

Accor partnership gives Kamaj boss grand ideas

At 54, Houssein Mahamoud Robleh has an ambitious line of projects ahead of him and many international contacts to help, as well as the blessing of president IOG, who sees his projects as a useful PR tool for his Vision 2035.

After doing business in security, hospitality, real estate and distribution, **Kamaj** group boss **Houssein Mahamoud Robleh**, is trying his hand at agriculture. After announcing a partnership with **Accor** for the construction of three hotels in Djibouti in December (*Africa Intelligence*, [04/01/21](#)), the 54-year-old entrepreneur went on to acquire a 32% share in **Universal Construction Firm** (UCF) last month. UCF was founded in Djibouti in December 2019 by **Diraneh Mohamed Robleh**, a Djibouti businessman living in Minnesota, and American architect **Dean James Dovolis**. It is run by **Mohamed Salad Hassan**, who also directs the Djibouti firm **Gindhish General Trading**.

Diraneh Robleh and Dovolis joined forces 18 months ago to pitch a highly-ambitious investment programme to the Djibouti authorities. The head of Kamaj, an old acquaintance of Diraneh Robleh, is to serve as the intermediary.

Requiring up to \$1bn in total, their programme includes upgrades to the Ambouli international airport, construction of a hotel nearby, the installation of agricultural land around the Wea dam, and a vast real estate project on an artificial island inspired by Dubai's Palm Islands to be named Sea Flower complete with hotels, luxury accommodation and a casino.

Material IOG can work with

When in Djibouti in November 2019, Diraneh Robleh and Dovolis met up with budget minister **Abdoulkarim Aden Cher**. A few months later, in February 2020,

the foundation stone of the Marvella Farms agricultural project as laid in PK 30, in Arta. This 150-hectare soilless hydroponic gardening project is being developed by the small venture capital firm **Agro Fund One**. Based in Denver, Colorado, and run by Brazilian entrepreneur **Guilherme Moreira** and his American business partner **Mark M. Erjavec**, Agro Fund One first started out in Latin America. So far, Marvella Farms, which will need \$300m to get off the ground, is the most advanced project of the investment programme.

For President **Ismail Omar Guelleh** (IOG), who is likely to win a fifth term in the 9 April election, the timing of project is ideal. IOG is always keen on projects that can add substance to his "Vision 2035", a programme reminiscent of the Saudi crown prince's strategic framework and aimed at diversifying foreign investment currently dominated by Chinese economic actors.

Last month, the Kamaj group CEO joined the happy few private sector individuals to accompany IOG on his official visit to Paris and took part in a meeting of the French employers' association **Medef International** with representatives of French firms (*Africa Intelligence*, [18/02/21](#)).

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Publication edited by
Indigo Publications (Paris, France)
Published on AfricaIntelligence.com (Commission paritaire 1225
Y 92894)