

MEMORANDUM

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The Memorandum is issued daily, with the sole purpose to provide updated basic business and economic information on Africa, to more than 4,000 European Companies, as well as their business parties in Africa.

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Daily news of Africa, without comments, as they are published

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EIB SIGNS NEW COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH ALGERIA



The Vice-President of the European Investment Bank (EIB), Roman Escolano, is on an official visit to Algeria from 12 to 14 July to sign a new cooperation agreement with Algeria, focused on road safety along the East-West highway.

The new cooperation agreement focuses on road safety, with a study financed by the EIB on safety standards for the Algerian section of the Trans-Maghreb highway. This study will focus on the East-West motorway crossing Algeria from its eastern to its western borders, as well as the urban road connections in the major Wilayas, including those of Oran and Bejaia, for an overall stretch of about 1,500km all along the Mediterranean coast.

It will take into account the needs of all road users in order to identify safety issues, as well as the sections that are already in service, and thus propose optimal management and traffic solutions.

"I am very pleased to sign this partnership with Algeria on a sector as important as road transport and road safety," Escolano said at the signing ceremony. "The EIB is above all an investment and advisory bank, so we will put all our skills and expertise acquired in Europe and in the region to successfully carry out this Road Safety Audit. Our objective is to increase the safety of users on these major roads, which are essential for the economic development of a country and the region and for the daily life of its inhabitants." (EIB 14-07-2017)

NAMIBIAN MINISTER UNHAPPY WITH SLOW RESPONSE TO TAX AMNESTY

Namibian Finance Minister Calle Schlettwein said Friday that the government has so far collected only six percent of the N\$4 billion (about US\$298 million) it is owed by tax dodgers, five months after Treasury launched an amnesty for evaders.



The government introduced a six-month tax amnesty in February during which taxpayers with assessed arrears were given a respite for a write-off 80 percent of the combined interest and penalties provided they paid off 20 percent of the total amount owed.

“To date, only N\$242.78 million (about US\$18 million) was collected. This pattern is worrying, noting that tax arrears is money which is overdue to the receiver but not paid,” Schlettwein said in a statement.

He noted that Namibia is “a rule-based country and tax rules have to be applied fairly.”

“All taxpayers are expected to play by the rules and meet their tax obligations,” Schlettwein said.

The minister said it was unfair that there is usually pressure on the government to settle its bills whenever it owes service providers yet the same calls are not made when companies owe the state.

“For that reason, the Government commits itself to meeting its contractual obligations irrespective of the causes. Within this month, all budgeted outstanding obligations will be met this month and all other obligations will be met within this quarter”.

The finance minister reminded taxpayers that the deadline for settling their outstanding arrears remains 31 July 2017.

“I urge all taxpayers with outstanding arrears to come forth and meet their obligations within this incentive arrangement. When the Incentive Programme lapses, the Receiver, for the fairness of the tax system, will have to step up actions to recover these outstanding balances,” he said. (APA 07-07-2017)

CONGO TO DELAY INGA 3 HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT

The Democratic Republic of Congo has recently made a statement that the [Inga 3](#) hydroelectric project is not yet expected to start producing power as originally planned in 2020 or 2021 but until 2024 or 2025. The 4 800 MW project worth \$14BN has had quite a struggle to attract financing. Last year it was treated to a big blow when the [World Bank](#) announced it had suspended funding after the presidency took control of the project, raising transparency concerns.

Early June this year, Congo asked one consortium, the final bidders – led by China Three Gorges Corporation and another that includes Spain’s Actividades de Construcción y Servicios SA – to submit a joint bid.

Bruno Kapandji, the head of the government agency overseeing development of Inga 3 project, told Reuters that they are working for the timing between 2024 or 2025 now that they have identified the potential developer.

The project along the Congo River is expected to expand on two existing Inga hydroelectric dams which is part of an eight-stage Grand Inga project that would produce a record 44 000 MW at an estimated cost of about \$50BN to \$80BN.

Its proponents say it could power half of Africa in the future. However, critics argue that the money would rather be spent supporting smaller local plants.

The project’s future seems clouded by the insubstantial political situation in Congo; the President Joseph Kabila refused to step down at the end of his constitutional mandate in December 2016.

This has contributed greatly to the growing insecurity in this unstable Central African country, as well an increase in militia violence and an overflow of prison breaks.

Of the 4 800 MW, 2 500 MW are set aside for South Africa, the other 1 300 MW will support Congo’s mining sector and the remaining 1 000 MW will be directed towards meeting the domestic power demand. On average only 15% of Congo’s population has electricity. (CRO 06-07-2017)

ETHIOPIA’S PARLIAMENT APPROVES OVER \$13.8B ANNUAL BUDGET

Ethiopia’s House of People’s Representatives on Friday unanimously approved the national budget of more than \$13.8 billion, which is for the next Ethiopian budget year starting on July 7, 2017.



Out of the total budget, more than \$4.9 billion was allotted for capital expenditure, of which more than \$3.4 billion, as well as \$615.6 million and more than \$869 million will be secured from the government treasury, donations and loans respectively.

More than \$5 billion has been allocated to subsidize regional governments, while \$301 million was earmarked for activities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The new budget has seen an increase of nearly \$2 billion or 16.9 percent, compared to the initial budget allocated for the just-ended fiscal year. (APA 07-07-2017)

WATER CRISIS IN CAPE TOWN AFFECTS CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

Water crisis in City of [Cape Town](#) is now affecting the construction sector with property developer Calgro M3 being among the hard hit.

The company said it was adhering to tighter restrictions that were implemented at the beginning of July, and added that for the past six months, the company has only used borehole water for its operations. The company focuses on the development of residential buildings, rental units and private memorial parks in South Africa and Namibia.

Calgro M3 CEO said the company decided to cut its water usage even further, as the city could soon run out of water completely. He believes this response is “a responsible reaction” by the company and added that no jobs would be lost as a result of its decision.

In a statement, the city said “level 4b restrictions will be used to drive down water usage to 500m litres of collective water usage per day which is required as dam levels remain critically low and reserves need to be built up during winter for the expected harsh summer months ahead.”

These restrictions require all water users to use less than 87 litres of water per person per day in total, irrespective of whether people are at home, work, school, or elsewhere.

Calgro M3 said that water crisis in Cape Town has led to construction being delayed on more than 1,750 residential units since January this year in an effort to conserve water. All these units have already been purchased. This accounts for a quarter of the company’s units under construction.(CRO 06-07-2017)

BANK COMPETITION LIMITS EXPANSION OF THE MOZAMBIQUE STOCK EXCHANGE

Competition for customer funds in the banking system in Mozambique is the main reason why the country’s stock exchange has only five listed companies, according to a study commissioned by the Mozambican Stock Exchange (BVM), the Mozambican press reported.

The study, conducted by the US Agency for Development’s (USAID) Supporting the Policy Environment for Economic Development (SPEED +), sought the reason or reasons why the BVM has only five listed companies in the stock market, despite the economic development of the country, with average growth rates of 7.0% in two decades.

Economist Hipólito Hamela, consultant in the drafting of this study, said that the main conclusion is that the BVM has its own competitors as capital market operators, that is to say, banks and “they are more interested in inviting a person who has excess liquidity to make a time deposit than to buy shares.” Hamela, quoted by daily newspaper O País, also said that banks can encourage companies that want to expand their business by opening up their capital to new shareholders through stock exchange operations to take on bank loans instead.

The BVM, established in 1999, currently has five companies listed on the stock market – Cervejas de Moçambique, CETA – Engenharia e Construção, Companhia Moçambicana de Hidrocarbonetos, Empresa Moçambicana de Seguros and Matama – Matadouro de Manhiça. (07-07-2017)

ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE COULD ADD TRILLIONS TO WORLD ECONOMY



In Nepal, many children who suffer from malnutrition belong to young mothers. In fact, teen marriages and pregnancies are common and over 23 percent of women give birth before they are 18 years old.

The benefits of ending child marriage are many—boosting a young girl’s morale and increasing her chances of education and work, and by that virtue, curbing high population rates in developing economies and boosting growth.

Still, more than 15 million children, under 18 years of age, are married each year.

A new [study](#) published by the World Bank and the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) estimates that from now until 2030, the largely outlawed practice of child marriage is going to cost developing countries trillions of dollars.

“We haven’t seen real investments needed to end the practise. Policy makers have increasingly acknowledged child marriage as a human rights abuse, but we didn’t have a sense of the economic impact, which we thought might spur increased funding by donors and governments,” Suzanne Petroni, one of the lead authors of the report, told IPS.

The burden is borne mainly by poor economies with a large population of children under 18. The UN [estimates](#) that Africa, by the end of 2050, will be home to the largest population of children under 18. In the Republic of Niger, for instance, 77 percent of women between the ages of 18 and 22 were married before they turned 18.

Given the high numbers, Niger also stands to curb its population growth by as much as 5 percent if it ended the practice, and trigger growth of 1.7 billion dollars in additional welfare, 327 million in savings to the education budget, and 34 million through reduced infant mortality.

Similarly, In Uganda, the economy stands to gain 2.4 billion dollars by curbing its population growth, as does Nepal, which stands to gain almost a billion dollars.

Globally, the amount adds up to 500 billion dollars, picked up by related benefits—fewer instances of malnutrition, for example—by the end of 2030.

“Many countries have laws on the books. In Bangladesh, for instance, half of the girls are married before 18, even though the country has banned child marriage since 1929. So clearly, laws are not sufficient to create change,” Petroni explained.

Besides the glaring benefits of a surge in economic growth in developing countries, ending the practise will ensure better prospects for young girls— better education, higher incomes, and finally, as better decision makers.

In fact, child marriage and higher school dropout rates hamper the chances of earning better wages by 9 percent on average.

The UN aims to abolish the practise by 2030, as a part of its broader mission to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).(IPS 30-06-2017)

BANK OF MOZAMBIQUE REQUIRES MORE INFORMATION FROM CREDIT INSTITUTIONS

Credit institutions authorised to operate in Mozambique will have to disclose on a quarterly basis additional information on solvency and liquidity levels, according to a notice published on Thursday in Maputo by the Bank of Mozambique.

The notice with 11 articles, dated 30 June, repeals another one of 31 December 2013 and is justified by the central bank with the need to “promote and give greater scope to the disclosure of information about credit institutions.”

In addition to maintaining the routine of each institution of semi-annual publication of indicators in a “Market Discipline” document, the new regulation adds the need for quarterly disclosure of a table with prudential and economic-financial indicators.

The information “must be published on the websites of the respective institutions,” as well as “sent to the Bank of Mozambique for publication in aggregate form,” it said.

The minimum disclosure requirements include information on capital structure, capital adequacy, credit risk and credit risk mitigation, market and operational risk, equity stakes and interest rate risk in the banking portfolio. (07-07-2017)

KENYA: ITALIAN FIRM WINS KONZA CITY ROADS AND SEWERAGE TENDER

Italian firm [Impresa Costruzioni Giuseppe Maltauro \(ICM\)](#) has won the Konza city roads and sewerage tender; this is Kenya’s first smart city.

The company was selected as the general contractor for the US\$ 385m project and their priority will be to design the infrastructure for phase one of the project as well as procurement the necessary material and equipment.

Precisely known as the Engineering, Procurement, Construction and Financing (EPCF) contractor, in details, ICM will oversee the building of roads, water and sewerage infrastructure within the 400 acre phase one of Konza City.

Konza Technopolis Development Authority (KOTDA) chief executive, John Tanui confirmed the reports and said that construction works will commence in July this year.

“Construction starts in July and ICM is required to build horizontal infrastructure as well as all the basic amenities and build a water reclamation plant and a reservoir for the city,” said Mr. Tanui.

The company will also landscape the parks and set up water distribution, sewage collection and treatment facilities.

ICM beat three other companies in the running for the project — Central Electrical International, China CAMC and Zhongmei Gibb.

ICM group of companies was founded in 1922 and has maintained a strong interest in the construction of roads; hydraulic and infrastructural works as well as civil engineering. It also has interests in mining and prefabrication.

The company has done other projects in Kenya including the rehabilitation of Maaui Mahiu-Narok road, Webuye – Malaba road and Eldoret-Turbo-Webuye-road.

Konza is an important project for Kenya's ambition to become East Africa's technology hub, but whose construction has delayed for years to some extent due to lack of funding.(CRO 05-07-2017)

IFAD SUPPORTS MOZAMBIQUE'S AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) will apply about US\$150 million in the agricultural sector in Mozambique, which will be disbursed over the next five years, beginning in 2018, said the representative of the institution for the country in Maputo on Thursday.

The funding is intended to support small-scale farmers as well as aquaculture, said Robson Mutandi, minutes before the meeting to review the performance of the portfolio of government projects funded by the IFAD.

At the meeting, which was attended by representatives of the Bank of Mozambique, the Ministries of Agriculture and Food Security and Economy and Finance, the investment strategy was drawn up for the next five years.

Mutandi, who also serves as IFAD's director in South Africa and Botswana, said that the resource allocation strategy will depend on a series of meetings, with Thursday's being the first meeting but added "we have some ideas where to apply that funding over the next five years," according to Mozambican news agency AIM.

The Mozambican government and IFAD signed a Country Strategic Opportunities Program (COSOP) in 2011 that established a framework for cooperation that ended in 2015.

IFAD's current lending portfolio includes support for programmes in the agricultural sector, small-scale fisheries, market links, financial services, value chain development and food and nutrition security.

IFAD has disbursed about US\$400 million since it began supporting Mozambique in 1983. (07-07-2017)

CAR: VATICAN FUNDS BUILDING OF THERAPEUTIC NUTRITION CENTER

President Faustin-Archange Touadera of the Central African Republic on Wednesday laid the foundation stone for the construction of a center for therapeutic nutrition in the capital Bangui, funded by the Vatican to the tune of CFA 2 billion.



The occasion was witnessed by a delegation from the Holy See and the Apostolic Nuncio of CAR,

The proposed hospital with a capacity of one hundred beds was a promise by Pope Francis during his visit to Bangui in 2015.

During the ceremony, President Touadera expressed his gratitude to the Vatican for its support to the health of children and teenagers in his country.

"Health is one of the priorities of the government because basic social services must be reinforced. Given the situation we have been through, many services have been destroyed in the country, which has reduced our ability to provide the populations with the healthcare they need" the CAR leader said.

The Vatican has also promised to train Central African doctors and send a team of Italian pediatricians to the country. (APA 12-07-2017)

JAPAN TO PROVIDE US\$6B FOR ENERGY INITIATIVES IN AFRICA

Japan has announced that it had agreed with the [African Development Bank](#) (AfDB) to launch an initiative to financially support energy-related infrastructure projects in Africa as part of its energy initiatives in Africa.

The Government of Japan and the AfDB signed a Letter of Intent to launch the [Japan-Africa Energy Initiative](#) (JAEI) to provide significant support to the New Deal on Energy for Africa which aims to achieve universal access to energy by 2025, using available energy sources and the most advanced technologies.

The agreement was signed on 3rd July 2017 on the sidelines of the ongoing African Union Summit at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa.

Japan will provide aid worth up to US\$6 billion, partly using existing frameworks, According to Japan's Ministry of Finance, the AfDB will specifically select projects eligible for aid under the initiative, in cooperation with African countries.

Japan's Ambassador to Ethiopia, Shinichi Saida passed a message from Taro Aso, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of Japan, "We strongly hope that, through this Initiative, Japan can contribute to accelerating the provision of electricity in Africa, including through its best available low-emitting clean coal technologies, thus leading to inclusive and sustainable growth in Africa."

Japan will offer financial assistance for the construction of high-efficiency coal-fired power plants utilizing clean coal technology that helps curb carbon dioxide emissions and for the operations of the plants. (CRO 05-07-2017)

ANGOLA'S SONANGOL STILL INTERESTED IN BUILDING THE LOBITO REFINERY

Angolan state oil company Sonangol remains convinced that the Lobito refinery construction project is strategic for the company and for the country "given the high national deficit in the production of refined products," according to the company's annual report and accounts for 2016.

The document recalls that the construction works of the refinery were stopped in August 2016 by the current board of directors, "for reassessment of the strategic vision of development and execution of this project."

"This measure provides for a careful review of the development, phasing and financing of this project and has resulted not only from the current adverse economic situation, in particular in the oil sector, but also from the non-materialisation of some of the original assumptions that led to its approval," the annual report said.

The report adds that the impossibility of measuring and incorporating the potential for development and exploration of the industries adjacent to the refinery at the current value of the refinery, has negatively affected the year, with impairments amounting to 116.914 billion kwanzas (US\$701 million).

Construction of the Lobito Refinery, which was planned to occupy an area of 3,805 hectares, should be completed in 2018, after the first stone was laid in 2012, and is estimated to cost US\$5.6 billion.

The refinery is designed to process 200,000 barrels of oil per day and produce fuels such as gasoline, diesel, jet fuel (Jet A1) and other derivatives. (07-07-2017)

EU CALLS ON ISRAEL TO RECONSIDER SETTLEMENT EXPANSION PLAN



The EU has called on the Israeli authorities to reconsider their decision to expand settlement plans in East Jerusalem, after Israel last week proceeded with plans and issued building permits for over new 1,500 settlement units.

Further settlement plans are reportedly expected to move forward, including in the Palestinian neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah.

“The settlement policy is illegal under international law, and its continuation undermines the viability of the two-state solution and the prospect for a lasting peace,” an EU statement said.

“The EU expects both sides to engage in a meaningful process towards a negotiated two-state solution, the only way to fulfil the legitimate aspirations of both parties, and stands ready to support them in this endeavour, together with international and regional partners.” (EEAS 10 -07-2017)

MOZAMBIQUE: GERMANY CONTRIBUTES €15M TOWARD MODERNIZING ELECTRICITY GRID

Germany has agreed to contribute about €15 million for the execution of the second phase of the Electricity Grid Modernization Project in Mozambique, APA can report on Wednesday.



The project, which is due to start in the next six months, links Bebeluane industrial park and the nearby residential areas in Matola, an industrial suburb 15 km southwest of the capital, Maputo.

The agreement was signed in Maputo on Wednesday by Mozambique Deputy Minister for Foreign

Affairs and Cooperation, Nyeleti Mondlane on and the German Ambassador Detlev Wolter.

Addressing a media briefing shortly after the signing, Nyeleti Mondlane explained that energy is one of the strategic pillars chosen by the government given the role it plays in economic transformation as well as social inclusion of Mozambicans.

In addition to contributing to the expansion of access to energy and boosting economic activities, the agreement, according to the minister, should reduce "regional imbalances in development between rural and urban areas."

She stressed that the money should make the power grid "increasingly robust" and, with that, be able to meet growing needs, considering the challenges of the country's economic diversification.

According to Wolter, the project envisages the construction of a new substation of 66/33 kilovolts and new low voltage networks (33 kilovolts) in the industrial park.

The German diplomat said this will allow the connection of the park with the Electricity de Moçambique (EDM) power grid.

"The project will assume strategic importance in the economic development of Mozambique in the future," he said, adding that it will boost the business environment as well as job creation in Maputo province.

Germany is one of Mozambique's largest development partners, and its support includes several sectors including education and health.
(APA 12-07-2017)

4 TAKEAWAYS FROM THE AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT

The African Union closed its 29th Ordinary Session earlier this week, following nine days of high-level meetings in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa, where leaders from the continent sought to discuss solutions to problems ranging from youth unemployment to HIV to cleaner energy.

The theme of the summit, "Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth," sought to further implement the development [roadmap](#) published in February 2017. That document outlined four critical components aimed at pushing Africa toward sustainable peace and development, including education and skills development; health and well-being; empowerment; and employment and entrepreneurship.

During the World Economic Forum on Africa last year, an [article](#) detailed the world's 10 youngest populations and revealed that all are in Africa. Many experts see this youthful population as a potential advantage for Africa; such a huge working-age population offers vast opportunities for economic growth. This growth, however, is limited to the extent that countries provide adequate education and jobs for young people. Without those jobs and economic opportunities, there could be a risk of societal breakdown as young people become frustrated and marginalized.

On the meeting's sidelines, more than a dozen first ladies called upon development partners to support their campaign to "eliminate new HIV infections in children and keep mothers alive," a framework to urgently take action to end the AIDS epidemic among children, youth and young women by 2020. Other key issues included the state of peace and security in Africa, as countries including Nigeria, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo and Central African Republic remain in fragile states, induced by combat, food shortages, malnutrition and the spread of disease. President Paul Kagame of Rwanda also presented information on the AU's upcoming institutional reform, and other sessions furnished updates for the ongoing negotiations behind the establishment of the [Continental Free Trade Area](#), which would create continent-wide flexible and free movement of trade.

Here are top four takeaways.

1. The signing of a clean energy partnership with New Zealand

The African Union Commission and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade signed a partnership agreement that detailed a framework for the creation and implementation of the [New Zealand-Africa Geothermal Facility](#).

This agreement would see the New Zealand government invest up to \$8 million to more than a dozen eligible countries of the [Geothermal Risk Mitigation Facility](#) — including Kenya, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique — and would make available New Zealand geothermal expertise based on country needs.

AfDB President Akinwumi Adesina sat down with Devex to discuss how he plans to achieve his "High 5" agenda strategy. His five priorities include Light Up and Power Africa; Feed Africa; Industrialize Africa; Integrate Africa; and improve quality of life for the people of Africa.

To date, 27 projects have qualified for grant awards for a total amount of \$79 million since the launching of the GRMF in 2012, from which four projects have been successfully completed, according to Amani Abou-Zeid, commissioner for infrastructure and energy of the AU Commission.

The goal of this facility is to expand access to affordable, reliable and clean energy in East African countries where geothermal projects have been [popular in recent years](#) as a method of reducing the energy shortage in the region with substantial support from the [African Development Bank](#).

Under the leadership of AfDB President Akinwumi Adesina, expanding access to energy has been prioritized as [top focus](#) under the [High 5 agenda](#), aimed at connecting roughly one-third of 640 million Africans who remain without power to on- and off-grid solutions.

2. The launch of the .africa domain

This week the AU summit officially launched the long-awaited .africa domain to the general public. The tool offers the opportunity to foster a unique online identity for African business owners, service providers and information seekers on the continent and beyond to connect.

This project has been in the making since 2000 when a few African internet professionals first solicited for the domain. The campaign was spearheaded by the South African company, ZA Central Registry, which will now be responsible for registering .africa websites.

"DotAfrica is unique in that it gives Africans that important sense of pride and identity, at the same time motivates them to achieve the very best for their continent and themselves," ZACR head Lucky Masilela said during the launch. Initiatives like .africa help harness the power of new technologies to solve old problems and grow value for the continent, he said, encouraging the African community worldwide to take advantage during general availability.

Masilela [estimated](#) that .africa addresses could cost as little as \$18. The registration site is available at <http://registry.africa/> for more information.

3. African heads of state adopt new initiatives to help end AIDS by 2030

African Union heads of state and government adopted the AIDS Watch Africa Strategic Framework to strengthen [AIDS Watch Africa](#), the highest level vehicle for collaborative action, advocacy and accountability toward ending AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria on the continent.

Kenya has become the first country worldwide to launch a new, affordable HIV treatment. This option, which has been prescribed in high-income countries as a first-line treatment method, will be available in public health facilities before being rolled out extensively nationwide.

During the meeting, leaders endorsed two major campaigns: the emergency catch-up plan to accelerate HIV response in West and Central Africa and the Two Million Community Health Workers initiative.

The World Health Organization estimates that [60 percent](#) of all people worldwide living with HIV know their status — but the western and central Africa regions lag far behind with only 36 knowing their status and 28 percent accessing treatment in 2015.

Under the leadership of countries and regional economic blocs — and in collaboration with [UNAIDS](#), the [WHO](#), [Médecins Sans Frontières](#) and other partners — the proposed "catch-up plan" would increase the number of people on treatment from 1.8 million to almost 3 million by mid-2018, giving an additional 1.2 million people — including 120,000 children — access to urgently needed treatment.

"We have a historic opportunity to end AIDS, TB and malaria in this generation due to advancements in science, technology and improved delivery systems at the community level," AIDS Watch Africa Chairperson and Guinean President Alpha Condé said at the meeting. He urged for better mobilization and training of community workers and a needed transformation to health systems to forge better health outcomes through increased investments in health.

While acknowledging recent advancements in HIV response, including the [introduction of the newest HIV drug in Kenya](#), leaders also noted the high rates of new infections among young girls and women in Africa. The meeting also emphasized a slow tuberculosis response and raised concerns about the resurgence of malaria in southern African countries that were reaching elimination stage, such as Namibia and Mozambique.

Unfortunately, achieving these ambitious health goals will not be possible without qualified health workers. UNAIDS estimates that there are more than 1 million community health workers in Africa today, but most focus on a single health problem and are undertrained, unpaid or underpaid, and not well integrated in health systems, the organization said.

The new initiative, endorsed by AIDS Watch Africa, seeks to retrain existing community health workers, where feasible, and to recruit new ones to reach the 2 million target. Community health workers have helped devise some of the most effective service delivery strategies for HIV testing and treatment, and studies have also linked community-delivered services with increased rates of immunization, exclusive breastfeeding and malaria control coverage.

“Few investments generate such a remarkable social and economic return as community health workers,” Jeffrey Sachs, director of Earth Institute at Columbia University, said in a written statement. “Community health worker programmes are essentially self-sustaining, in that they avert illness, keep workers healthy and productive and contribute to economic growth and opportunity.”

4. Release of two handbooks to amplify women’s voices

The African Union Commission Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security and [UN Women](#) jointly launched a handbook on “Practicing Gender-Responsive Reporting in Conflict Affected Countries in Africa.” The special envoy also launched a separate booklet on “African Women Mediators and Election Observers.”

This support came just a few weeks after the launch of the [African Women’s Leadership Network](#), a networking group with the support of UN Women and the [Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations](#) aimed at stimulating women’s leadership in Africa and increasing their participation and influence in politics and peacemaking.

A new networking group created for and by African women seeks to increase the voice and presence of female leaders in politics, humanitarian agencies and on-going regional peace efforts.

The handbook on gender responsive reporting promotes reporting that accurately portrays women’s lives in conflict and post-conflict contexts by highlighting the range of their roles and strengths, as well as the impact of conflict in their lives. The booklet on African women mediators and election observers aims to compile African women’s expertise in mediation and election observation in an easily accessible document and to facilitate and promote their effective participation in peace processes.

The goal is to encourage women to recount their experiences and enhance women’s participation in political processes and societal developments. While the crowd-sourced documents are in their infancy, future editions plan to capture more in-depth expertise in peacebuilding and elections monitoring.

“The role of women in conflict prevention, social transformation, community engagement, and in addressing issues of exclusion and structural violence is critical for the achievement of sustainable peace,” Letty Chiwara, UN Women representative to Ethiopia, the AU, and UNECA, told audience members during the launch. African women need to change the narratives on women, peace and security by documenting their stories of resilience and commitment to peace, she added. (DEV 07-07-2017)

TELECOM NAMIBIA ALERTS PUBLIC TO TELEPHONE DIRECTORY FRAUD

Telecom Namibia on Wednesday issued a public warning against fraudsters going about calling and emailing prospective users promising them space in the national telephone directory.



Oiva Angula, the company's corporate communications manager said people are receiving calls from individuals claiming to be representatives of the state-owned telecommunication entity.

Telecom Namibia has contracted TDS Namibia to do the sale of advertising space and the compilation and supply of the printed telephone directory until 2018.

Angula said Telecom Namibia has no contract with any parties other than TDS Namibia and advised the public "to be careful and vigilant when receiving such emails and phone calls". (APA 12-07-2017)

US ANNOUNCES \$630 MILLION IN HUMANITARIAN AID

The United States on Saturday announced more than \$630 million in aid for Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and Nigeria, where conflict has helped to cause what the United Nations calls the world's largest humanitarian crisis in more than 70 years.

"This is truly a life-saving gift," said David Beasley, the new American director of the U.N.'s World Food Program.

While the United States is the world's largest humanitarian donor, U.S. President Donald Trump's proposed deep cuts to foreign aid — more than 30 percent — have caused widespread concern. The announcement came as he attended the Group of 20 summit in Germany.

Millions of people at risk

"We welcome President Trump's attention to the global humanitarian crisis, but he was announcing aid that Congress approved months ago and that his administration has delayed," Rev. David Beckmann, president of the Washington-based Christian organization Bread for the World, said in a statement.

The total U.S. humanitarian assistance to the four countries is now more than \$1.8 billion this fiscal year, the U.S. Agency for International Development said.

Tens of millions of people in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and Nigeria face hunger amid conflict. Yemen has the world's largest cholera outbreak, while half of drought-hit Somalia's 12 million people need aid. South Sudan's civil war and Nigeria's Boko Haram insurgency have contributed to severe hunger.

The WFP said via Twitter that the new U.S. donation "comes just as families face the time of year when food stocks run out." The U.N. agency earlier this year warned that food aid could be cut for more than a million hungry Nigerians if promised funding from the international community didn't arrive.

In May, Trump announced \$329 million in "anti-famine" aid to the four countries.

Trump budget ends program

While the Trump administration's 2018 spending plan does not eliminate money for emergency food aid, it ends a critical program by consolidating it into a broader account that covers all international disaster assistance. Doing so reduces the amount of money the U.S. dedicates to fighting famine to \$1.5 billion next year, from \$2.6 billion in 2016.

Trump officials say the proposed changes will streamline U.S. aid programs, eliminate redundancies and increase efficiency. Relief organizations fear less U.S. money will mean an increase in famine and hunger-related deaths, particularly in Africa, if Congress approves the budget. (VoA 08-07-2017)

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