

Ugandans to the rescue



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Posted By Musa

As Mubarak Cancels Trip to Kampala Does Dictator M7 get the message?

Gordon Brown has used his first major speech since leaving office to say the future growth of the world economy is reliant upon the development of Africa.

Speaking in Kampala, the Ugandan capital, the former UK prime minister said he wanted to see the continent achieve its full potential.

Mr. Brown also made light of losing the British general election in May.

He said he was someone who "spent some time as a politician before becoming a community organizer".

Mr. Brown contrasted himself with President Barack Obama "who spent some time as a community organizer before becoming a politician".

Speaking to Ugandan political leaders, Mr. Brown said he wished to see the creation of an "African century".

"Future growth in the world economy, and future jobs in the developing world, will depend on harnessing both the productive potential and the pent-up consumer demand of this continent," he said.

"There is an alternative to a decade of low global growth which would fail to meet both the development needs of Africa and the growth needs of Europe and America.

"To me the answer is obvious - as we struggle to find new sources of growth we must turn here, to Africa, to this continent of huge potential and talent."

To help economies develop across Africa, he said nations needed to increase access to broadband internet, which he said less than 1% of people currently had access to.

Mr. Brown added: "I am already working with some of you to bring together experts in this field for a major campaign and program of work, because I truly believe that the rapid expansion of internet access in Africa could transform how Africa trades, learns and holds political power accountable."

Turning his attention to the developmental aid given to Africa, he said this

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needed to increasingly focus on private sector wealth creation, and not just

Providing services for the poor.

"The job of aid is to kick-start business-led growth and not to replace it," he said.

Meanwhile Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has cancelled plans to attend the African Union summit in Uganda, amid fresh speculation over his health. No reason for the cancellation was given; but state media reported that Mr. Mubarak had delegated the prime minister to represent Egypt in Kampala. Egyptian officials said earlier that Mr. Mubarak's planned trip would show that he was in good health.

President Mubarak, 82, had gall bladder surgery in Germany in March.

On Thursday, he addressed the nation on the eve of Egypt's annual Revolution Day, commemorating the anniversary of the military coup that toppled the monarchy in 1952, where he spoke while standing for 11 minutes.

Concerns about his health resurfaced when a series of meetings were postponed last week. But Mr. Mubarak has since followed a busy schedule, attending public events almost daily.

Mr. Mubarak's health is a top state secret in Egypt and a cause of political and economic uncertainty. Speculation has it that he is to be succeeded by his son or his military intelligent chief.

Mr. Mubarak has been in power for 29 years and his fifth six-year term ends in 2011. However, he has not made it clear whether he intends to stand in the elections. But last year he transferred the powerful position of the Chairmanship of the ruling party to his son.