

MEMORANDUM

N° 125/2015 | 06/07/2015

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NILE NATIONS TO RESUME DAM TALKS

Senior officials from Cairo, Khartoum and Addis Ababa are set to resume talks in Sudan over Ethiopia's controversial bid to build its so-called Grand Renaissance Dam on the River Nile, a diplomat has intimated to the African Press Agency.

The Sudanese Ambassador to Cairo Abdul Mahmoud Abdul Halim speaking on Saturday said a tripartite meeting will be held in Khartoum between the three countries in two weeks to look at the impact of the dam on the Blue Nile River's water provision to the two downstream countries of Egypt and Sudan.

According to the ambassador the decision to hold further talks was taken at a meeting of 12 experts from Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia, which was concluded in Cairo on Friday.

He stated that the representatives from two international consultancy firms, the French BRL Group and the Dutch Deltares, attended the meeting of the Water and Irrigation Ministers of Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia.

They are scheduled to take part in the planned talks, the date of which has not been specified.

Cairo's three-day talks tackled technical aspects of a study on the effects of the huge hydro-electric dam at the source of the Blue Nile, to be conducted by the two consultancy firms" Mr. Abdul Halim explained.

A breakthrough was made on the long deadlocked negotiations in March when the three countries leaders signed a framework accord on the Grand Renaissance Dam in Khartoum.

The three countries agreed on the Sudanese and Egyptian shares of electricity generated by the dam, expected to reach 6,000 megawatts, a mechanism for resolving conflicts, and compensation in case of damages.

The three signatories will be bound to the recommendations of the firms that will assess the impact of the dam on the share of the Nile waters to Sudan and Egypt.

In 2013, Ethiopia began diverting the Blue Nile, to build its 6,000 MW dam which it said was aimed at meeting its need for electricity.

Cairo had opposed the project over fears that its share of from the Nile, the biggest among the 11 basin countries would be seriously compromised.(APA 05-07-2015)

MOZAMBIQUE IN GOOD SHAPE BUT MUST CONTROL STATE FIRMS



The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said strong economic growth in Mozambique is supported by major investments in the coal mining and natural gas sectors but stricter control over state-run firms is necessary, reports said on Thursday.

The former Portuguese Colony has become a global magnet for foreign firms who are scrambling to tap its unexplored natural resource wealth and they have been ploughing billions of dollars since oil and gas discoveries were made two years ago.

"Mozambique's continued strong growth performance and low inflation are commendable, but more needs to be done to improve public financial management, including stronger controls over state-owned enterprises," the IMF said in a statement emailed to APA on Thursday.

Mozambique's economy has seen an average 7 percent growth in recent years and the government

expects a 7.2 percent Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth this year pushed by strong performances in the electricity and gas sectors.

The southern African nation is in the process of floating over a dozen exploration blocks in its northern region, where U.S. oil major Anadarko Petroleum and Italy's Eni are already developing multi-billion dollar natural gas projects.

The IMF said new mining and hydrocarbon legislation, on the verge of being passed, would attract further investment in the world's fast growing economy which celebrated 40 years of independence from Portugal last week. (APA 02-07-2015)

JIANGSU, CHINA, WANTS TO DEEPEN COOPERATION WITH CUNENE, ANGOLA

The province of Jiangsu, China, intends to carry out several projects for agricultural cooperation with the province of Cunene, Angola, announced Thursday in Ondjiva, the deputy secretary of the municipal government of Nanjing, Yang Xiaoyang.

The deputy secretary, who was speaking during a meeting with provincial government officials from Cunene, said willingness to cooperate was part of the twinning project between the two provinces, discussed by the two governments during the 2013 visit to China by the governor of Cunene, António Didalelwa, seeking out lines of action.

Yang Xiaoyang also restated interest in increasing cooperation between the two provinces in areas such as trade, agriculture, housing and cement, among others, according to Angolan news agency Angop.

The Chinese official is leading a delegation comprising the heads of foreign economic cooperation, trade and general managers of Chinese companies that are carrying out projects in Cunene province. (03-07-2015)

SENEGAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY DOWN SLIGHTLY

The economic activity in Senegal excluding agriculture and forestry declined by 1.2 percent month-on-month in May 2015, the Directorate of Forecasts and Economic Studies (DPEE) reported on Thursday. This is primarily due to the underperformance of the tertiary sector (less 1.6 percent), the Dakar-based body said.

However the primary and secondary sectors did well over the period increasing by 2.7 percent and 2.9 percent respectively.

On an annual basis, a 3.8 percent increase was witnessed in May 2015 in the secondary sector (over 8.7 percent) and the tertiary sector (over 3.7 percent). (APA 02-07-2015)

EUROPEAN UNION WILL SUPPORT GUINEA-BISSAU IN CONTROLLING BORDERS



The European Union (EU) will support the Government of Guinea-Bissau in the control of land and sea borders, the country's Interior Minister, Octavio Alves said Wednesday in Bissau.

The minister also told the Portuguese News Network that the support would be provided under the European Union Borders project, which should start in 2016, adding, “until then we will create conditions for greater border security.”

Alves also said that it was useless to set up a lot of security devices in Bissau and “leave the borders in the interior of the country to their fate” and expressed concern about the way Guinea-Bissau’s borders are crossed without the slightest control by the authorities.

“Unfortunately the situation is not the best and we have enforcement difficulties. Foreign nationals enter the country without any control and in some cases the authorities that area present do not have sufficient resources to carry out checks and supervision to ensure border security,” he said. (03-07-2015)

AU WARY OF TENSION IN G/BISSAU



The Peace and Security Council of the African Union has expressed deep concern over the recent situation in Guinea Bissau, which is marked by tension among the country’s political leaders. In a statement issued in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on Sunday, the council stressed that the tension, if not swiftly defused, has the potential of seriously undermining the progress made thus far and complicating the efforts to mobilize adequate support both from the region and the larger international community.

Accordingly, the council strongly urged the Bissau Guinean stakeholders to exercise restraint and show a high sense of responsibility, in order to resolve the current challenges, and to focus on the issues that are central for the well-being of their people and the long-term stability and prosperity of their country, the statement noted.

The council noted the invitation extended by the Bissau Guinean authorities for it to dispatch a delegation to Guinea Bissau, as soon as possible, in order to interact with the government and all other stakeholders and encourage them to redouble their efforts towards achieving lasting stability and development. Council responded positively to this invitation, and agreed to undertake the visit in due course the statement added.

It also stated that the council noted with satisfaction the steps taken by the new Bissau-Guinean authorities to consolidate the gains made following the holding of the presidential and legislative elections, including with respect to socio-economic recovery and defense and security sector reform.

The council encouraged the Bissau Guinean authorities and the other stakeholders to pursue and enhance their efforts, with particular focus on defense and security sector reform, justice and reconciliation and socio-economic recovery, the statement added.(APA 05-07-2015)

ETHIOPIA, UGANDA SIGN MOU ON EDUCATION

Ethiopia and Uganda have signed a Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) on education, agriculture and cultural heritage and tourism to further cement their relation.

Ethiopian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Tedros Adhanom, and Uganda's Minister of Defense, Crispus Kiyonga, witnessed the signing ceremony held in Addis Ababa on Saturday at the end of the Ministerial Level Meeting of the 2nd Ethio-Uganda Joint Ministerial Commission.

We have signed a number of cooperation agreements and these additional agreements would help to deepen the longstanding bilateral relations of the two sides Dr Tedros said.

"The exemplary relations between our two countries will help us to explore new avenues of cooperation

and allow us to further expand our long and historic friendship and solidarity, he added.

Uganda's Minister of Defense, Crispus Kiyonga, on his part said his country deeply values the strong diplomatic relationship with Ethiopia.

The two countries are also working to ensure peace and security in the region on top of cementing their economic cooperation, he said.

According to Kiyonga, Uganda remains committed and will continue its efforts to work with Ethiopia to ensure peace and security in Somalia and South Sudan.(APA 05-07-2015)

NAMIBIA TO ESTABLISH FINANCIAL OMBUDSMAN OFFICE

The Namibian Finance Minister Calle Schlettwein said on Thursday that the government is on the verge of establishing an Office of the Financial Services Adjudicator to protect consumers from unscrupulous elements in the sector.

At the moment, financial customers are not adequately protected and more needs to be done to ensure customers are protected against malpractices by the financial service providers, he said during a breakfast meeting organised by Namibia National Reinsurance Corporation, a reinsurance state company.

He said the financial adjudicator, as per the Financial Services Adjudicator Bill the promulgation of which the cabinet has approved will have powers to enquire into, investigate, consider and determine complaints against financial service providers in a just, procedurally fair, economical and expeditious manner.

He added: Poor market conduct, where financial institutions conduct their business in ways that prejudice customers, amplifies challenges relating to low savings and over-indebtedness, and undermines steps taken to make the financial sector more accessible to Namibians in order to deepen financial inclusion.(APA 02-07-2015)

NAMIBIA SEEKING TO FULLY EXPLOIT AGOA



Namibia has welcomed the renewal of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), as the country works on a new strategy to ensure that it benefits from duty-free market access to the US, a senior government official said on Thursday.

According to Benjamin Katjipuka, the Director of International Trade in the Ministry of Industrialisation, Namibia has not benefited from AGOA in the past ten years.

We are now developing an engagement strategy on how best we can benefit from AGOA as well as ready ourselves for after 2025 for the new World Trade Agreement compatible arrangement, Katjipuka was quoted as saying by the Namibia Press Agency.

He said the country has not fully benefited from the agreement due to various challenges, in particular the closure of the Ramatex garment and textile factory in 2005 which resulted in the loss of 600 jobs.

President Barack Obama on Monday signed into law the Trade Preference Extension Act of 2015, to renew the AGOA for the next ten years, which replaces the current agreement that expires in September 2015.

The agreement promotes duty-free market access to the US, for qualifying countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

Under AGOA, Namibia can export beef to US markets, while the country's grapes have also been granted access, said the official.

Namibia exports to the US mostly uranium ore and non-industrial diamond as well as refined copper and fish products under the Most Favoured Nations (MFN) agreement.

None of these products are eligible under AGOA. We trade in those products with the US, but under MFN, Katjipuka said, adding that Namibia imports machinery, transportation equipment, chemicals and chemical products from the US.(APA 02-07-205)

MOZAMBIQUE'S ECONOMIC GROWTH MUST TRANSLATE INTO JOB CREATION

Mozambique's Minister of Labour and Social Security, Vitoria Diogo has said the country's impressive economic growth and distribution of wealth should be reflected in job creation, APA learns here on Thursday.

When we have jobs, when we receive wages for the work we are doing, we are sharing in the wealth that this country has and job creation is one of the great pillars of our governance, Diogo said as she inaugurated an Employment Centre in the natural gas-rich city of Vilankulo in the southern province of Inhambane on Thursday.

The Minister added that the government was focusing on job creation and on improving productivity and competitiveness as part of its five year programme for 2015-2019.

The government has thus set as its target for the next five years the creation of one and a half million new jobs and promoting pre-professional internships is one of the vehicles we have been encouraging, Diogo reportedly said.

According to Diogo, the new Employment Centre should be a meeting point not only for people looking for jobs, but also for local businesses concerned to find local solutions, by making the best use of human capital to solve local problems, in order to develop the district and the country.

Candidates for employment should find in this centre all the information they need about the opportunities created by various bodies involved in development, Diogo said.

He called for more partnerships, not only with private businesses, but with all forces which, directly or indirectly, contribute to the creation of the labour market in Vilankulo municipality and district.

Mozambique has seen an average 7 percent growth rate in recent years pushed by its unexplored natural resource boom but only a few jobs have been created despite massive investments in the extractive industry.(APA 02-07-2015)

UK LAUNCHES NEW PROGRAM INITIATIVE FOR AFRICA TARGETING MIGRATION CRISIS

The United Kingdom has launched a new project initiative; aimed at strengthening vulnerable states in Africa - under a range of programmes from which the British government provides emergency aid, jobs and education, to help address the root causes of the migrant crisis.

An official statement launching the project on Thursday said this additional initiative forms part of the new programmes for Africa under the £4 billion the government earmarked towards improving economic development, governance and security in African states as well as improving access to basic services.

The UK Department for International Development (DfID)'s economic development work includes a strong focus on jobs and targeting the youth population while governance and security initiatives will help to build stronger, more stable states and promote peace and respect for human rights.

The UK secretary for 'International Development', Justine Greening explained that the new support forms part of a wider approach by the UK government to tackle the migrant crisis and will focus on the fragile and vulnerable states from which the majority of migrants are leaving.

This includes a number of African countries such as Nigeria, South Sudan and Kenya ; as well as Syria and its neighbours, officials announced.

The new support will also help to create jobs and opportunities, provide protection for vulnerable groups, and address underlying causes of conflict and tension so that people are able to build their lives in the region.

The support includes aid initiatives totalling £217 million in Africa, to help approximately 2.5 million refugees and vulnerable people in the countries that the majority of migrants are travelling from or through. This includes the Sahel region, South Sudan, Kenya, Sudan, Central African Republic and Nigeria.

According to officials, the new support for Africa includes: £30 million of support for over 580,000 South Sudanese refugees providing emergency assistance and meeting longer term needs including restoring livelihoods, education and vocational training projects.

The programme also stretches to £18 million of support for vulnerable people affected by conflict in Central African Republic, including 170,000 refugees from CAR living in Cameroon, helping them to meet their basic needs and build their own livelihoods.

There is also £4 million of support for over 75,000 vulnerable and displaced people in north east Nigeria providing emergency support for the UN and international NGOs who are responding to urgent needs for water and sanitation, and nutritional support.

Another £111 million support is targeted at the Sahel for 500,000 people affected by food insecurity and 300,000 people affected by conflict - improving their resilience to shocks and crises. DFID's Sahel programme is also providing support to 81,000 Nigerian refugees in Cameroon and Niger with £38.7 million to support vulnerable people in Sudan, in particular those most affected by conflict.

This will support the provision of food, clean water, access to healthcare, nutrition, education, and protection services. This will potentially support more than 400,000 people to re-establish and strengthen their livelihoods, provide nutrition services to over 500,000 people, and health services to 2.7 million people; and £15 million of assistance for more than 533,000 refugees living in camps in Kenya providing support in critical areas including health, nutrition and food, water and sanitation, officials said. (APA 02-07-2015)

NIGERIA'S EGBIN POWER PLANT GENERATES OVER 1000MW

Nigeria's largest power generation plant, Egbin Power Plc in Lagos state, has for the first time in eight years generating above 1,000 megawatts of electricity.

A statement by the company on Wednesday in Lagos said that the feat was achieved because of continuous investment and upgrade of activities on the plant by the Sahara Power Group and Korea Electric Power Corporation,

The statement noted that eight years ago, the plant achieved the 1,000MW mark for barely two hours and never attained it again until now.

Prior to the privatisation of the plant in November 2013, the plant's average generation was below 500MW due to the dismal state of its six units.

It quoted the Chairman, Egbin Power Plc, Mr. Kola Adesina, as saying that the feat signposted the unfolding success of the privatisation process and the power sector reform in the country.

Adesina attributed the achievement partly to the direct intervention of the Nigerian Government in its determination to resolve the power crisis, which had resulted in recent improvements in gas supply.

"This is driving the increase in power supply in the nation and boosting socio-economic development. Prior to this, we had invested heavily and had the plant ready to generate power at full capacity, but there was no gas to do so.

This, is indeed, a good development for the power sector in Nigeria," he said.

The company's Chief Executive Officer, Dallas Peavey, said the transformation in Egbin plant commenced after its acquisition by Kepco Energy Resource Limited, in collaboration with its technical partners, Korea Electric Power Corporation. (APA 02-07-2015)

CORIS BANK MOBLIZES 15BN CFA FRANC FUNDING FOR BAMAKO HOTEL PROJECT

Coris Bank International (CBI) of the Burkinabe banker Idrissa Nassa has mobilized CFA 15 billion francs to fund the Sheraton Hotel project in Bamako, officials of the bank confirmed Thursday.

Funding was obtained through the subsidiaries of the bank in Mali, Burkina Faso and Togo, officials said.

The Egypt-based import-export Afreximbank, will ensure that the loan is spread over a 2 year- period.

The construction of the Sheraton Bamako, a 5-star hotel, will enable Mali to increase its hotel capacity ahead of the hosting of the Africa-France summit scheduled for 2016.

With a capital standing at CFA 25 billion francs in 2013, a total deposit of CFA 250 billion francs and total loans granted estimated at more than CFA 230 billion francs, CBI is riding on a wave of optimism.

After opening subsidiaries in Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire) Bamako (Mali) and Lome (Togo), CBI fulfils part of its ambition to achieve greater presence within the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) by 2020.(APA 02-07-2015)

NIGERIA RECORDS OVER 460,000 NEW JOBS IN 1Q

Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) has said that 469,070 jobs were created in the first quarter of this year in the country.

The NBS said in a report released on Thursday in Abuja that the figures represented an increase of 99,585 jobs or 26.95 percent over the number created in the preceding quarter and 94.7 percent more

than what was recorded in the corresponding quarter of 2014.

The Bureau said that while the formal sector generated 130,941 or 27.92 percent, the informal sector accounted for 332,403, compared to the 227,072 new jobs in the 4th quarter of 2014, signifying a 46.39 percent increase between the two periods.

It added that under the informal sector, comprising jobs generated by individuals or businesses employing less than 10 or those businesses operating with little or no structures, such as those in agriculture and wholesale and retail trade, the NBS stated that the 332,403 new jobs were expected in view of the numerous informal economic activities that came up during the election period.

Making further clarification on the formal sector, the NBS disclosed that the 130,941 new jobs showed a decline of 7,085 or 5.13 percent when compared to the fourth quarter of 2014 but a 72.3 percent increase when compared to the same period in 2014.

It also reported 1,339 or 30.5 percent increase in the jobs created in the public sector.

According to the NBS, this makes it 5,726 new jobs generated in the public sector, which also represent 1.2 percent of the total jobs generated during the reference period.

The Bureau also stated that increase in formal jobs came from the cadre of Managerial, Professional and Technical Workers which rose from 32,974 employees in the fourth quarter of last year to 47,921 in Q1 this year, indicating a growth of 14,947 or 45.32 percent. (APA 03-07-2015)

UNCTAD OPENS REGIONAL OFFICE TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL EXPERTISE TO AFRICA

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has opened a regional office in Addis Ababa effective July 1, 2015 to directly provide high-level technical expertise and advisory services to African countries and regional organizations.

The regional office will directly serve UNCTAD African member states and will facilitate substantive links with regional and inter-regional organizations in Africa, including their economic cooperation and integration organizations.

The aim will be to support and contribute to the acceleration of transformative regional integration efforts, such as the current initiatives to integrate existing Regional Economic Communities, like SADC, EAC, COMESA and others into ever closer integration, laying the groundwork for regional value chains that will build productive capacity and transform African economies. (APA 03-07-2015)

ETHIOPIA, COTE D'IVOIRE SIGN MOU TO STRENGTHEN TRADE, BUSINESS COOPERATION

Ethiopia and Cote d'Ivoire on Friday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to further strengthen their trade and business ties, in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa.

Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC) Director-General, Fitsum Arega, and Center for the Promotion of Investments in Cote d'Ivoire (CEPIC) Director- General, ESSIS Esmel Emmanuel, signed the MoU during the Ethio-Ivorian Business Forum held here in Addis Ababa.

The MoU is meant to help the two countries to work together and exchange experiences and knowledge in business and investment areas.

The two countries emphasized the role to be played by the Ethiopian Airlines and Ethiopian Shipping

Lines to intensify business and investment cooperation between them. Ethiopia and Cote d'Ivoire are reportedly making good economic progress.(APA 03-07-2015)

GHANA PURCHASES 614,000 TONNES OF COCOA IN 8 MONTHS

Ghana's Deputy Minister of Finance, Mr. Cassiel Ato Forson, on Thursday informed Parliament that the state purchased over 614,000 tonnes of cocoa within a period of eight months, from October 2014 to May 2015.

He stated that although the state budgeted to purchase 950,000 tonnes within the same period, it did not get enough cocoa beans to purchase from farmers, resulting in that low figure.

The minister was subsequently quizzed by some Members of Parliament before being allowed to take his seat.

Cocoa constitutes a large chunk of Ghana's agricultural exports raking in more revenue for the country over the years.

The country has over the past years targeted to hit the 1,000,000 tonnes threshold therefore successive governments have made various efforts to support Ghanaian cocoa farmers to increase yields through various modern ways of cultivating the cash crop.

Ghana is one of the world's largest producers of cocoa.(APA 03-07-2015)

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