MEMORANDUM

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SUMMARY

MOZAMBIQUE ECONOMY GREW 5.9 PERCENT IN FIRST QUARTER

Mozambique's National Statistics Institute, (INE) has said the country's gross domestic product posted growth of 5.9 percent in the first quarter of 2015 compared with the same period last year.
INE said on Monday that economic performance in the first quarter of 2015 was mainly driven by the secondary sector, which grew 8.2 percent, with greater emphasis on the electricity, gas and water sectors, with total growth of 12.6 percent.

The primary sector ranked second with growth of 7.7 percent, which according to INE, was driven by the mining industry, which registered an increase of 16.6 percent.

The tertiary sector also posted a growth of 4.9 percent due to a rise in the restaurant sector by 9.1 percent.(APA 06-07-2015)

VIETNAM DEVELOPS SEED RICE FOR MOZAMBIQUE

Vietnam will spend over US$2 million developing seeds to be used in large-scale rice production project in Mozambique's Zambezia province, said the Vietnamese ambassador to Mozambique.

Nguyen Van Trung, who was speaking at the Mozambique/Vietnam Business Forum held last week in Maputo, between Mozambican and Vietnamese businessmen, also said the project aims to ensure food security in the province, which is still suffering the effects of floods that occurred earlier in the year.

The ambassador also announced Vietnamese entrepreneurs would for the first time attend the Maputo International Fair, which takes place this year from 31 August to 6 September.

Vietnam is currently involved in several projects in Mozambique, notably in agriculture, aquaculture, telecommunications and trade, and last year the country invested over US$400 million in Mozambique, following the acquisition of the country's third mobile telephony license.

With diplomatic relations since 1975, Mozambique's independence, the two countries posted two-way trade in 2014 of US$100 million.

The Mozambique/Vietnam Business Forum was organised by the Vietnamese Embassy the Association of Small and Medium Vietnamese Enterprises, in coordination with the Confederation of Economic Associations of Mozambique (CTA), the Mozambique Investment Promotion Centre (CPI) and the Mozambican Association of Small and Medium-sized Businesses. (06-07-2015)

MAYHEM HITS BOTSWANA PARLIAMENT

There was chaos in the Botswana Parliament on Monday as opposition Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) MPs were manhandled and thrown out of the building.
First it was Wynter Mmolotsi who was ordered to leave the house after he had argued that Deputy Speaker was out of order by disallowing an urgent motion by Dr Phenyo Butale on the water and power crisis bedeviling the country.

While Mmolotsi was still addressing the media outside police and security officers came out carrying Butale who was also kicked out of parliament.

The winter sitting of Parliament opened on Monday, after a three month break.

According to the National Assembly order, members were expected to resume debates around the Botswana Land Policy.

The policy which was brought to the house by former Minister of Lands and Housing Lebonaamang Mokalake is said to help address the land shortage crisis in the country.

The policy further calls for special arrangements to be made in enabling access to land for the youth among other things.

Ministers were also expected to field a number of questions from members of parliament.(APA 06-07-2015)

PORTUGAL'S PRIME MINISTER VISITS BISSAU TO SUPPORT GUINEA-BISSAU

The Portuguese prime minister is due Monday to begin an official visit to Bissau during which he is due to sign the Strategic Cooperation Programme between Portugal and Guinea-Bissau for 2015/2020, the Portuguese press reported.

Before Bissau, Prime Minister Pedro Passos Coelho visited Praia (Cabo Verde), to take part in the celebrations of the 40th anniversary of Cape Verdean Independence. His delegation includes the Minister of State and Foreign Affairs, Rui Machete and Health Minister, Paulo Macedo.

The Strategic Cooperation Agreement between Portugal and Guinea-Bissau for 2015/2020 will be signed at the end of a meeting between the prime ministers of Portugal and Guinea-Bissau, who will give a joint press conference.

In March an international donor conference for Guinea-Bissau was hosted in Brussels, with a view to raising funds to consolidate democracy, strengthen the rule of law, accelerate economic recovery and improve the living conditions of Guineans.

At the time, Portugal committed to provide approximately 40 million euros, supplied through a new strategic cooperation programme with Guinea-Bissau for the next few years, to be signed by June.

On Saturday, the Minister of Economy and Finance of Guinea-Bissau, Geraldo Martins said in Bissau he wanted to see more Portuguese investments to create more jobs and consequent development of the country.

The minister, who was speaking at the opening of the Bissau delegation of Portugal's Agency for Investment and Foreign Trade (AICEP), said AICEP would provide more opportunities for Portuguese entrepreneurs in Guinea-Bissau. (06-07-2015)

KENYAN CURRENCY WEAKENS FURTHER AGAINST DOLLAR

The weakening Kenya shilling sent jitters in the foreign exchange markets as the strong dollar piled more pressure on the shilling to hit the 100 mark.

On Monday, the shilling was trading at 100.05/15 to the US dollar, compared to the dollar marking a new low that was last seen in 2011.

According to market experts, strengthening of the dollar across the globe as well as widening of the current account deficit is to blame for the weak shilling.

The woe on the Kenyan shilling is expected to pile up as the country's major export which is tea has been experiencing a downward trend.(APA 06-07-2015)

SENEGALESE LEADER LAUNCHES EMERGENCY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

President Macky Sall said on Tuesday that the Emergency Community Development Program (PUDC) he launched the same day at Diamniadio (40 km east of Dakar) meets his constant desire to implement an inclusive and consistent development that will make the case for better regionalization.

PUDC is a program that is important to me. This is to facilitate better involvement of local political authorities in the preparation of local development strategies and their implementation. We want to achieve national development giving everyone access to national resources and local socio-economic infrastructure, Macky Sall said as he launched the PUDC which is entirely funded by Senegal with the technical component entrusted to UNDP.

For its 2014-2017 pilot phase, PUDC has a total budget of CFA 113 billion earmarked to equip rural infrastructural projects regarding hydraulics, rural roads and electrification.

For its pilot phase, it will help build and rehabilitate 3050 km of rural roads, 250 water towers, electrify 325 villages and render over 100,000 modern processing equipment available to women.

Ultimately, PUDC will help build and rehabilitate 8029 km of rural roads and 730 boreholes, for a total budget of over CFA 420 billion.

With this pilot program, we need to work quickly and well and we can, President Sall pointed out.

According to him, many of Senegal's localities fail to exploit their resources because they remain isolated and disconnected from trade services, with women's exertions which remain painful and unbearable in rural areas.

We need to correct all of this. The program wants to meet the urgent and immediate needs of our people and is fully financed by Senegal's own resources, he added.

PUDC is a new project, the main objective of which is to improve living conditions and head off social inequalities.

The project has four components including the development of local socio-economic infrastructure, the improvement of rural productivity, agricultural production and livestock, the strengthening of institutional capacity of local actors and the development of a geo-referenced information system.

PUDC implementation will support the well-being of a large segment of the Senegalese population.

"With this program, Senegal lays the foundations for a genuine support of people's needs, Mamadou Moulaye Gueye, Diamniadio Mayor said as he was speaking on behalf of elected local officials.

According to Fatoumata Bintou Djibo, resident representative for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the program is for a country determined to take its destiny in its own hands and tie its fate to that of an emerging country. (APA 07-07-2015)

HELIOS LOOKS FOR INVESTMENT PARTNERS

Private-equity firm Helios Investment Partners has about $800m to invest in businesses in Africa and is looking to partner South African companies looking for co-investors in the rest of Africa.

The London-based, Africa-focused private equity firm said it was well placed to share knowledge with South African companies that wanted to share the risk when deploying funds in the rest of Africa. Helios Investment Partners said they were looking for financial services, fast moving consumer goods, technology media and telecoms, energy, industrials, logistics and distribution companies to directly invest in on the continent.

In its latest investment, eight-year-old Helios Investment Partners this week announced it was co-investing $276m in a consortium with Vitol, the world’s biggest independent oil trader.

The consortium reached an agreement to buy a majority stake in the downstream business of JSE-listed Nigeria-based Oando, which has more than 400 service stations in Nigeria and 84,000 tonnes of storage.

In May, Helios Investment Partners invested $100m for a 12.4% stake in Africa Oil, a Canadian oil and gas company with assets in Kenya and Ethiopia. The company is investing its Fund III, which closed this year and raised $1.1bn.

Following these recent investments its chief operating officer and partner, Henry Obi, said the firm still had notable capital to co-invest with South African firms looking to expand in the rest of Africa.

"We have a significant amount of money left in the fund. I would say over $800m. This will be invested over the next four years," said Mr Obi, who was in SA to meet investment bankers and South African companies looking to do deals in the rest of Africa.

"We are looking for South African companies to partner with them across the whole of Africa in any sector."

One of the companies that Helios has co-invested with before is Shanduka Group, a black-controlled company previously owned by Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa but merged with businessman Phuthuma Nhleko's investment firm Pembani.

In 2011 an affiliate of Helios Towers bought Nigerian telecoms firm Multilinks from SA's state-owned phone operator, Telkom.

In 2013 Helios Investment Partners invested in unsecured credit provider Bayport after financial services firm Transaction Capital exited the business.

Mr Obi said Helios Investment Partners had also co-invested with family offices from SA and funds of funds, but was willing to do more.

Helios Investment Partners is also raising $300m in a side-fund, which will be earmarked exclusively for oil and gas investments. It hopes to close it by the end of this year.

In the oil and gas sector, it is also invested in SA's Impact Oil and Gas, which is exploring off the coast of the Cape. (BD 03-07-2015)

ETHIOPIAN PARLIAMENT APPROVES OVER $11.1B BUDGET

The Ethiopian national Parliament on Tuesday approved over 223.3 billion birr ($11.1 b) budget for the 2015/2016 fiscal year.

The budget as of Wednesday will increase by 17 percent compared to the previous year.

Over 62.5 percent of the total budget will be channeled to the federal government, Meselech Wodajo, Budget and Finance Affairs Standing Committee Chairperson with the parliament disclosed.

The remaining 37.5 percent will be extended to regional states and the two city administrations, she pointed out.

According to her, over 84 billion birr ($4 billion) of the budget was allocated for capital and over 50 billion birr ($2.5b) for regular expenditure.

Some 71 percent of the federal government's budget will be utilized for road, water, education, agricultural, health and rural electrification projects spending, she noted.(APA 07-07-2015)

MUGABE MOVES 'DEVIL INCARNATE' INFORMATION MINISTER IN RESHUFFLE

President Robert Mugabe on Monday moved Zimbabwe's information minister, who he branded a "devil incarnate" last year, to an education department role in his second cabinet reshuffle since December.

Minister of Information Jonathan Moyo, whom Mr. Mugabe says appointed opposition sympathisers as editors of state-owned newspapers, was to be Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, the secretary to the president and cabinet, told reporters.

Misheck Sibanda, did not give a reason for the changes, but said Mr. Mugabe had left the post of information minister vacant.

Mr. Mugabe’s seven cabinet changes included moving Kembo Mohadi, longtime minister in charge of homeland security to the national state security ministry.

Ignatius Chombo, who ran the local government ministry for 15 years, takes over the homeland security ministry.

Savior Kasukuwere, one of the youngest ministers in Mr. Mugabe’s government, is the new minister of local government after serving at the ministry of water and environment since 2013.

Mr. Kasukuwere, nicknamed Tyson for his combative style, made his name as the enforcer of Mr Mugabe’s black economic empowerment drive that is forcing foreign-owned companies to sell majority shares to black Zimbabweans.

In December, Mr. Mugabe fired his deputy of ten years, Joice Mujuru, and several other ministers. (Reuters 06-07-2015)

UK FIRM INCREASES STAKE IN AFRICAN INSURER UAP

FTSE 100-listed finance firm – Old Mutual, announced here, on Tuesday that it has taken control of Kenyan-based insurer, UAP Holdings after buying a further 13.6 percent stake from investment firm Abraaj.

According to officials, the acquisition means Old Mutual now owns a majority stake of 60.7 percent in the pan-African financial services group.

It also comes as Old Mutual looks to grow customer numbers in Africa, excluding South Africa, to 10 million by the end of the decade.

The region accounted for 14 percent of adjusted operation profits last year, while South Africa, - where the 170-year-old firm first launched, accounted for 4 percent.

UAP offers services, including life insurance, general insurance; and premium financing services.

It has been operating in Sub-Saharan Africa since 1977 and has subsidiaries in six countries including Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and South Sudan.

Dubai-based Abraaj said UAP's gross written premium and book value increased at compound annual growth rates of 25.5 percent and 18.8 percent since it invested through one of its funds in 2012. (APA 07-07-2015)

TANZANIAN PARLIAMENT PASSES PETROLEUM BILL

Tanzanian legislators have passed a new petroleum bill that creates a regulatory and legal framework to manage discoveries and control of the East African nation’s natural gas reserves and possible future oil finds, officials said.

Tanzania has an estimated 55.1-trillion cubic feet of gas reserves, the second-largest in the region after Mozambique, and the new law is aimed at speeding up the development of the sector.

It was passed late on Sunday amid stiff opposition and days of debate. Some 40 opposition legislators were suspended from parliament after disrupting sessions on Saturday, complaining that the law was being rushed through after inadequate consultation.

"We are now through ... the parliament has finally passed the bill," Energy Minister George Simbachawene told state television from the country’s administrative capital Dodoma.

More than 30 international gas and oil exploration firms are currently operating in Tanzania, and the bill sets out royalty production fees to be paid to the government.

Under the law, which needs to be signed by President Jakaya Kikwete, the government will take a 60% to 80% share of profit from onshore gas production, and up to 85% from offshore production.

The government's share of profits from any future oil production will be between 50% and 70%. Mr Kikwete is scheduled to dissolve parliament on July 9, to pave way for presidential and parliamentary elections in October. *(*AFP 06-07-2015)

NIGERIAN GOVT SAYS EXCESS CRUDE ACCOUNT NOT PART OF RELIEF PACKAGE FOR STATES

The Nigerian government has denied media reports that funds will be drawn from the Excess Crude Account (ECA) for the relief package approved by President Muhammadu Buhari.

President Buhari approved a N400 billion (about $2.04bn) bailout on Monday to clear the backlog of salaries in states and local governments.

A statement by the Special Adviser to the President on Media and Publicity, Mr. Femi Adesina, on Tuesday in Abuja said: "Reports in sections of the media today that funds will be drawn from the excess crude account for the relief package approved by President Muhammadu Buhari for states and local governments, are incorrect."

He explained that the package included "the sharing of the $2.1 billion dividend paid to the Federation Account by the Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas Company (NLNG).

"A Central Bank-packaged special intervention fund that will offer financing to the states, ranging from N250 billion (about $1.2bn) to N300 billion (about $1.5bn), which will be a soft loan available to states for the purposes of paying backlog of salaries.

"And the debt relief programme designed by the Debt Management Office which will help states restructure their commercial loans currently put at over N660 billion (about $3.3bn), and extend the life span of such loans while reducing their debt-servicing expenditures.

"The measures approved by President Buhari definitely do not include drawing down the remaining balance in the Excess Crude Account or the 'liquidation' of the account as some media outlets have wrongly reported."

According to Adesina, no such decision has been taken or approved by President Buhari, and last week's meeting of the national economic council clearly concluded that the excess crude account should be left untouched at this time. (APA 07-07-2015)

SHORELINE PLANS $2BN BOND TO BUY AFRICA ASSETS

Shoreline Group, a Nigerian company with interests from oil production to rope-making across six African countries, plans to sell $2bn in debt to buy crude and gas assets on the continent, which may include Equatorial Guinea and Tanzania.

The debut issue of as much as $500m of five-to seven-year Eurobonds would probably happen before the end of the year, CEO Kola Karim said following a two-week roadshow in the US and Middle East, arranged by two international banks he declined to identify.

"The winner of this market is going to be the guy who has access to not only local but international capital," he said. "I'm bullish about gas and gas infrastructure. If this country is going to grow, that's going to be huge."

Shoreline is seeking to profit from an energy deficit in Nigeria, where homes and businesses rely on generators rather than grid power, which works for only a few hours a day, if at all.

The company's operations span infrastructure and engineering, power and telecommunications.

Founded in 1997, Shoreline produces about 60,000 barrels of oil a day, with crude accounting for about 60% of its overall business, he said.

Shoreline is one of at least five local businesses that bought fields in the oil-rich Niger River delta region after foreign companies, including Royal Dutch Shell, Total and Eni, sold onshore assets.

More than a dozen small indigenous producers account for about 20% of Nigeria's production of 1.9-million barrels a day.

Investors would be keen to "back the right horse" even after a drop of more than 40% in crude prices over the past year, Mr. Karim said.

Shoreline will be looking at oil and gas blocs in Tanzania and Equatorial Guinea, he said. Tanzania holds East Africa's biggest natural gas reserves after Mozambique.

Mr Karim said he had approached all three major international ratings companies and was looking to sell the $2bn of bonds in three or four tranches. Shoreline's rating should be in line with Nigeria's, he said.

Nigeria is rated Ba3 by Moody's Investors Service and BB-by Fitch Ratings, three levels below investment grade. Standard & Poor's rates it a step lower at B+. The yield on $500m of Nigerian Eurobonds maturing in 2021 increased by eight basis points to 6.04% on Monday.

Investors may use the bonds of Kosmos Energy and Tullow Oil, both of which pump oil in Ghana, as benchmarks for Shoreline's debt, Mr Karim said.

The yield on Kosmos's $300m of bonds due in August 2021 rose 16 basis points to 8.72% on Monday, compared with 11.64% at the end of January. Tallow's $650m of notes maturing in April 2022 yield 8.4%, from 11.11% in December. That compares with rates of about 3% on $1.75bn of 10-year debt issued by Exxon Mobil, the world's largest crude producer by market value.

"The appetite is there," said Mr. Karim. "Look at the rate of return in Europe or for a money manager in North America. And then look at the rate of the return in Nigeria. Where would you get 7% in the US or Europe? You can only still get those returns in Africa." (Bloomberg 07-07-2015)

WATER HYACINTH INFESTS ETHIOPIA'S BIG LAKE

Water hyacinth, an aquatic weed, continues to infest Ethiopia's biggest lake, threatening the livelihood of over 2.5 million people, APA can reveal on Tuesday.

The source of the aquatic weed has not yet been identified but has so far infested 40 thousand hectares of the shore and one- tenth of the Lake Tana since its appearance in 2010.

If not controlled, the infestation can embed the mouth of Lake Tana which is the water source of the nation's hydro electric power dams including Tana Beles and the controversial big dam being built over the River Nile.

An FAO sponsored meeting was held in Addis Ababa to dwell on the mitigation strategy before it goes out of hand and becomes a problem for the entire region.

Lake Tana is the source livelihood for more than 2.5 million people, its economic value is more than 2 billion birr (4100000) per year.

This is a significant amount. We lose this amount every year, Ethiopia's Minister of Agriculture, Wondirad Mandefro said.

The aquatic weed, with rapid rate of dispersing and reproductive output, has once again been uprooted with involvement of over half a million local people but the re-infestation continues, Dr, Amlaku Asres, one of the researchers, said.

The impact is so the significant not only in terms of livelihood but also in terms of biodiversity too. The Lake, you know we have endemic fish species and it affects also the survival of the endemic fish species and the Lake is also biodiversity hotspot for birds. We have more than 300 species of birds around the Lake and it affects also birds. So, the damage is really significant, the researcher added

Over 14 million birr ($700,000) has been proposed to deal with the invasive weed in the coming five years. (APA 07-07-2015)

PORTUGAL PROVIDES 40 MILLION EUROS TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF GUINEA-BISSAU

Portugal is providing aid of 40 million euros to promote democracy and development of Guinea-Bissau under the Strategic Cooperation Programme (PEC) for 2015/2020, under an agreement signed Monday in Bissau.

The document was signed by the foreign ministers of both countries, Portugal’s Rui Machete and Guinea-Bissau’s Mário Lopes da Rosa, as part of a one-day visit to Bissau by the Prime Minister of Portugal, Pedro Passos Coelho.

Passos Coelho said the PEC covered multiple aspects, including defence, justice, education, employment, health, administrative modernisation, environment, energy and rural development.

“My visit aims to strengthen bilateral relations between our two peoples, but, above all, it sends a clear message of major institutional confidence, reinforcing the positive perception that Guinea-Bissau has acquired in its own right among international investors, multilateral institutions and the international community at large,” he said.

In turn, the Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau, Domingos Simões Pereira, said that during the meeting with his Portuguese counterpart the two had reviewed a number of actions implemented by both governments.

Simões Pereira said the Guinean side expressed interest in receiving more Portuguese support and highlighted the role of Portugal in strengthening Guinea-Bissau’s naval capabilities to increase control of its territorial waters.

In the afternoon Passos Coelho was granted an audience with by the President of the National Assembly, Cipriano Cassamá and José Mario Vaz, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau. (07-07-2015)

MALAWI, ZAMBIA SIGN WILDLIFE TREATY

Malawi and Zambia on Tuesday signed a Trans-Frontier Conservation Area (TFCA) treaty to protect their common biological resources in a unique conservation and development area along the two countries' boundaries.

Malawi President Peter Mutharika said in the commercial city of Blantyre during the signing ceremony that the treaty is of mutual socio-economic benefits to the peoples of both countries particularly those living within and adjacent to the TFCA.

"A prudent conservation, management and development of the vast wildlife and cultural resources of the area will pay economic dividends to our people," he said.

He added that proper conservation and management of such boosts tourism revenues for border communities in particular and the two nations significantly.

However, he said, the right to utilize natural resources comes with the obligation of doing it in a responsible manner that safeguards their continued existence of posterity.

It is therefore of critical importance that the natural ecosystems and the rich biodiversity along the international boundaries of Malawi and Zambia are conserved and managed in a coherent approach ensured by the treaty, he said.

Zambia President Edgar Lungu said the treaty will bind the two countries together in the cause of conservation and management of the natural resources along the borders.

"This is a symbolic landmark in the development of our people and the natural resources. Let us protect them," he said.

The treaty seeks to create a collaborative environment towards conservation and sustainable livelihoods for the two nations, law enforcement and protecting the wildlife for the two member states among others. (APA 07-07-2015)

SOUTH AFRICA: SLOW AND PRICEY PORTS HARM BUSINESS

Investment meant to address SA's infrastructure backlog is not matching up to the levels envisaged by the National Development Plan. The country's ports are among critical facilities caught up in entrenched regulatory frameworks that appear unable to reform monopolistic pricing behaviour.

This is particularly evident in the regulation of state-owned entities such as Eskom and Transnet — which account for much of the planned infrastructure spend — where pricing is often far removed from costs.

SA's ports, through which more than 98% of the country's imports and exports pass, best illustrate this. The country's port network is expensive and largely inefficient.

While the latest Port Regulator's Global Pricing Comparator Study shows improvements to the overall container shipping costs of SA's ports in the past three years, the higher-than-average costs persist.

Transnet is undertaking a R312bn capital investment programme in recognition of its limitations and their effect on the economy. Of this, R33bn will be invested in Transnet Port Terminals and R47bn in the Transnet National Port Authority.

But the size of the investment programme is linked to economic growth rates being stable at 2.5%-3%.

Thus, slowing economic growth is a threat to its plans.

For container traffic, SA's ports are particularly pricey. The handling of containers through Durban and Cape Town ports is still 125% more expensive on a total ports costs definition than the global average, making these two the most expensive in the world.

With the bulk of SA's manufactured goods exported through containers, these high costs are "clearly contradictory to industrial policy, which aims to incentivise value addition, broadening of the manufacturing base and increasing manufactured exports", the benchmark study says.

The World Bank's 2015 Doing Business in SA says the country's exports "have suffered" since the 2008 global debt crisis.

"And while that is closely linked to external factors, the burdens faced by South Africans when exporting goods through the country's major ports cannot be ignored — SA is among the 50 most expensive economies to export, as expensive as a landlocked economy such as Paraguay," the report says.

SA ranks 100 out of 189 economies measured by Doing Business 2015 on the ease of trading across borders. It is among the top five performers in sub-Saharan Africa.

"The number of documents necessary to import and export in SA is high compared globally," the World Bank says.

Exporting through the four ports (Cape Town, Durban, Ngqura and Port Elizabeth) measured in this study requires five documents, takes on average 16 days and costs an average of $1,968 per 20-foot container.

In France and Ireland only one document is needed, while Panama requires three documents.

Importing requires six documents, takes on average 20 days and costs $2,190 per 20-foot container.

Singapore, the best-performing port, takes four days for imports while for exports it needs six days.

Developing economy peers Brazil and Mexico require 12 and 11.2 days to import, respectively, while needing six and eight days to export. Port and terminal handling times differ across ports, especially for imports, ranging from six to nine days.
Durban is the slowest port, partly because it handles larger volumes of containers and experiences congestion. Inland transportation represents the highest cost, reflecting the distance between the ports and Johannesburg.
Some of the recommendations to improve logistics in SA include streamlining the documentation requirements; identifying constraints to port efficiency; and cutting port tariffs.
Creating a simple trade documentation system with the help of the South African Revenue Service, Transnet and private operators is also necessary, the World Bank says. (07-07-2015)

EGYPT SUSPENDS COTTON IMPORT TO PROMOTE LOCAL PRODUCTION

The Egyptian government has suspended the importation of cotton to encourage the production and marketing of local harvest, the Ministry of Agriculture announced Tuesday in a statement.
The move does not apply to shipments loaded before July 4, the ministry noted, expressing its concern to recover every aspect of Egypt's cotton reputation.

Renowned for its high quality and once labeled white gold, the Egyptian cotton market has witnessed a decline over several years.

The Ministry of Agriculture last January ended all forms of subsidies to cotton producers and set as a condition the existence of running contracts with farmers for the growing and sale of the commodity.

Egypt liberalized the sector in 1994 and left farmers to cope with fluctuating world prices and higher costs of fertilizers.

The production per hectare of cotton in the country reached its peak in the 1960s with the cultivation of 924,000 hectares thanks to the stability of world prices before the recent fall by almost 60 percent. (APA 07-07-2015)

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