



# Learning from Sierra Leone’s Freetown City Council’s model in expanding access to clean, reliable water supply

The Freetown City Council (FCC) is pleased to share the progress it has made in expanding access to safe and reliable water for thousands of residents across the city. Over the past six years, FCC has led sustainable, inclusive, and community-focused water initiatives as part of the Transform Freetown agenda, prioritizing informal settlements, markets, schools, and health facilities.

In 2019, FCC took the first step by using revenue from increased market dues to install water tanks at nine major markets (including Hagan Street, Bombay, Lumley, and Portee) and to construct a borehole at Regent Square Municipal School. These initial investments laid the foundation for a much broader citywide expansion.

In 2025, FCC will begin feasibility studies for new community-based rainwater harvesting systems in informal settlements like Moyiba, Portee/Rokupa, Dworzak, Kroobay, and Cocklebay, under the C40 Inclusive Water Resilience Accelerator Fund.

FCC also issues a strong reminder: deforestation is one of the greatest threats to long-term water security. While investments in water infrastructure grow, cutting down trees reduces groundwater recharge and undermines sustainability. FCC calls on all Freetonians to protect our forests and safeguard our natural water sources.



“Water is life, and equitable access to clean water is at the heart of our development goals,” said Mayor Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr. “

From solar-powered kiosks to community-led water management, we are building a Freetown where water unites and empowers, rather than divides, our communities.”

It should be noted that providing pipe borne water to the residents of Freetown is the responsibility of Guma Valley Water Company under the supervision of the Ministry of Water.

FCC seeks to complement the work of these MDAs by supporting underserved communities with water access in alignment with our commitment to Transform Freetown and Transform Lives.



# Ivory Coast experiences surge in cocoa smuggling in recent years

Ivory Coast is seeing an increase in cocoa smuggling with neighbouring countries. In the last quarter of 2024, an estimated 50,000 to 75,000 tonnes were allegedly, illegally sent to Guinea and Liberia. Our Observer went to film smugglers in Sipilou, on Ivory Coast’s western border, in the middle of the night.

How can the increase in cocoa smuggling be explained? In Ivory Coast, the price of cocoa is set by the government. The idea is to protect the country’s producers from fluctuating world prices. Currently, the official price is 1,800 francs a kilo (2.74 euros). But when global prices are high, like now, smugglers can step in to take advantage of the price difference between Ivory Coast and its neighbours, where cocoa can sell for as much as 5,000 francs a kilo (7.62 euros).

Cocoa smuggling in Côte d’Ivoire has seen a significant rise in recent years, driven by escalating global cocoa prices and disparities in local farmgate prices. Between October and December 2024 alone, approximately 50,000 metric tons of cocoa, valued at around \$573 million, were allegedly illegally transported to neighboring Guinea.

In October 2024, Ivorian authorities intercepted 33 trucks carrying about 1,100 tons of cocoa beans intended for smuggling into Guinea. Additionally, in February 2025, customs officials seized approximately

2,000 metric tons of cocoa beans at the port of Abidjan, falsely declared to evade taxes.

The surge in smuggling is largely attributed to the substantial increase in global cocoa prices, which reached a record \$12,931 per metric ton in December 2024. This price hike incentivized smugglers to exploit the higher prices offered across borders. In response, the Ivorian government has implemented measures such as confiscating proceeds from smuggling, revoking passports, and suspending driving licenses to deter illegal activities.

Despite these efforts, the persistence of smuggling poses significant challenges to Côte d’Ivoire’s cocoa industry, affecting production forecasts and contributing to the volatility of global cocoa prices.



# Proweb Solutions – Helping African businesses grow through the best use of Technology

By Makafui A. Kuenyehia,  
Managing Consultant – Proweb Solutions Ltd

As Africa and the rest of the world progress further into the digital age, the importance of using technology in our businesses cannot be overemphasized. From marketing the business to managing operations and enhancing profitability and productivity, technology has come to show us that things can be done quicker, better, and more efficiently.

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provide a wide array of services that include but are not limited to Custom Software Development, Managed Hosting Services, Digital Assets and Security, Software Licensing, Managed IT Services, Training and Support.

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A compelling online presence is crucial for success in the digital age. Proweb Solutions specializes in creating feature-rich websites and web applications that are not only visually appealing but also functionally robust. By focusing on user experience and responsive design, they ensure that your business effectively engages with its target audience across all devices.

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Recognizing that off-the-shelf software often falls short of addressing specific business challenges, Proweb Solutions develops custom software tailored to your organization's unique requirements. Whether it's mobile applications, web applications, or database systems, their team delivers solutions that streamline operations and enhance productivity.

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Ensuring the security and reliability of your online assets is paramount. Proweb Solutions provides high-performance managed hosting services backed by an expert team dedicated to setting up, managing, securing, and monitoring your servers. Their managed IT services encompass infrastructure setup and management, offering peace of mind so you can focus on growing your business.

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The Author, Makafui A. Kuenyehia, is the Managing Consultant of Proweb Solutions Limited. With over 20 years of experience in information systems (IS) management and over 25 years of experience and knowledge to offer in any field of information and communication technology, he has been involved in several multinational projects in Africa. Makafui is an EC Council-Certified Security Expert and ITIL Service Management Certified. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Information and Communication Technology.

Makafui has been involved in the management of IT teams in developing online presence and branding, web-based applications, deploying cloud services, implementing and integrating systems, developing databases, managing projects, and providing managed IT services for decades.



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Watch out for the full article in the upcoming edition of the Global African Times Magazine

## IMF Appoints African Billionaire, Tony Elumelu to Advisory Council on Entrepreneurship and Growth

Heirs Holdings Founder and Group Chair, Tony O. Elumelu, CFR, has been appointed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to its Advisory Council on Entrepreneurship and Growth, convened by IMF Managing Director, Kristalina Georgieva.

Tony Elumelu, Africa's leading advocate of entrepreneurship and whose Foundation has funded, mentored and trained over 25,000 African entrepreneurs since 2015, champions entrepreneurship as the engine for the economic transformation of Africa.

A self-made entrepreneur, Elumelu's embracing of entrepreneurship is fundamental to his concept of Africapitalism, his belief that Africa's private sector can and must play a leading role in the continent's development, making long-term investments, that deliver social and economic value.

The Advisory Council comprises global business leaders, policymakers, and academics, dedicated to identifying and addressing regulatory barriers to entrepreneurship. Its mandate is to recommend policies that enhance resource allocation, stimulate innovation, and catalyze sustainable private sector-led economic growth. Elumelu will be instrumental in ensuring that Africa's entrepreneurial potential is central to global economic policymaking.

Other members of the Council include: Harberger Professor of Economics, University of Chicago, Professor Ufuk Akcigit; Saudi Ambassador to the United States, HRH Ambassador Reema Bandar Al-Saud; Chair, CEO, and Co-Founder of Salesforce, Mr. Marc Benioff; Executive Chair, Banco Santander, Ms. Ana Botín; Chairman, Tata Group, Mr. Natarajan





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Chandrasekaran; Chief Executive, Vodafone Group, Ms. Margherita Della Valle; Founder, Chairman and CEO, Vista Equity Partners, Mr. Robert Smith and Argentine Minister of Deregulation and State Transformation, Mr. Federico Sturzenegger.

Speaking at the inaugural meeting of the Advisory Council on Wednesday 26 March 2025, the IMF Managing Director, Kristalina Georgieva, noted: “The Council brings together a group of leading thinkers and practitioners in business, finance, academia, and policymaking to share their views and experiences on how macroeconomic and financial policies can provide a supportive environment for innovation, entrepreneurship, and productivity—key ingredients for a thriving private sector and strong economic growth.”

Global African Times wishes Sir Tony Elumelu OFR a hearty congratulations on achieving this great feat.



## Africa’s Travel Destinations – Discover Bunce Island in Sierra Leone, the commercial Slave trading outpost

Bunce Island, a small, uninhabited island in the Sierra Leone River, served as a major slave trading post in West Africa from the late 1600s to 1807, where British traders shipped tens of thousands of enslaved Africans to the Americas. Bunce Island is located in the Sierra Leone River, about 20 miles (32 kilometers) upriver from Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone.

Bunce Island (also spelled “Bence,” “Bense,” or “Bance” at different periods) is an island in the Sierra Leone River. It is situated in Freetown Harbour, the estuary of the Rokel River and Port Loko Creek, about 20 miles (32 kilometres)



upriver from Sierra Leone’s capital city Freetown. The island measures about 1,650 feet (502.9 metres) by 350 feet (106.7 metres) and houses a castle that was built by the Royal Africa Company in c.1670. Tens of thousands of Africans were shipped from here to the North American colonies of South Carolina and Georgia to be forced into slavery, and are the ancestors of many African Americans of the United States.

It was a fortified British trading post and a pass-over point for commercial ships transporting enslaved people to the West Indies and North America. The Royal African Company established a commercial fort on Bunce Island around 1670. The island was a major slave trading operation from the late 1600s to 1807, when the British government outlawed the slave trade. From Bunce Island, enslaved people were sold to colonies in the West Indies and North America, with a significant number going to the rice plantations in South Carolina and Georgia.

Although the island is small, its strategic position at the limit of navigation for ocean-going ships in Africa’s largest natural harbour made it an ideal base for European slave traders. To mark the 2007–2008 bicentennial of Britain’s abolition of the slave trade, a team at James Madison University created a three-dimensional animation of the castle as it was in 1805, and an exhibit on the site that was displayed to museums all across the U.S. which is now held by the Sierra Leone National Museum.

Bunce Island was first settled and fortified by English slave traders circa 1670. During its early history, the castle was operated by two London-based firms: the Royal African Company and its offshoot, the Gambia Adventurers, the latter a “Crown-chartered company” or parastatal subsidized by the Crown. On October 31, 1678, at Gresham College the latter offered the former the contents of their investment on the island. The castle was not commercially successful but it served as a symbol of English influence in the region, where Portuguese slave traders had been established since the 1500s.

The island is now uninhabited, with the ruins of the slave trading buildings serving as a somber reminder of its history. Bunce Island was one of the most lucrative slave trading operations in West Africa.

The early phase of the castle’s history ended in 1728 when Bunce Island was by José Lopez

da Moura, a Luso-African slave trader based in the area. He was the richest man in present-day territory of Sierra Leone, the grandson of a Mane king and part of the hybrid Luso-African community that had developed along the lower rivers. This class acted as middlemen, resisting efforts by the Royal African Company to monopolize trade with African rulers. Lopez led others in destroying the Bunce Island factory.

It was at the limit of navigability for ocean-going vessels, making it a natural meeting place for European slave traders and African traders.

Studies have revealed connections between the linguistic traits and cultural traditions of the Gullah people in Georgia and South Carolina and the people of Sierra Leone, highlighting the impact of Bunce Island on the transatlantic slave trade. Bunce Island is included on UNESCO’s Tentative List for World Heritage status nomination. The island is marked by rapidly deteriorating ruins, wrapped in a somber air.

There are ongoing efforts to conserve what’s left of the island and to build a museum in Freetown to shed light on its dark past. The Bunce Island Coalition has launched a project to conserve the island and build a museum in Freetown.

Bunce Island was abandoned until the mid-1740s. It was later operated by the London-based firm Grant, Oswald & Company, founded by Scottish merchants Richard Oswald and Alexander Grant, who took over in 1748.



### The History Of Bunce Island

In 1785 Bunce and a number of other dependent islands were conveyed to the company of John and Alexander Anderson. Throughout the late 18th century, it was a highly profitable enterprise. During the second half of the eighteenth century, the companies sent thousands of slaves from Bunce Island to plantations on the British and French colonies in the West Indies, and to Britain’s North American colonies.

Bance Island House, the headquarters building where the Chief Agent lived with his senior officers, was at the



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centre of the castle. Immediately behind it was the open-air slave yard, which was divided between a large area for men and a smaller one for women and children. Remnants of two watchtowers, a fortification with places for eight cannons, and a gunpowder magazine remain standing. Some of the cannons bear the royal cypher of King George III. At the south end of the island, several inscribed tombstones mark the graves of slave traders, slave ship captains, and the foreman of African workers.

The slave traders who did business at Bunce Island came from a variety of backgrounds. During the castle’s early history, Afro-Portuguese—part of what historian Ira Berlin described as the “Atlantic Creole generation”—sold slaves and local products there. They were well-established along the rivers near the coast and were descendants of male Portuguese slave traders known as lançados and African women, and were often bilingual. During the island’s later history, Afro-English dynasties became established in communities along the West African coast, beginning in the 17th century. By 1800, there were about 12,000 Afro-English in this area. Mixed-race men from such families as the Caulkers, Tuckers and Cleavelands sold slaves and traded goods at Bunce Island. Like the Portuguese descendants, they occupied a middle ground, often marrying into the upper classes of African tribes. The slave ships came from London, Liverpool and Bristol; from Newport, Rhode Island in the North American colonies; and from France and Denmark. They transported slaves mostly to European colonies in the Caribbean and the American South.

Bunce Island was an important British commercial outpost and an attractive target during times of war. French naval forces attacked the castle four times (1695, 1704, 1779, and 1794), damaging or destroying it each time. The attack of 1779 took place during the American War of Independence when the Continental Army’s French allies took advantage of the conflict to attack British assets outside North America. Pirates, including Bartholomew Roberts or “Black Bart”, the most notorious pirate of the 18th century, attacked in 1719 and 1720. The British

traders rebuilt the castle after each attack, gradually altering its architecture during the roughly 140 years it was used as a slave trade entrepôt.

Bunce Island is best known as one of the chief processing points for slaves to be sold to planters in Lowcountry of the British colonies of South Carolina and Georgia, including the Sea Islands, where they developed extensive rice plantations. Rice requires a great deal of technical knowledge for its successful cultivation. South Carolinian and Georgian planters were willing to pay premium prices for slave labour brought from what they called the “Rice Coast” of West Africa, the traditional rice-growing region stretching from what is now Senegal and Gambia in the north down to present-day Sierra Leone and Liberia in the south. Still, records of the port of Charleston show that nearly 40 percent of the slaves came from Angola.

Stay tuned for the continuation of this article on Bunce Island...here on our website [www.globalafricantimes.com](http://www.globalafricantimes.com)

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DEADLINE: 15th APRIL 2025

Kindly send CV and Cover Letter to [info@ghanacic.org](mailto:info@ghanacic.org) Emails should be titled "Executive Director". Deadline for applications is 15th April 2025.

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• Shall be in charge of scanning the petroleum retail environment and reporting on changes in the environment, competitors and their activities/strategies and their possible impact on PETROSOL and offering solutions to them in a timely manner.

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