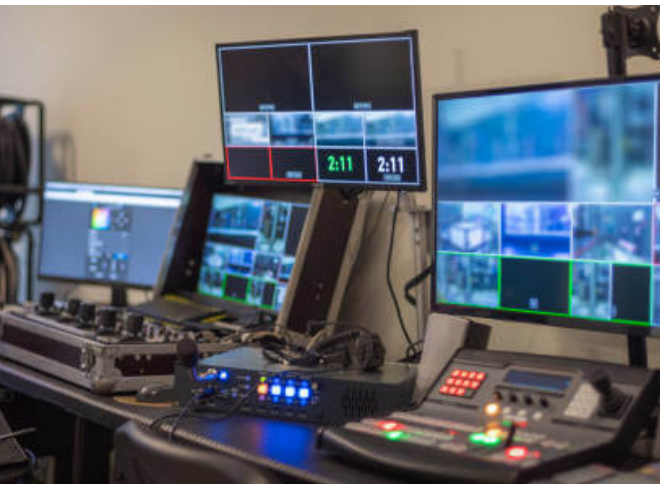
by **Charles Antoine Bambara**
Chairperson

Editorial: Harnessing Multidisciplinary Expertise for Unparalleled Impact in Africa and Beyond

ABC Global Communications is an international communications agency with a strong presence in Africa, with African specialists and other staff with a solid knowledge of Africa.

Our key activities

- Strategic Communications and advisory
- Outreach Campaigns and Advocacy – Diplomacy and Lobbying
- Media Training
- Social media reports and mis/disinformation analysis
- Conference facilitation & Public speaking
- Photojournalism/Photo Report & Exhibition
- Communication for businesses and institutions
- Proof Reading and translation





ABC Global Communications: Harnessing Multidisciplinary Expertise for Unparalleled Impact in Africa and

Beyond

ABC Global Communications is an international communications agency with a strong presence in Africa, with African specialists and other staff with a solid knowledge of Africa in support and back-up positions.

It is a multidisciplinary, multilingual team with French and English as their first language, and most of our specialists speak and communicate in many other African languages.

The group's fifteen specialists come from thirteen different countries, which are: Benin - Burkina Faso - Ivory Coast - France - Ghana - India - Kenya - Mali - Niger - DR Congo - United Kingdom - Senegal - Chad.

This eclectic composition is a wealth of this Communications group, and this is its strength and particularity.

This unique multidisciplinary expertise is an undeniable asset compared to other communications agencies. And this allows ABC Global Communications to meet all challenges and provide its partners and potential clients with unfailing know-how and efficiency.

Trust ABC Global Communications and let us be efficient, professional, innovative, and authentic together.

We build and consolidate your global influence and your future.

Reports & Analysis



UK: Reshaping the Labour Party Africa Policy

Traditionally, UK Labour party is more Africa-centric compared to the Conservative party. And expectations are that Keir Starmer the new Labour Party Prime Minister, will revive this relationship.

While the international focus is still dominated by foreign affairs: Ukraine – Israel conflict with Hamas – upcoming US election and China ambitions on Taiwan, the current Labour government led par PM Starmer will hopefully continue to pledge more fundings to Africa beyond the current £ 84 million in foreign aid to help stop irregular migration in the UK.

THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY SCARS ON THIS UK-AFRICA RELATION.

After Tony Blair's term in office as prime minister, the party has been criticised for its lack of international vision.

But the current Foreign Affairs Secretary David Lindon Lammy, with his Guyana background, has worked in the past with Tony Blair and Gordon Brown from 2002 in different junior ministerial positions. There are reasons to believe, he will revitalize the UK-Africa axis.

The British Conservative Party fourteen years in power has left scars on this UK-Africa relation.

The former Department for International Development – DFID - has closed since September 2020. The department was instrumental in supporting the UK cooperation with Africa. And DFID regional programmes in Africa has made a significant difference in many African countries.

The Commission for Africa, also called the Tony Blair Commission for Africa, was an initiative established by the British government to examine and provide impetus for development in Africa. And this commission has also stopped working and we recall that its key principles was *“the development should not be about aid alone and had to be about partnership and governance”*. Can a re-ignition be triggered once again by the Labour party in strengthening the UK-Africa connexion?

A COHERENT AFRICA POLICY NEEDED.

While still in opposition, Keir Starmer knew that he will need to reverse, when he takes office, the Conservative Party’s lack of a coherent Africa Policy. He encouraged at the time, his shadow foreign secretary David Lammy to visit Africa and to start brainstorming with specialists from different think tanks, and in a March 2023 publication, titled *“Britain Reconnected: A Foreign Policy for Security and Prosperity at Home”* Lammy wrote: *‘It would be a huge mistake for Labour to overlook the importance of Africa’* adding that the continent is poised to experience *“the most significant population growth in the coming decades”*.

Notwithstanding the challenges of the international affairs, it is expected that with the Labour Party back to power, the priorities might shift slightly towards Africa. The party has prepared for that, holding talks with many experts and specialists of Africa inside and outside UK.

This is why David Lammy stated:” *We will develop new initiatives to build dynamic partnership with African nations, recognising the continent's vast trajectory for growth”*. And the Labour party manifesto echoed this view: *“recognising the growing political and economic importance of African countries, we will deliver a new approach to the continent to foster opportunities for mutual long-term benefit.”*

THE NECESSITY TO RESHAPE UK AFRICA POLICY.

Successive Conservative governments in the recent past, were keen also to increase trade and business opportunities with countries across the Africa. In January 2020, Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s government held the first UK-Africa investment summit to *“ensure the continent's growing demand for investment is met by the UK's expertise and innovation”*. But later one of his successors Rishi Sunak, who planned to hold the second UK-Africa investment summit in April 2024, decided in the light of domestic affairs’ pressure, to postpone indefinitely the summit with no new date announced.



It will not be a surprise to see a similar summit or forum organised by the current new Labour government.

In 2024, ten of the fifteen fastest growing economies in the world are African, according to Visual Capitalist one of the growing online global publishers. Among those countries, there are: Niger – Senegal – Libya – Rwanda – Cote-d'Ivoire – Burkina Faso – Benin – The Gambia – Ethiopia – and Tanzania. This is based on GDP growth forecasts from the IMF's October 2023 World Economic Outlook.

UK MEANS BUSINESS IN AFRICA.

And of course, the United Kingdom will plan to tap into this.

A new dawn is rising in the UK-Africa Relations with hope in both sides. After the Brexit, UK is keen to diversify and boost its cooperation with more global South countries and this include Africa.

UK should once again become an advocate for African development and promote strong trade and investment ties in a win-win spirit. But Keir Starmer needs to prepare and outline a clear policy strategy for Africa that will drive this cooperation.

This is why Anneliese Jane Dodds, Minister of State for Development and for Women and Equalities said that *“the UK is committed to reconnecting with African countries, listening to our African partners and putting trade and growth at the heart of our partnerships”*.

Benin: An industrial sector driving growth and development.

With a GDP estimated in 2023 at 11,680 billion FCFA, or approximately 19.4 billion USD (IMF), Benin has been ranked among the middle-income countries since 2019, with a GDP per capita estimated at 1,411 USD.

With an area of 13,066 km² for a population of approximately 13.4 million inhabitants, Benin, this small West African country located on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean, has been in full economic growth for more than thirty years. And we readily remember its historic Conference of the Vital Forces of the Nation in February 1990, which was a trigger in Africa for the organization of the Sovereign National Conferences.



The Beninese economy depends to a large extent on subsistence agriculture, regional trade and the production of cotton, its main cash crop. This latter sector represents approximately 40% of the country's GDP and 80% of its export revenues, and has greatly raised the standard of living in Benin, a country whose economy is essentially fiscal with above all a remarkable industrial boom, notably thanks to its expanding ports aspiring to become major regional hubs. In 2021, already, the added value in the industrial sector stood at 929.9 billion FCFA compared to 872.8 billion FCFA in 2020, an increase rate of 6.54% compared to 4.71% a year earlier. This transformation is the result of a policy aimed at positioning Benin as a major player in international trade in Africa. The country benefits from an advantageous geographical position, as previously indicated, bordered by the Atlantic Ocean and close to landlocked countries such as Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali.

INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES TO STRENGTHEN AN IDEAL POSITIONING.

The recently modernized and expanded Autonomous Port of Cotonou offers advanced logistics facilities and increased processing capacity, which significantly reduces transit times. As a result, it has become a privileged and competitive transit point for goods destined for the interior of the African continent, particularly to landlocked countries. Thanks to massive investments in port infrastructure, Benin has been able to modernize its facilities to meet international standards in terms of trade and logistics. Its strategic maritime and land borders allow the Port of Cotonou to serve as an entry and exit point for intra-African trade.

The country also benefits from relative political stability and economic reforms that foster an attractive business climate for foreign investors. This context offers a unique opportunity for Benin to position itself as a regional logistics centre.

In parallel with the development of port activities, Benin has embarked on a process of progressive industrialization by creating modern and attractive industrial zones for national and foreign investors. Recent reforms and investments in the port of Cotonou, the management of which has been entrusted to international operators with proven experience in the field, demonstrate the desire of the Benin government to transform this infrastructure into a leading hub.

This choice has facilitated the introduction into the system of modern and efficient management practices promoting expansion works, including the construction of new quays, the acquisition of latest generation handling equipment and the improvement of road and rail infrastructure linking the port to the interior of the country.

GLO-DJIGBÉ, A MODERN INDUSTRIAL ZONE THAT RELIES ON LOCAL PRODUCTION

The locality of Glo-Djigbé located 45 km from Cotonou, is home to an industrial zone dedicated to the local processing of agricultural products such as cotton, cashew nuts, pineapple, shea nuts and soybeans, etc. It is a gigantic "*integrated logistics and industrial platform designed to provide industrial plots, warehouses, truck parking and container handling facilities*".

Glo-Djigbé aims to highlight Benin's many potentials to maximize industrial processing. The leading producer of cotton seed in Africa, and the tenth in the world, with more than 700,000 tonnes of harvest in 2020, Benin plans to increase its production in 2024. This represents an exceptional opportunity for cotton products, with the "Made in Benin" label. There is also cashew, the second export crop after cotton, whose quality is highly appreciated on regional and international markets.



Benin is also the 3rd largest pineapple producer in the world, with a gross value of US\$50 million and a potential export value, after processing, of US\$200 million. Shea butter, of which Benin is the 6th largest producer in West Africa, with a potential export processing value of US\$200 million, is generally used as cooking oil or soap, and is widely exported to Europe, where it is used in chocolate, cosmetics and pharmacology.

The Glo-Djigbé Industrial Zone (GDIZ), whose main objective is to create an environment favorable to industrial investments and administrative and fiscal support for the realization of business projects in Benin, should provide approximately 300,000 direct jobs by 2030, for an investment of at least US\$1.4 billion during its first phase of development. This initiative, the result of a public-private partnership between the Republic of Benin and ARISE Integrated Industrial Platforms (ARISE IIP), aims to design, finance and operate the Glo-Djigbé industrial zone to make it a model of international development. On the sidelines of a visit to the site at the end of July 2022, French President Emmanuel Macron said he was convinced that the GDIZ "*puts Benin on the path to an economy of industry and transformation [...] of added value produced in Africa, benefiting Africans.*"

Indeed, it offers subsequent advantages to investors, including a permanent exemption of 100% of corporate tax (instead of 5%), professional tax and license tax, a 100% exemption from employer payroll tax (otherwise, up to 33%), a 100% exemption from VAT on raw materials brought into the zone (instead of 18%).

INFRASTRUCTURE OF CHOICE AND ADVANTAGEOUS ENTREPRENEURIAL CONDITIONS

The modernization also includes the adoption of technologies to improve operational efficiency. The port now uses computerized management systems for cargo tracking, thus reducing waiting times and operational costs. Initiatives such as the electronic single window facilitate customs procedures, reduce the slowness in processing files and above all limit corruption, making the port more credible, competitive and attractive to importers and exporters.

The improvement of port infrastructure has had a ripple effect on local industry. The establishment of industrial zones near the port encourages the installation of companies in various sectors such as agro-food processing, textile manufacturing, and electronics assembly.

These zones benefit from attractive tax incentives, logistical proximity to the port, and a skilled workforce. The reduction in logistics costs and delivery times stimulates Beninese exports. Agricultural products, particularly cotton, pineapple, and shea, find more easily outlets on international markets, thus increasing the country's export revenues. This positive dynamic contributes to diversifying the Beninese economy and reducing its dependence on imports.

Benin's long-term vision is to create an integrated logistics network, linking the port of Cotonou to an efficient land transport system that serves neighbouring countries. Partnerships with neighbouring countries and investments in road and rail infrastructure are essential to realize this vision. In parallel, the development of advanced logistics services, such as distribution platforms and storage centres, will strengthen the port's capacity to meet the growing needs of regional businesses.



STRENGTHEN SUB-REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION.

Continuous training of professionals in the sector and the adoption of cutting-edge technologies, such as the digitalization of customs procedures, are also essential levers to maintain and increase the competitiveness of the Autonomous Port of Cotonou. Its development as a regional hub cannot be achieved without increased cooperation with neighbouring countries. Benin will have to further engage in strategic partnerships with countries such as Nigeria, Togo and Ghana, etc., to harmonize customs policies and facilitate trade. Regional initiatives, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), also strengthen the potential of the Port of Cotonou and integrate Benin into a larger common market. In addition, international cooperation with organizations such as the World Bank and the African Development Bank makes it possible to finance infrastructure projects. These partnerships provide not only the necessary funds, but also the technical expertise to carry out the modernization and expansion projects.

Despite the notable progress, several challenges remain. Indeed, the economy is largely dependent on exports of unprocessed agricultural products (cotton, cashew nuts) and the re-export of imported goods and commodities (used cars, rice, etc.) to Nigeria. Nearly 85% of the workforce is in the informal economy. Other sectors, including cashew nuts, shea nuts, coffee, and palm products, pineapple and cocoa, deserve to be boosted.

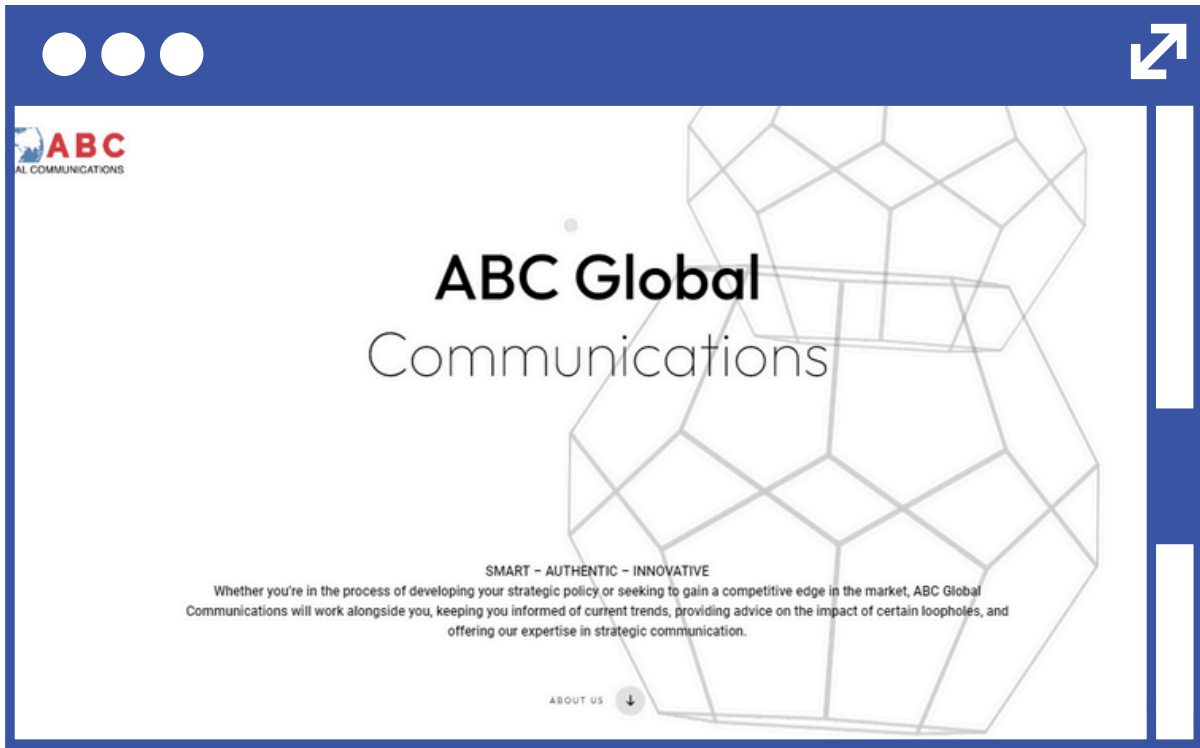
The need to continuously improve land transport infrastructure to efficiently connect the port to landlocked countries is crucial. Strengthening maritime security to combat maritime piracy and combating corruption are also priorities to ensure a transparent business environment. Benin's future as a regional hub depends on its ability to overcome these challenges and maintain a long-term vision. Continuous training initiatives for port and logistics personnel, the adoption of green technologies for sustainable development, and commitment to transparent governance practices are essential to ensure the sustainability of this ambition.

Sources:

- (Government of Benin (Published on July 18, 2023) [[Link](#)])
- Key Industry Figures, March 2023 CCIB [[Link](#)]
- Glo-Djigbé Industrial Zone website [[Link](#)]



Web and Social Media Audience Analysis: A Promising Start



ABC Global Communications' website, launched on May 19, 2024, in a bilingual version, has recorded an encouraging audience in its first months of existence. To date, the site has attracted **446 unique visitors** who have viewed the site's pages **1,920 times**, with an average consultation duration of **41 seconds**. This figure indicates that each user has visited the site slightly more than four times on average, a positive sign of the interest generated by the content offered.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION AND COVERED TOPICS

The site's users primarily come from the **United States, Germany, and Burkina Faso**. This geographical diversity reflects an international reach, highlighting the global appeal of the topics covered.

The publications on the site address various relevant subjects, ranging from the **mining, agricultural, tourism, and industrial potential serving economic growth in Africa, to economic cooperation between India, the United Kingdom, and Africa, as well as the condition of women in conflict zones**. These contents are focused on analysis and reporting and cover countries such as **Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Chad, DR Congo, Benin, Djibouti, India, and the United Kingdom**.

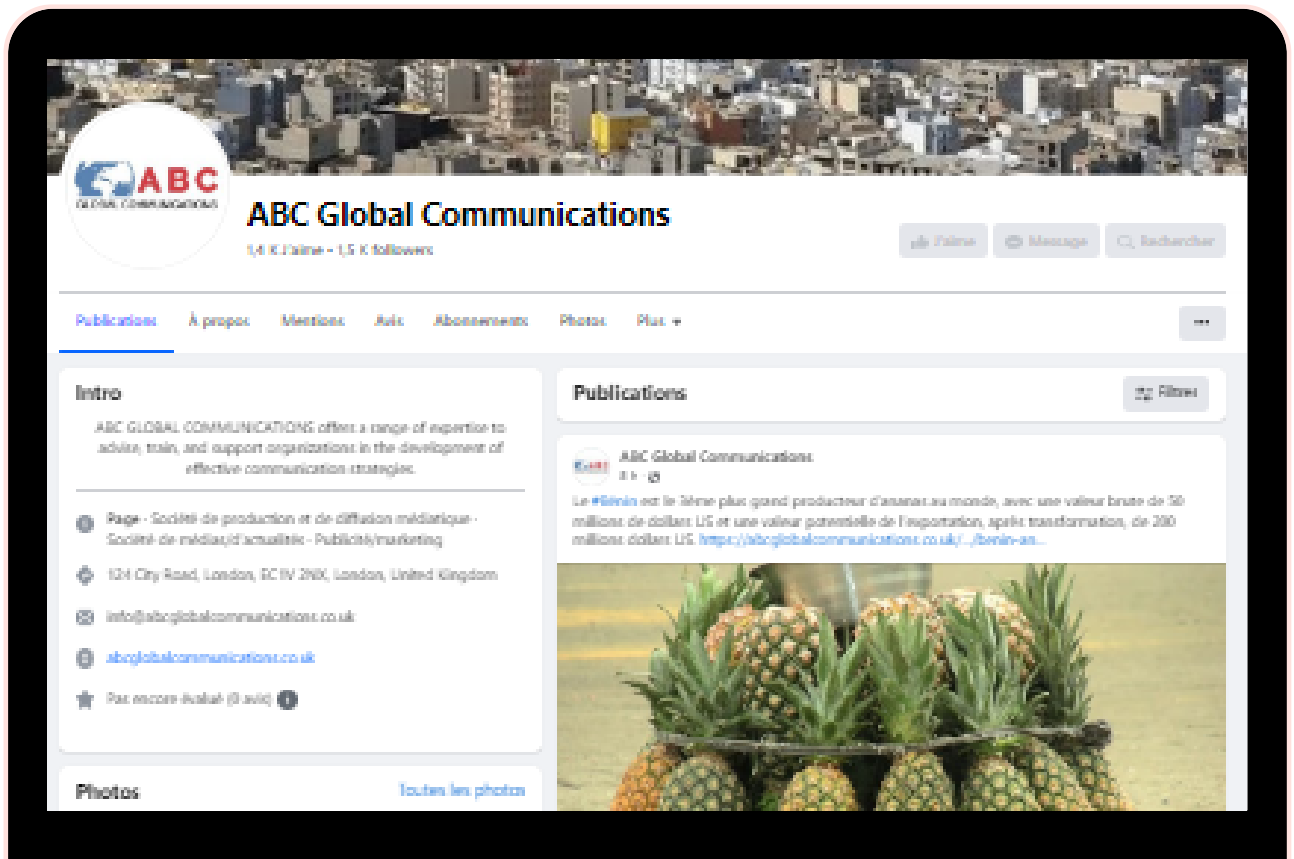
SOCIAL MEDIA DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY

To maximize the visibility of its publications, the website relies on a distribution strategy via social media platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) and LinkedIn.

On **Facebook**, the site enjoys its highest audience growth with **1,539 subscribers**, the vast majority of whom are men (**85.10%**) and a minority of women (14.90%). This channel appears to be the most effective in terms of subscriber acquisition, which could be explained by the visual appeal and ease of sharing content via this platform.

On **X** (formerly Twitter) and **LinkedIn**, audience growth is slower but still positive. These platforms, traditionally geared towards more professional audiences or those interested in idea-driven discussions, seem to offer fertile ground for the gradual and sustained development of the site's audience.

In conclusion, the initial audience results of the website and its extensions on social media are promising. The geographical diversity of visitors and the resonance of the covered topics demonstrate a growing interest in the offered analyses and reports. Social media, particularly Facebook, plays a key role in the distribution strategy, although additional efforts could be made to accelerate growth on X and LinkedIn. These platforms offer opportunities to expand the audience, especially among professionals and more specialized audiences.



Upcoming plans & activities



1

Preparation of a bid on communication services for a Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation project.

2

Preparation of a call for applications for the European Union and UN Women, which have joined forces to launch a new program called “*Advocacy Coalition Building and Transformative Feminist Action (ACT) to End Violence Against Women*”.

3

Reception of a request for a long-term contract to translate official documents for an international NGO working in Africa.

4

Ongoing discussions with the Norbert Zongo National Press Center (CNP-NZ) in Burkina Faso to share expertise and experience on the challenges of journalism in West Africa.

We will share more information on these different activities in the next edition of our newsletter.



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