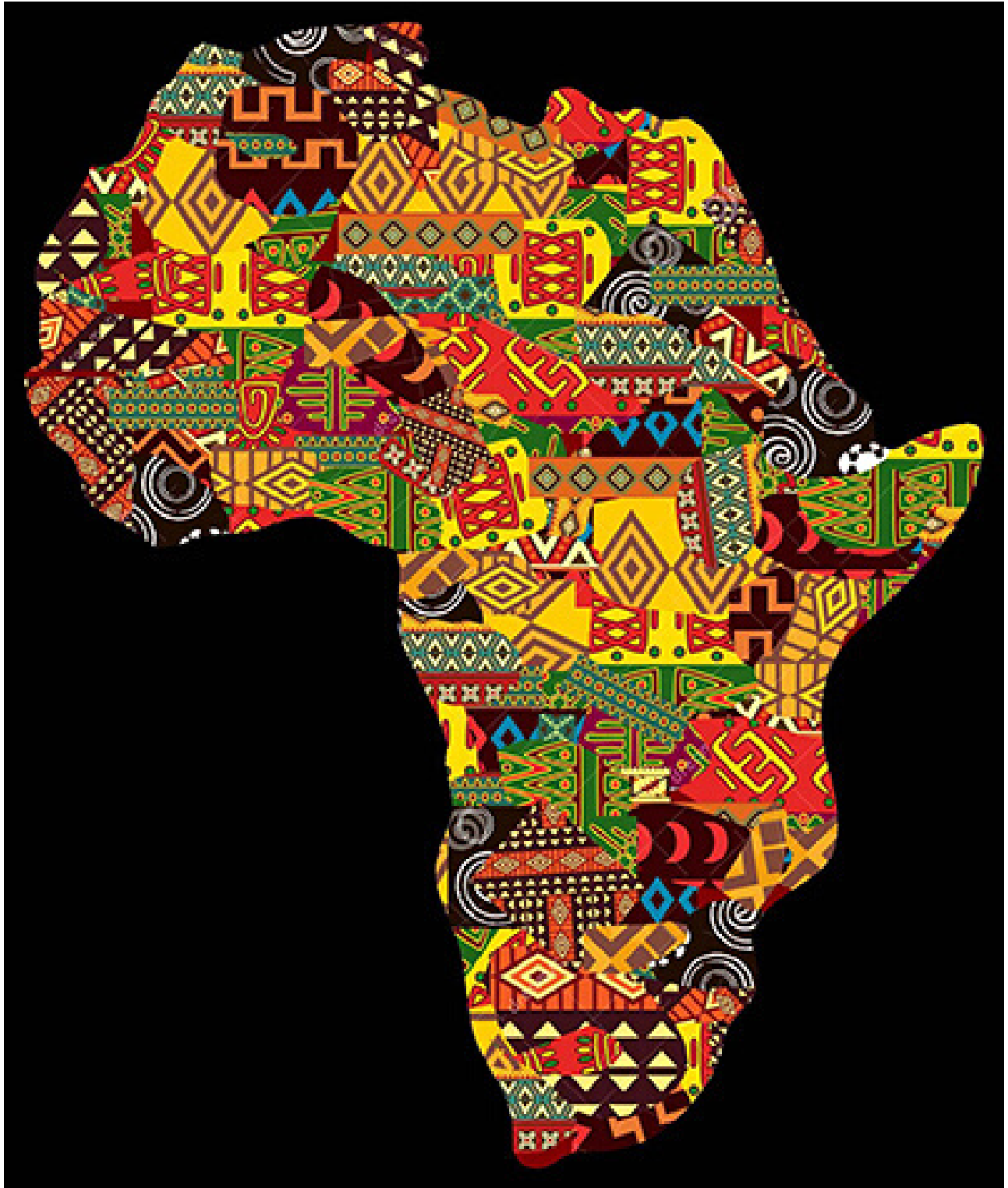


AFRICA DAY



MAY 25

We are in difficult times. The World Bank has predicted Africa will sink into its first continent-wide recession in 25 years as a result of the coronavirus shock, as global trade contracts in the commodities on which many of its economies rely. Growth in the region is forecast to fall from 2.4 per cent in 2019 to between minus 2.1 per cent and minus 5.1 per cent, in a continent with population growth of 2.7 per cent.



While we fight this attack on our lives and livelihoods, Africa Day reminds us the great continent that we share and our hope that this battle, (which we will win), will also lead to the creation of economies that are more sustainable, more responsible and more future-facing.

On May 25 of every year, Africa Day is observed across Africa, as well as by Africans in the diaspora to celebrate the African heritage and the freedom the African continent enjoys from colonial rule. On this day, the foundation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) is also commemorated, as Africa Day traces a part of its roots to this organization.





The main objective of this organization (OAU), which was formed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on May 25, 1963 was to protect the fragile sovereignty which had recently been achieved by African States, and to help the remaining African countries under colonial rule to gain sovereign independence.

Preceding the Organization of African Unity was a Pan-African Liberation Conference held in Ghana on April 15, 1958, where there was a call to observe the African Freedom Day, now the Africa Day, and five years later, the OAU, which is now the African Union was formed, with its date of inception marking the day of commemoration.

The continent was not totally free from colonial rule when the celebration of Africa day started, with countries such as Angola, Mozambique and South Africa still under colonial rule. Today, the story is different for the African continent as it has seen all of its countries free from colonial rule, and this day of celebrating Africa celebrates all the heroes who together fought for the liberation of the continent.



Africa's name is believed to have been derived from the ancient Romans when they defeated the African city of Carthage, naming it Africa, after the Afri tribe that lived in that area. The African continent is the second largest in the world with a total area of approximately 11.73 million square miles, which is equivalent to 30.37 million square kilometers. This accounts for 5.7% of the earth's surface and 20% of the total surface of the land on this planet.

The continent is divided into five subsections namely;

1. North Africa
2. East Africa
3. Central Africa
4. Southern Africa
5. West Africa

54 countries make up the African continent, and in addition to them are 10 territories and two de facto independent states which have limited or no recognition.

The largest country in Africa is Algeria (based on geographical area), whereas the largest city is Cairo in Egypt.

As of August 2018, the African continent had the second largest population in the world, with 1,287,920,518 people, which constitutes 16.87% of the world's population.

At least 3,000 distinct ethnic groups exist in Africa, with about 2,000 different languages being spoken. Each language has different dialects. Arabic is the language which is most largely spoken, followed by English, Swahili and French respectively.





Per the records on bone fossils, Africa is believed to be the first continent to have supported human life as fossil remains found in Africa suggest that humans inhabited the continent about 7 million years ago. The African continent also houses the largest river in the world; the Nile river.

In addition to this, Africa is the home of one of the richest men in history; Mansa Musa of Mali, whose net worth at the time of his death in 1377 was estimated to be in the range of US\$300 billion to US\$400 billion in adjusted dollars for the late 2000s.



Africa is worth celebrating, and the Africa Day is celebrated by different people in different ways. For some African countries, the day is marked as a holiday. For some, the celebration goes beyond the 25th of May and carries on for days.

Others celebrate through food and dance, and Africans in the diaspora would typically step out in full African regalia to appreciate, celebrate and show off their roots.

Africa Day not only reminds Africans of their freedom, but also reinforces the bond and the unity shared as Africans. Long live Africa.



Sources:

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