MEMORANDUM

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EXTRA - WEEKEND EDITION

SUMMARY

TUESDAY 16 JUNE: HIGH-LEVEL EVENT ON THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN SOUTH SUDAN AND ITS IMPACT ON THE REGION

EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos Stylianides, will co-chair in a high-level conference on the humanitarian crisis in South Sudan on 16 June in Geneva, organised by the European Commission together with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

The event will address critical funding needs and give participants the opportunity to announce new pledges of support. The event also aims to raise awareness about the worsening humanitarian crisis in the world's youngest country, and its impact on the region.

Commissioner Stylianides will open the conference together with United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Stephen O'Brien, and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Antonio Guterres. Participants will include representatives of EU Member States, other donor countries, international organisations, and humanitarian organisations operating in South Sudan.

The UN has declared South Sudan a level 3 emergency – the highest level of humanitarian crisis.

The conflict in the country has displaced more than two million people since December 2013. The economy is on the edge of collapse. The humanitarian needs include food, clean water, health care, sanitation and shelter, while the protection of civilians remains a major concern.

Commissioner Stylianides announced additional humanitarian aid of €50 million during a visit to South Sudan in April, bringing the total of EU humanitarian assistance to the country to over €200 million in 2015.

The situation has deteriorated further over the last month following the resumption of fighting. At the beginning of June, the government of South Sudan expelled without an official explanation a senior United Nations (UN) representative – Mr. Toby Lanzer, who had served as the Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in South Sudan, as well as the UN Development Programme Resident Coordinator and the Humanitarian Coordinator since July 2012. (EC 12-06-2015)

COMMISSIONER LAUNCHES EURO-MEDITERRANEAN GAS PLATFORM

Miguel Arias Cañete, European Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy, and Dr. Yousef Bataineh, Ambassador of Jordan to Belgium, alongside representatives of the Union for the Mediterranean countries have launched a new Euro-Mediterranean platform for cooperation on gas.

The platform, launched on 11 June in Brussels, aims to incentivise dialogue, facilitate partnerships between stakeholders and strengthen cooperation between the Members of the Union for the Mediterranean.

It is the first of the three platforms – on gas, regional electricity market, and renewables and energy efficiency – to be launched following the Commissioner's visit to Algeria and Morocco last month. These regional platforms aim to deepen energy cooperation between the EU and South and East Mediterranean countries. The Gas Platform is expected to strengthen security of gas supply in the region by promoting regional cooperation around gas exploration and production, by supporting the development of necessary infrastructure and by reinforcing regional gas trade exchanges, making the Mediterranean basin a major gas marketplace in the future.

Speaking at the launch, Arias Cañete said: "Today we have come together because we share a common goal of delivering a stable, secure and thriving Mediterranean gas market that gives people across the region secure, competitive and sustainable energy. This goal has always been at the heart of EU energy policy, and has truly taken centre stage in our Energy Union strategy. I am committed to fully exploiting the benefits of furthering Euro-Mediterranean cooperation on energy issues." (EC 11-06-2015)

FINLAND SLASHES DEVELOPMENT AID BY 43%

In his former capacity of Commissioner Olli Rehn was already advocating austerity [EC}

The new centre-right Finnish government has decided to cut development aid by 43%, prompting furious reactions from NGOs and fears other EU countries will follow its example.

The new Finnish government, which took power on 29 May and has former Commissioner Olli Rehn as minister of economic affairs, has decided to reduce the budget for development co-operation by 43%.

The cuts will start this year. No more revenue from emission allowance auctions will be allocated to development cooperation. Another cut worth €300 million would come in the 2016 budget. The cuts combined would mean a cut of 43% compared to 2014. The funds available for helping the world's poor were then €870 million.

The decision by the three parties forming the government - Centre Party, Finns Party and Coalition Party - is a huge turn-around in Finnish foreign policy, where international solidarity has been one of the core elements, Marko Ulvil, chairperson of the Siemenpuu Foundation said in a statement.

Rilli Lappalainen, secretary general to Kehys, the Finnish national platform within the European NGO confederation for relief and development Concord, told EurActiv that the cuts would "kill the NGO sector".

Lappalainen said that the decision wasn't unexpected, as it has been part of the coalition agreement. He also said that cuts were made in all sectors of society, but the biggest cuts were for development aid and for education.

He also said that the NGO sector had approached the government for further details, but those were still unavailable and would be announced shortly.

"They are really killing the NGO sector, especially the small ones. This is really dramatic. Finland has always been one of the champions of development and a reliable partner," Lappalainen said, lamenting the consequences for the partners in the developing world, because in his words this aid was a matter of life and death.

The foreign ministry, which is responsible for the development cooperation budget, has already warned NGOs that they should prepare for 30–40% cuts next year. This does not only impact new programmes, existing contracts will reportedly be affected as well.

Representatives of Finnish NGOs and civil society have also published an open letter to Lenita Toivakka, minister of Foreign Trade and Development, reminding the minister that the work Finnish development organisations do is valuable and benefits the poorest of the poor.

They wrote, "We represent regular Finnish people who want to participate in working for a more just world. Development cooperation has wide support. Over 80% of Finns consider development cooperation important. If you implement the planned 30-40% cuts, you're eroding the foundations of the long-term and effective work of our organisations."

"We find it shocking that Finland, who has been a stout supporter of civil society, leading by example, decides to deliver a death blow to a number of NGOs, who will be unable to continue their work after these cuts. This is a worrying signal to send out, especially now when the space for civil society is under threat in many countries all over the world," Reetta Helander, Communication officer of Kehys, told EurActiv. (10-06-2015)

ANGOLA REQUESTS MORATORIUM ON DEBT REPAYMENT TO CHINA

The President of Angola asked, Wednesday in Beijing, for a moratorium of at least two years on debt repayment to China and for the granting of new credit facilities or the expansion of existing one, according to a report from Angolan public television, TPA.

TPA, which did not disclose the total amount of Angola's debt to China, also said that President José Eduardo dos Santos made this request when speaking at the opening of official talks with his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, as part of his the official visit to China since Monday.

The president said that Angola intends to continue joint activities with China in the fields of basic and economic infrastructure as well as education, science, energy and water, agriculture, manufacturing industry, geology and mining, and training of technicians and specialists.

Santos said that Angola faces a serious problem resulting from the fact that the country's economy is mainly dependent on the export of a single commodity – oil – accounting for about 90 percent of Angolan exports.

"The significant decline in oil prices and the consequent sharp reduction in state revenues has forced us to revise our general state budget downwards and to implement cost containment, reducing our ability to recover economic and social infrastructure and to promote public and private investment," he said.

José Eduardo dos Santos said that Angola intends to establish bilateral agreements with China to accelerate the implementation of the country's economic diversification programme, "given our technological capacity and the necessary means that the country has."

He noted that the Angolan State intended to renegotiate the current terms of its debt, requesting a moratorium of at least two years on repayment, negotiations for new funding agreements, as Chinese credit lines have been a major source funding over the last few years for both the public and private sector.

The Angolan Head of State is accompanied on his fourth official visit to China by the Minister of State and Presidential Chief of Staff, Edeltrudes Costa and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Georges Rebelo Chikoti.

The president's entourage also includes the Minister of Finance, Armando Manuel, Minister of Trade, Rosa Pacavira, Minister of Agriculture, Afonso Pedro Canga, Minister of Transport, António da Silva Tomás, Minister for Energy and Water, João Baptista Borges, Minister for Higher Education, Adão do Nascimento and Minister of Education, Mpinda Simão. (12-06-2015)

ANGOLA EXPECTED TO START FALLING BEHIND IN PAYMENTS TO SUPPLIERS

Angola is expected to start falling behind in its payments to suppliers due to the sharp fall of oil prices and consequent lack of foreign currency, the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) said in its report on the West African country.

"The government is trying to alleviate the problem caused by the drop in oil prices and the consequent shortage of foreign exchange, promoting initiatives not related to oil, but the lack of foreign reserves is stifling efforts to develop other sectors of the economy," reads the document.

The Angolan national currency depreciated by more than 6.6 percent last week, according to the official exchange rate of the National Bank of Angola (BNA), which was not enough to slow the rise of the dollar on the informal market.

This devaluation was mainly in three daily sessions of last week due to operating conditions of the forex market, but remains well below prices in the informal market, which is the only solution to difficulties faced by customers in access to foreign currency at commercial banks.

The result, said the EIU, "led the National Bank of Angola to impose restrictions on withdrawals and international transactions," causing difficulties for some companies.

"There are several companies that are reporting difficulties in paying foreign suppliers and processing salaries, and this has created problems in several economic sectors, including construction and industry," analysts said.

As a sign of these difficulties, the Angolan President asked the Chinese government for a moratorium of at least two years on paying off the debt to that country and requested new credit facilities or the expansion of existing ones. (12-06-2015)

MERCOSUR – EUROPEAN UNION MINISTERIAL MEETING - JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The Mercosur-European Union Ministerial Meeting was held in Brussels, Belgium, on June 11, 2015. The European Union was represented by Ms. Cecilia Malmström, Commissioner for Trade of the European Commission. Mercosur was represented by: Mr. Mauro Vieira, Minister of External Relations of the Federative Republic of Brazil and Pro Tempore President of Mercosur, accompanied

by Mr. Armando Monteiro, Minister of Development, Industry and Trade; Mr. Carlos Bianco, Secretary of International Economic Relations of the Ministry of External Relations and Worship of Argentina; Mr. Eladio Loizaga, Minister of External Relations of the Republic of Paraguay, accompanied by Mr. Gustavo Leite, Minister of Industry and Trade; Mr. Rodolfo Nin Novoa, Minister of External Relations of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay; and Mr. Alexander Yanez, Vice Minister for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

2. The Ministers focused on the importance of deepening and expanding the relationship between both blocs and, to this end, had an open and frank exchange of views on the state of play of the negotiations for an ambitious, comprehensive and balanced Association Agreement.

3. They reaffirmed their full commitment to strive for a conclusion of the negotiations, in line with the statement by the Heads of State at the Mercosur-EU Summit in 2010, and underlined the importance of maintaining the constructive atmosphere that has guided negotiations thus far.

4. The Ministers exchanged general information on their respective market access offers, in accordance with what had been agreed at the EU-Mercosur Summit in Madrid on 17 May 2010. Ministers agreed that, provided conditions for a successful exchange are met, the goal shall be to exchange market access offers within the last quarter of 2015. To assess those conditions, they tasked negotiators to meet expeditiously and report back to their respective authorities.

WORLD BANK EXPECTS “DIFFICULT CHALLENGES” FOR ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE

The overall decline in the price of fuel and goods will this year lead to “difficult challenges” to developing countries, such as Mozambique and Angola, which will have more difficulty paying loans, said the World Bank in a report issued this week.

In the update to the annual “Global Economic Outlook – 2015″, the World Bank lowered its growth forecast for the group of developing countries to 4.4 percent, which will have an impact on the world economy, representing a “fourth consecutive year of disappointing growth,” (2.8%).

According to the World Bank, the appreciation of the dollar will hinder payment of foreign debts of countries such as Angola, which will be affected given that it is an oil exporter, and Mozambique, which will benefit from the reduction of its fuel import bill but will be hampered by the lower prices of the goods it exports.

In this context, the World Bank said that the Angolan economy this year would grow by 4.5 percent anticipating a decline of 0.6 points in 2016 (3.9 percent), from which the country may recover in 2017 (5 percent).

Amongst Portuguese-speaking African countries (PALOP), Mozambique is the country that will grow most in 2015, with expansion of gross domestic product (GDP) of 7.2 percent, as well as in the following two years (7.3 percent).

Cabo Verde (Cape Verde) is expected to grow 3 percent this year, 3.4 percent in 2016 and 3.5 percent in 2017, while Guinea-Bissau will see its GDP expand 4.2 percent in 2015 and 3.9 percent and 4 percent in the next two years, the report said making no mention of the economic growth forecast for São Tomé and Príncipe.

Equatorial Guinea, on the other hand, is facing a recession until 2017, when its economy will grow 3.7 percent after a contraction of 3.1 percent in 2015 and 15.4 percent in 2016. (12-06-2015)

LAUNCHING OF A TWO-YEAR EU FUNDED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT TO THE HOLDING COMPANY FOR WATER AND WASTEWATER (HCWW) FOR TECHNICAL STUDIES AND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT.

The European Union offered a 2.4 million Euros fund for the Water Sector Reform Programme – Phase II (WSRP-Phase II). This TA project commenced on 29th of January 2015 and will significantly contribute to all three specific objectives of the WSRP-Phase II,: a more robust and coherent institutional framework with clearly defined water supply and sanitation policy and strategy, and with better performing water supply and sanitation service providers; better use of existing water resources by improving operational efficiencies of the affiliated companies, reducing water losses and reusing treated wastewater as well as protect public health and the environment.
Ambassador James Moran, Head of European Union Delegation to Egypt said that “the EU has a sustained commitment to work with Egypt to ensure proper and adequate service. We have been here for many years, working hand in hand with the government to support this vital sector and we will continue to provide our support in improving the quality of life and the socio economic development of the country”. "I firmly believe that Water is the key to sustainable development. We need water for health, food security and economic progress. Yet, each year brings new pressures. One out of three people already live in a country with moderate to high water stress. It is anticipated that by 2030 nearly half the global population could be facing water scarcity, with demand outstripping supply by 40 percent. In Egypt 50 percent of the population, 40 million Egyptians, have no access to sanitation,” he added.
The TA project aims to achieve specific objectives such as:
•Providing HCWW with a Strategic plan for Technical Losses Reduction, through technical losses diagnosis methodology and pilot implementation on a selected number of ACs.
•Improving the management of Reverse Osmosis Plants Brine Disposal through building capacities inside the HCWW Planning Department to enable them to carry out Environmental Impact Assessment Studies (EIASs) on brine disposal; and promote the adoption of suitable regulation on this matter.
•Updating the National Rural Sanitation Strategy based on in-depth analysis and diagnosis of current situation, and a strategic planning methodology for implementation of Governorate-level rural sanitation programs.
The TA project is structured around three discreet components to accomplish the set objectives:
•Component 1: Technical Losses Reduction Strategy and Master Plan
•Component 2: Improvement of management of Reverse Osmosis plants brine disposal
•Component 3: Updating of the Existing National Rural Sanitation Strategy
The workshop to launch the programme is held at the Conrad Cairo Hotel on Thursday 4th of June 2015 from 09.30 to 14.30 and attended by the HCWW Chairman and Vice Chairmen, HCWW staff, and Affiliated Companies, as well as the donor community including the European Union (04-06-2015)

MUGABE LEAVES FOR TRIPARTITE FTA LAUNCH IN EGYPT

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe left Harare for Egypt on Monday for the launch of the Tripartite Free Trade Area involving the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East African Community (EAC) and Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The establishment of so-called “Grand” Free Trade Area, comprising 26 countries in southern and eastern Africa, is expected to bolster intra-regional trade by creating a wider market, increased investment flows, enhanced competitiveness and the development of cross-regional infrastructure.

The legal and institutional framework has been agreed through a Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding on Inter-Regional Cooperation and Integration signed by COMESA, EAC and SADC, that came into force on 19 January 2011.

The African Union Commission has expressed strong support for the Tripartite cooperation within the framework of establishing an African Economic Community and the overall African Union Vision and Strategy presented in the Lagos Plan of Action (1980) and the Abuja Treaty (1991) as well as the resolution of the 2006 AU Summit that directed the commission and the regional economic communities

(RECs) to put in place mechanisms to facilitate harmonization and coordination within and among the three RECs.

The first Tripartite Summit was held in 2008 in Uganda, with initial commitment to implementation regarding programmes in trade, customs and economic integration; free movement of business persons; and infrastructure development amongst the three RECs.

The Tripartite FTA brings together a population of 625 million and a gross domestic product of US$1.2 trillion. It accounts for half of the membership of the African Union and 58 percent of Africa's Gross Domestic Product. (APA 08-06-2015)

US OPPOSES THIRD TERM FOR PAUL KAGAME (RWANDA)

The United States said on Friday it is opposed to a third term in office for Rwandan President Paul Kagame.

Rwanda's Parliament is expected to consider an amendment to the country's constitution that would lift a two-term limit on presidential terms and potentially enable Mr Kagame to seek re-election in 2017.

Rwanda is a key US ally in Africa, with Washington also ranking as one of Rwanda's leading donors. The Obama administration's stand against a possible third term for Mr Kagame will thus be seen as significant in Kigali and throughout the Great Lakes region.

"The United States believes that democracy is best advanced through the development of strong institutions, not strongmen," a spokesman for the State Department's Africa bureau said in response to a *Nation* query.

"Changing constitutions to eliminate term limits in order to favour incumbents is inconsistent with democratic principles and reduces confidence in democratic institutions," the statement added.

"We are committed to support peaceful, democratic transition in 2017 to a new leader elected by the Rwandan people."

Disturbing precedence

The US stance against a third term for Mr Kagame follows critical comments by a State Department official last month regarding Rwanda's human rights record.

"Alongside Rwanda's remarkable development progress, there have been equally consistent efforts to reduce space for independent voices and to diminish the ability of the media, opposition groups and civil society to operate," Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Steven Feldstein said in testimony to a US House of Representatives subcommittee on Africa.

Repressive actions by the Rwandan government are setting "a disturbing precedent for the region and continent," Mr. Feldstein warned.

"Other countries are carefully watching Rwanda's model of economic liberalisation and political repression. In my discussions, counterparts frequently point to Rwanda and question whether protecting the rights of their citizens matters if they can achieve substantial economic development."

In the US view, Mr. Feldstein added, it is wrong to assume that a country can continue to experience strong economic growth and foreign investment while restricting political rights.

"This is not a sustainable path," the State Department official declared. "At some point — if unchecked — human rights violations will begin to affect Rwanda's economic performance, stability and the willingness of foreign investors to pump in outside capital and do business." (Africa Review 06-06-2015)

ANOTHER FIRE DISASTER AVERTED IN GHANAIAN CAPITAL

An office in the plush US$ 50 million Ministry of Defence building situated near the 37 Military Hospital Area in Accra, the Ghanaian capital, was reported to have caught fire in the early hours of Monday, barely six days after floods and a fire disaster had sent the country into shock, and a three days official mourning for which had just began.

The news sent shivers down the spine of many Ghanaians, who are reliving Wednesday eveningâ€™s fuel station explosion that ripped the nation of more than 100 lives.

But the timely intervention of some staff at the Ministry, supported by the Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS) team, was enough to avert what could have become another fire outbreak at a vital government ministry in recent times.

Some journalist who rushed to the scene told APA that they were delighted at the manner the staff were proactive in bringing the fire under control, preventing it from spreading to other parts of the building and commended the staff for their bravery.

One of the air-conditioners in one of the offices is said to have developed an electrical fault and caught fire, forcing some staff to start fighting the fire and alerting the fire service, to bring the situation to normal.

In 2009, the entire Ministry of Foreign Affairs building was razed down by fire. Several other state properties have also recently been destroyed by fire. (APA 08-06-2015)

MAURITANIA: STERLING ENERGY JOINS TULLOW ON THE C-10 OFFSHORE BLOCK

Sterling Energy plc, a British oil and gas company listed in London, concluded, through its subsidiary in Mauritania, a “sale and purchase agreement” with Tullow Mauritania Ltd to acquire 13.5% interest in the production sharing agreement on the C-10 block off Mauritania.

Under the terms of the agreement announced on June 3, Sterling Energy Ltd Mauritania will make a contribution to past expenditures and pay a $ 50,000 cash contribution to Tullow to cover the reimbursement of expenditure incurred during the transitional period.

Following the approval of the Mauritanian government, which is still expected to be granted, Sterling Energy Mauritania will have a participation of 13.5%, while Tullow Mauritania will see its participation decrease, from 90% to 76.5%, with 10% interest for the Mauritanian Hydrocarbon and Mine Assets Company (SMHPM).

The production sharing agreement is in the second phase of the exploration period expiring on November 30, 2017.

The C-10 block covers an area of about 10,725 km2 and lies in water depths ranging between 50m and 2400m off Mauritania.

Sterling Energy Plc, an oil and gas exploration company, has interests in potential projects in Madagascar, Mauritania and in Somaliland.(Ag Ecofin 04-06-2015)

MOZAMBIQUE: CHINESE FIRM SHUT DOWN OVER ‘DEPLORABLE CONDITIONS’

Mozambique’s Labour Ministry on Monday announced that a Maputo-based Chinese owned recycling company has been ordered to close shop over what was described as “deplorable conditions” for 15 Mozambicans working there.

The Lantim Group recycles garbage and plastic materials but is suspected to be operating illegally.

This was discovered when a brigade from the General Inspectorate of Labour (IGT) visited the company late last month and its management failed to present requisite documents attesting to a contractual relationship between its and the local workforce.

A Labour Ministry statement seen by the {African Press Agency} on Monday said there was no list of the workers employed, no schedule containing their working hours and the absence of written work contracts.

The brigade also found that, despite the health hazards involved in recycling waste, the company did not provide its workers with any protective clothing, there were no gloves, boots, face masks or anything else to protect the workers.

"Given these inhuman conditions, and the gross violations of Mozambican labour legislation, the IGT suspended the activities of the Lantim Group in order the safeguard the health and lives of its workers, reads the document which adds that restarting activities will depend on correcting all the irregularities detected, which will be verified by a further inspection visit the statement said.

It recalled that the ministry has repeatedly called on employers and workers alike to respect the country's labour laws and particularly to ensure health and safety at work.

It said that it is in the interest of employers to protect their workers health, since this will reduce absenteeism, and a healthy workforce will be more productive than one suffering from work-related accidents and occupational hazards and illnesses.

The Lantim Group has not commented on the ministry's decision. (APA 08-06-2015)

REFORM URGED TO AID AFRICAN DEBT MARKETS

Developing Africa’s financial infrastructure was as important as advancing its physical infrastructure, and while African countries have raised their profile in world capital markets significantly over the past five years, participants at last week’s World Economic Forum on Africa called for greater reforms and more investment to create better markets for African debt.

Countries such as Côte d’Ivoire, Zambia, Kenya and Ghana collectively raised more than $7bn on international debt markets last year, at yields on a par with those of developed countries, and this is expected to accelerate over the next 10 years, Barclays Africa CEO Maria Ramos told the forum.

Africa’s inclusion in the global emerging markets debt index has jumped from five countries with $5.6bn in issue in 2008 to 15 countries with $36bn in issue.

Raymond McGuire, Citi head of global banking, said the increase in issuance by African sovereigns and financial sector players reflected confidence from primarily European investors.

"The view is that we have confidence in Africa as a vital growth geography, and the infrastructure is developing so we can facilitate capital flows, outside just the fixed income market," McGuire said.

Ms Ramos said a lot more reform to domestic pension fund and mutual fund sectors was needed, with tax incentives to saving, as well as more investment in technology and trading systems and improved governance to equalise the playing field and reduce the cost of issuance. Harmonizing the rules across countries would help reduce the cost of issuance, as would creating more liquidity in markets.

Investec Asset Management CEO Hendrik du Toit urged issuing governments to build proper yield curves in the debt market, instead of issuing debt for whatever maturity was cheapest. Proper yield curves would enable the development of corporate bond markets and of local currency domestic debt markets. He cited the importance of developing domestic capital markets across Africa, or countries would always be dependent on foreign finance. SA was a cornerstone investor in many debt issues by other African countries, Mr. du Toit said, and the dispensation which allowed an additional 5% of SA’s savings pool was an important change which would support this. (BD 08-06-2015)

GAMBIAN PRESS ZOOMS ON EXPULSION OF EU DIPLOMAT, ECOWAS TERM LIMIT

The expulsion of the European Union's top diplomat in Banjul by the Gambia government, and the Gambian leader's reaction to the proposed Ecowas term limit, were the stories that made headlines in

Gambian newspapers on Monday.

The Point newspaper reported on its lead page that the Gambia government has on Friday issued a statement through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ordering the Charge d' Affaires of the European Union to the Gambia, Ms Agnes Guillaud, to leave the country within 72 hours.

The statement did not give any reason for Ms Guillaud's expulsion, who was given until Sunday to leave the country, according to the statement.

The report by The Point also indicated that the expelled diplomat described her ''Europe Day'' speech on May 9 as her last speech in the Gambia, noting that her mission was coming to an end.

The Daily Observer for its part reported that the Gambian leader Yaya Jammeh, has strongly denounced the Ecowas proposed term limit, which was subjected to discussions by the sub-regional body during its last month's summit in Accra, Ghana.

Jammeh said the idea is premeditated by the West whom he accused of attempting to control African authorities. He therefore described the term limit proposal as undemocratic'. He said the Western nations knew that elections cannot take him (Yaya Jammeh) from power, therefore decided to convince Ecowas to introduce term limits for presidents in other to get rid of him.

Democracy is power to the people and not power to the West. I fear only Allah and nobody else. He alone will decide the Gambia's destiny, the Daily Observer quoted Jammeh as saying during his nation-wide tour in Banjul on Friday.(APA 08-06-2015)

UBER KENYA TO BEGIN TAKING CASH, MOBILE MONEY PAYMENTS

Taxi hailing firm Uber has added cash and mobile money payment options to its service in Nairobi in a bid to grow the number of users.

The options go live Friday, making Kenya the second market in which Uber has added a cash option after trying out its card-based cashless model.

“Paying with cash is really important for people in Kenya,” said Jambu Palaniappan, Uber regional general manager for Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa. “This cash experiment will give us some great insights and help us develop our technology to best meet the needs of local consumers.”

The cash system was first rolled out in Hyderabad, India last month.

“It will roll out gradually over the next few weeks,” said Mr. Palaniappan. “Not all of you will be able to see the cash option (on your mobile app) right away as we are testing different groups and user preferences.”

This comes to target users that are not comfortable having their debit or credit card details online.

Riders who choose the cash payment option will take a ride and pay their driver at the end of the trip an amount calculated by the app and rounded up to the nearest Sh50 to ease issues of change.

The cashless system for public transportation launched in Kenya is struggling to take off with many commuters still opting to pay for their trips in cash.

The San-Francisco based company has been expanding its services in Kenya with the recent introduction of Uber 4 Business (U4B), targeting corporate Kenya. The service is set to rival corporate cab services offered locally by taxi companies like Pewin, Princess, Wote and Jatco by providing users with less paperwork as well as Uber’s popular hailing and tracking options.

In Chicago and New York, Uber launched another service last month dubbed Uber Eats. Piloted in Los Angeles and Barcelona, the app allows users in the four cities to get food from restaurants delivered to them.

The app company is seeking to cement its hold on the Nairobi taxi market before making any expansion into other cities in Kenya or the region.

“We want to first get Nairobi right,” said Mr. Palaniappan.

Uber has grown rapidly in value to be worth around $40 billion (about Sh4 trillion). According to the Financial Times, the company is readying another huge round of funding to fuel its global expansion. (Business Day 05-06-2015)

UN ENVOY CONCERNED OVER TENSION IN STRATEGIC TOWN OF CENTRAL SOMALIA

The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Somalia, Nicholas Kay, on Tuesday expressed deep concern over the events in Galgadud Region in Central Somalia where a militia has took control of government installations.

Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamaa (ASWJ) militia on Sunday overran Dhusamareb town and took control of government installations.

I am very concerned about the developments in Dhusamareb. All parties must respect the ceasefire agreement signed in Guricel on 5 March 2015, refrain from violent actions and make immediate efforts to de-escalate the situation, said Kay in a statement issued in Nairobi.

I urge the ASWJ forces to disengage and withdraw to earlier positions. All differences should be resolved through peaceful dialogue and compromise. Resorting to arms to stake any community's claims puts at risk the significant progress made in the state formation process," added Kay.

The envoys remarks after the moderate Islamic group had claimed seizure of strategic town in central Somalia

Ahlu Sunna wal-Jamea spokesman Abdi Nur Mohamed confirmed the development to the media.(APA 09-06-2015)

PRESIDENT OF ANGOLA IN BEIJING ALSO TO REVIEW PARTNERSHIP WITH CHINA

The visit of the Angolan President to China will make it possible to adjust plans and government programs based on the current economic and financial situation and review the existing partnership, said Sunday in Luanda the secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Manuel Augusto, who was speaking after the departure of José Eduardo dos Santos to China, said that this visit was very important “given the ties between Angola and China and particularly the development partnership that exists between the two countries.”

The President’s delegation includes the Minister of State and Presidential Chief of Staff, Edeltrudes Coast and the ministers of Foreign Affairs, Georges Chikoti, Transport, Augusto Tomás, Trade, Rosa Pacavira and Energy and Water, João Baptista Borges.

The official programme of the visit, which will begin with a welcome ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in central Beijing on Tuesday, includes a journey in a high-speed train to Tianjin, the largest port in northern China, about 120 kilometres from Beijing.

José Eduardo dos Santos last visited China in December 2008, four months after attending the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympic Games.

Xi Jinping was welcomed in Luanda in 2010, when he was vice president of China, and Prime Minister Li Keqiang, was in Angola in 2014.

China accounts for about half of the oil exported by Angola in exchange for financing to Chinese companies involved in national reconstruction, including roads, railways and housing.

The amount of loans and credit lines granted by China to Angola since 2004, through various state banks, totals around US$15 billion, according to Chinese figures. (08-06-2015)

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