

# MEMORANDUM

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## TOGO BAGS US'S AGOA TRADE VISA

Togo has obtained a textile and clothing visa under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) of the United States, a senior American official announced on Wednesday.



US Trade Department Representative, Robert Lighthizer is in Lome for the start of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum where he made the announcement on Wednesday.

"I would like to take a brief moment to announce an example of success in AGOA of a beneficiary country working hard to enhance its export strategy. I have just signed a letter approving a textile and clothing visa for Togo under AGOA" Lighthizer told the opening session of the AGOA ministerial meeting.

"This milestone will enable Togolese entrepreneurs to take advantage of the many textile and clothing opportunities available under the AGOA program... and we wish them all the best in this endeavor" he added.

Delighted by the announcement, Togolese Prime Minister Komi Selom Klassou hailed what he called successful trade ties between his country and the United States.

"AGOA is a cornerstone of our exchanges, and it is a framework for a true alliance in which we work together to strengthen and diversify our trade relations by focusing on improving governance and policies that are conducive to growth and development" Klassou opined.

According to the Togolese official, the benefits of a joint venture with the United States are unquestionable.

The 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum which is being held under the theme "The United States and Africa: Partnership for Prosperity through Trade" brings together senior US officials and African ministers.

38 countries in Africa are eligible for the AGOA program. (APA 09-08-2017)

## AFRICAN WOMEN USE MOBILE INTERNET MORE HEAVILY THAN MEN



Opera, and digital reading non-profit, Worldreader study found that women tend to purchase bigger data packages when compared to men.

A [study](#) undertaken by global software company Opera and digital reading non-profit Worldreader has found that women in Africa use mobile internet to empower and entertain themselves. Opera ran a survey of 1,500 women and men aged 14 to 44 in Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa in May 2017 to learn more about their web

browsing habits on their mobile phones. The poll results were later combined with Worldreader insights on the mobile reading habits of 50,000 Worldreader app users in the three countries above.

### **Women in Africa are as tech-savvy as men**

The combined study revealed that women in these three African countries are as tech savvy as men when it comes to browsing the internet using their mobile phones. Women are using their browsers as often as men, with the majority of female survey respondents in Kenya and Nigeria (60%) stating that they access their mobile browsers more than eight times a day to do various internet activities.

Moreover, women tend to purchase bigger data packages than men. Nearly half of female respondents in Kenya said that they spend over KSHS 1,000 (9.62 USD) to buy mobile data plan while only a third of the male respondents are doing so. Similarly, in Nigeria, around 70% of women who partook in the survey stated that they spend over NGN 1,000 (2.74 USD) to buy a mobile data plan in comparison to 60% of men paying the same amount. Women also lead when it comes to buying big data packages with five times more women buying data 10GB data bundles in Kenya than men.

### **Women use the internet for entertainment and self-development**

Both, Opera Software surveys and Worldreader usage data show that women in Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa engage with the wider variety of content available on the internet than men. Female respondents to the Opera survey on average showed a higher percentage of interest for nine out of 15 topics. Similarly, Worldreader observes that women are on average accessing more e-books than men using their e-book reading platform. Not only that, Worldreader reports that their female users are reading three times as many pages on average as their male counterparts.

Women in three African countries are predominately browsing the internet to relax and entertain themselves. By browsing lifestyle, music and entertainment content on Opera and by reading romance, thrillers and other fiction e-books on Worldreader (in some cases up to 10 times as many as men), women in Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa are embracing the Internet as a tool for entertainment.

### **Women are more engaged with online content**

Empowerment is another major motivator for women using their mobile phones to access the internet. According to Opera, women are more engaged than men with content that can improve their lives, including content related to education, economy, property rights, public services, and health. In all three countries a higher percentage of women than emphasized the need for having access to news via their mobile browser.

Similarly, Worldreader reports that women between 26 and 44 years of age are particularly interested in reading e-books from the Inspiration, Career Development and Children's sections of the Worldreader library. (ITNA 10-08-2018)

## **EGYPT TO CUT ITS TRADE DEFICIT BY 50% IN 2020**

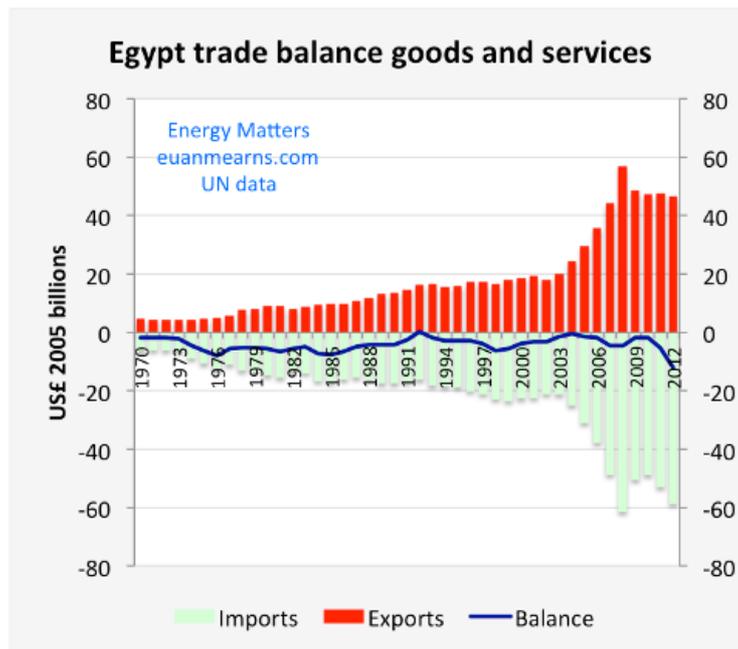
Egypt hopes to cut its trade deficit by 50 percent in 2020 as part of efforts to encourage domestic industries and boost exports, said Trade Minister Tarek Qabil on Wednesday.

During a meeting with Moody's delegation, Qabil added that Egypt had narrowed its trade deficit by \$18 billion over the past 18 months (since the beginning of 2016).

Trade and Industry Minister stressed that the ministry is taking steady and balanced steps to carry out a strategy to enhance industrial development and foreign trade.

He added that Egypt has large trade connections thanks to its free trade agreements with several major economic blocks worldwide, which in return would help its exports enter various markets.

The ministry of trade is taking steady steps to achieve its strategy aimed at boosting domestic industries and foreign trade by 2020 in line with the Egyptian government's 2030 scheme for sustainable development, Qabil announced. (APA 09-08-2017)



## WILL MOROCCO BECOME A GAS EXPORTING COUNTRY?



Morocco, which imports the majority of its fuel needs and spends 10-12 pc of its gross domestic product on energy bills, bets heavily on renewables to meet its rapidly growing demand and honor its international commitments to combat climate changes.

But will this North African country turn into gas exporter? It seems that the British company Sound Energy is upbeat about its gas finds in Morocco and about its future in this country.

This UK-based company has announced lately that it received from the Wilaya of l'Oriental Region (a local authority in Eastern Morocco) an approval for the proposed route of the gas export to Europe through Gazoduc Maghreb Europe (GME) pipeline.

This preliminary approval is another step in the development of the infrastructure required to support the early monetization of gas from the TE-5 Horst discovery at Tendirara.

Sound Energy CEO James Parsons said: "I am delighted to have received this confirmation, which supports the significant progress we have made in developing our Moroccan portfolio to date".

The approval is also “further evidence of the relationships that Sound Energy has built in the country since entering in 2015, and the mutual cooperation that exists with local, regional and governmental authorities”, he added.

Last March, Sound Energy confirmed significant gas potential upon completing the drilling of its third gas well TE8 in the Tendirara license area in eastern Morocco. It also reported success in its first two Tendirara wells (TE-6 and TE-7).

These gas discoveries put Morocco on track to become a player in the gas market. The wells discovered by Sound Energy are expected to be pumping gas by 2019.

According to Sound Energy CEO, Morocco has a significant untapped gas potential. For foreign firms, the country, wherein several drillings for oil and gas operations are being conducted, represents a stable frontier in North Africa.

This reality has become especially clear over the last three years. In the case of Libya, the country’s new government has struggled to retain control over its energy assets and export facilities under the pressure of local militias. In neighboring Algeria, a legacy of underperforming projects, institutional corruption and political uncertainty drive away new investors.

Thus, Morocco appears as the best and most secure investment alternative since it enjoys strong political stability, an open and fast-growing economy and offers several competitive incentives to investors. (N.Africa Post 08-08-2017)

## **CABO VERDEAN GOVERNMENT SETTLES DEBTS WITH COMMERCIAL BANKS**

The government of Cabo Verde has reached agreement to settle debts amounting to 21.7 million euros with Banco Comercial do Atlântico (BCA) of the Portuguese state financial group Caixa Geral de Depósitos, under an agreement signed on Wednesday in Praia.

The agreement to settle the Cabo Verdean state’s debts of over 10 years with BCA was signed by Finance Minister Olavo Correia and the chairman of BCA, António Castro Guerra.

Under terms of the agreement, Cabo Verde’s government will pay 1.093 billion escudos (9.9 million euros) corresponding to interest-rate subsidies from 2004 to 2016, an amount to be paid in the 12 months counting from 1 January 2018, with quarterly instalments and an interest rate of 4.375 percent.

The government will also pay 1.073 billion escudos (9.7 million euros) for taxes paid and not owed between 2005 and 2015, over seven years counting from 1 January 2018 and with an interest rate of 3.5 percent.

The payment of 233 million escudos (2.1 million euros) regarding two bank guarantees was also agreed. Cited by Lusa news agency, the finance minister announced that an agreement would be signed next week to settle debts worth nearly 900 million escudos (8.1 million euros) with Caixa Económica de Cabo Verde.

Caixa Geral de Depósitos is the main shareholder of Banco Comercial do Atlântico, Cabo Verde’s biggest commercial bank, holding 52.5 percent of the capital. It also has a stake in Banco Interatlântico. (10-08-2017)

## **DIABETES IS ON A RAPID RISE THROUGH SUB SAHARAN AFRICA**

In the 1990s diabetes was seen as a condition that mainly affected rich people in high income countries. Nowadays, it’s one of the leading contributors to death in all countries in the world, driven by increases

in national and personal wealth resulting in people having more disposable income. In addition, urbanization has led to more and more people living sedentary lifestyles. A commission of experts, which was set up in 2014 to tackle the challenge in Africa, have recently released their [findings](#). The Conversation's health and medicine editor Candice Bailey spoke to professor Justine Davies about the importance of the commission and what good it can do.

#### [What do we know about diabetes in Africa? Why is there a concern?](#)

About 95% of cases around the world are type 2 diabetes, which is associated with obesity. The impact of diabetes is becoming much greater in poorer countries and regions. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to 34 of the world's 48 least developed countries. In lower-income countries, even though national and personal wealth is increasing, health systems are not developed enough to cope with the increasing numbers, or the long-term consequences of diabetes such as heart attacks, strokes, blindness, and kidney failure.

The health fraternity has a good idea diabetes rates in Africa are increasing but they don't know enough about the number of people with the disease. The health fraternity has a good idea that diabetes rates on the continent are increasing but they don't know enough about the number of people with the disease. For example, a [recent study](#) found that there is no information about people with diabetes in 21 countries. Added to this, the Commission also found that – in countries where the burden of diabetes is known – only about half of the people with it in populations across Africa are aware that they have the disease. Of these only one in 10—or 11%—receive the [drugs they need](#).

#### [What are the costs?](#)

There are two costs affiliated with diabetes: treatment costs and economic costs.

Diabetes itself can be treated very cheaply as it only requires medications (usually tablets) to lower glucose. But the long-term consequences, for example, [heart attacks, strokes](#), blindness, and kidney failure, require specialists and specialist equipment to treat. These are very expensive. The consequences are also more likely to lead to people not being able to work.

The Commission calculated that southern African countries accounted for two-thirds of the \$12.1 billion spent on diabetes in sub-Saharan Africa in 2015. Wealthier countries, particularly South Africa, were spending more because they're going through more societal changes. Less than a tenth of the costs (\$1.7 billion) originated from poorer countries in western Africa.

Diabetes can be treated very cheaply, but the long-term consequences, for example, heart attacks and strokes, are very expensive to treat. And looking ahead, projections show that by 2030 southern Africa is likely to see the greatest increases in annual health care and personal costs: between \$17.2 billion and \$29.2 billion. In east Africa spending is expected to increase from \$3.8 billion in 2015 up to \$16.2 billion in 2030.

The Commission report estimates that the total costs to economies and individuals in sub-Saharan Africa in 2015 was US \$19.5 billion.

More than half of this economic cost (56%, \$10.8 billion) was from treatments, including medication and hospital stays. Other costs included out-of-pocket expenses paid for by the patients and productivity losses, mostly from shortened life expectancy as well as people leaving the workforce early (\$0.5 billion), taking sick leave (\$0.2 billion) and being less productive at work due to poor health (\$0.07 billion).

#### [In which way are health systems ill-prepared to deal with chronic diseases like diabetes? Are there countries that are worse off or better? And why?](#)

The impact of diabetes is greater in countries and regions that are poorer. In lower-income countries, health systems have focused on tackling infectious diseases for the last 15 to 20 years. The increase in diabetes cases hasn't been seen as a priority. This has led to several gaps in care, including a lack of equipment for diagnosing and monitoring diabetes, lack of treatment, and lack of knowledge about the disease among health care providers.

Many infectious diseases can be cured relatively quickly, which means that the systems for treating chronic, lifelong, diseases like diabetes are rare.

But there's a lot we can learn from countries that have developed systems to deal with high burdens of HIV. Lessons are being drawn from them to provide care for other chronic conditions in Africa.

Another reason for health care systems in Africa not being able to cope with diabetes—or many other illnesses—is that they haven't been given the level of investment needed to provide good quality care for all.

#### [How could the challenges around diabetes be tackled effectively?](#)

It is critical that we establish the true burden of diabetes and the burden of other risk factors associated with diabetes, like high blood pressure and abnormal cholesterol.

The Commission's analysis demonstrates a clear need for improvements at all levels of diabetes care. And interventions that have been successfully trialed in sub-Saharan African countries need to be scaled up. This includes community-based care for high blood pressure, patient education, home glucose monitoring, and more education about diabetes for health care professionals. The Commission also pointed out that the response needs to come from many different levels; from individuals, to society, to health care planners, health care providers and governments. The researchers note that prevention is critical to improving health and avoiding further economic burden. This is because managing type 2 diabetes and its risk factors (such as obesity and physical inactivity) is much simpler and cheaper than treating complications that develop in the later stages of the disease. (Quartz 10-08-2017)

### **INDIA'S MERCATOR LIMITED GROUP TO SELL MINING LICENCE IN MOZAMBIQUE**

The Indian group Mercator Limited, previously Mercator Lines Limited, aims to earn US\$300 million from the sale of coal assets in Mozambique and Indonesia to finance partial acquisition of the state-owned Dredging Corporation of India, reports the Indian newspaper The Economic Times.

The group has been negotiating with Fairfax Financial Holdings of the Canadian billionaire Prem Watsa and with the American investment funds KKR and Blackstone the joint presentation of a proposal to purchase the 74% portion that the Indian government has to sell in the state-owned dredging enterprise, the newspaper adds.

Dredging Corporation of India is that country's biggest dredging company and the only one in the sector that is state-owned. It counts a fleet of 19 dredgers.

The sources cited by the newspaper indicated that Indian and Chinese companies are interested in the coal assets, which include a mining licence in Mozambique and three mines in Indonesia.

"The administration decided that coal was no longer a key business for the group's activity," the sources specified, adding that the deal should be concluded by the end of the year.

The Mercator Limited group, founded in 1983, is a conglomerate active in commercial navigation, logistics, dredging and coal exploitation. (10-08-2017)

### **LE HOLDING DE LA FAMILLE MAERSK LANCE UN FONDS D'INVESTISSEMENT DANS LES INFRASTRUCTURES EN AFRIQUE**



Travaux de construction du pont Henri Konan Bédié, à Abidjan

Le holding A.P. Moller, qui contrôle l'armateur géant A.P. Moller-Maersk, a annoncé, mercredi 9 août, avoir lancé un nouveau fonds d'investissement dans les infrastructures en Afrique, rapporte Reuters.

Le fonds, qui a été lancé en partenariat avec le fonds de pension PKA (Pensionskassernes Administration A/S), PensionDanmark et la caisse de retraite des médecins du Danemark, a déjà reçu des engagements de 550 millions de dollars et ambitionne de lever 1 milliard de dollars.

Le fonds sera dirigé par les anciens hauts cadres de Maersk Kim Fejfer, Lars Reno Jakobsen et Joe Nicklaus Nielsen, ainsi que par Jens Thomassen, qui quitte la direction de Denham Capital.

Avant de rejoindre le holding, Kim Fejfer dirigeait [APM Terminal, filiale de Maersk](#) qui gère des ports et a investi dans des infrastructures portuaires dans des pays d'Afrique sub-saharienne [comme le Nigeria et le Ghana](#).

« Nous sommes ravis d'avoir créé une nouvelle entreprise prometteuse dans notre portefeuille, dotée d'une équipe solide qui possède les capacités adéquates et l'expérience nécessaire pour gérer des investissements dans les infrastructures des marchés émergents » s'est réjoui Robert Maersk Ugbla, directeur général d'A.P. Moller Holding.

A.P. Moller Holding est un fonds créé en 1953 par le fondateur d'A.P. Moller Maersk et détenu par la famille Maersk, qui gère un portefeuille d'environ 20 milliards de dollars. Le holding détient 41,5% des parts et 51% des droits de vote de la société cotée Maersk. (JA 09-08-2017)

## EGYPT TO INVEST \$17.5M IN ANTI-MINES ACTION PROJECT

Egypt's Minister of Investment and International Cooperation, Dr. Sahar Nasr, has chaired a meeting with the group of development partners on the second phase of the national project to proceed with anti-mine action in the country.



The meeting was attended by Reinhold Brender, vice-EU Ambassador to Egypt, and Dr. Randa Abulhassan, director of the United Nations Development Programme in Cairo, along with the UNDP resident representative, as well as several Egyptian government officials, including Hala Rafaat who is in charge of implementing the project on behalf of the ministry.

The Ministry saw the 75th anniversary of Alamein battle and the end of the World War II as a good opportunity to call on its development partners to proceed with the mine clearance operation in the North West Coast.

He pointing out that the coming period will witness development projects in electricity, sanitation and housing as part of a comprehensive strategy to boost development in western Egypt.

The board of directors agreed on allocating \$17.5 million to the Anti-Mines Action Project in Western North Coast for six months starting from October 2017 to April 2018, and also announced the commencement of the negotiations on the third phase of the project to allocate \$5 million to clear the rest of the northern coast and the Sinai Peninsula.

Reinhold Brender, vice EU Ambassador in Egypt, said the cooperation in demining operations brought tangible results, underlining the European Union's keenness to move forward with further cooperation with Egypt in the upcoming period in the field of mine clearance operations. (APA 11-08-2017)

## AFRICAN COUNTRIES ARE WELCOMING MORE TOURISTS THAN EVER BEFORE

Africa's tourist spots were some of the fast-growing and popular destinations in the world last year. This is despite setbacks in recent years like the Arab Spring or high-profile disease outbreaks like Ebola. One of the reasons for that growth is an increase in the numbers of Africans traveling within the continent. Growing at a rate of 6% per year, the total number of international tourist arrivals to Africa more than doubled between 1995 and 2014 as international tourist arrivals to Africa reached 56 million in 2014, a [new report](#) by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development shows.

Northern Africa is the main draw for international tourists as it received almost half of total international arrivals in Africa between 2011-2014. With arrivals in Africa concentrated across a handful of countries, Egypt (9.9 million), Morocco (9.8 million), South Africa (9.2 million) and Tunisia (6.8 million) recorded the highest average numbers of international tourist arrivals between 2011 and 2014. Those four countries alone accounted for more than 60% of all international tourist arrivals to Africa between 2011 and 2014. In the past two decades, tourism export revenues have also risen three-fold, despite recent blows to the industry like the 2010 Arab Spring, to reach \$47 billion in 2014 with average tourism export revenues per international tourist arrival rising from \$580 in 1995–1998 to \$850 in 2011–2014. While Northern Africa received the largest share of tourism export revenues between 2011 and 2014, Southern Africa earned the most tourism export revenues per arrival, with its tourism product described as “more upmarket.” The share of Africans in the total international tourist arrivals has steadily increased with Africans now accounting for four in every 10 international visitors on the continent. But that share remains below the global average. To boost the regional share of tourist visitors, governments on the continent must focus on “streamlined visa requirements,” open air routes and create targeted tourism policies, the report says. (Quartz 08-07-2017)

## JAPAN EXTENDS \$51M GRANT TO ETHIOPIA



Shinichi Saida, Ambassador of Japan to Ethiopia, and Admasu Nebebe, Ethiopia's State Minister for Finance and Economic Cooperation, signed the Exchange of Notes for three Grant Assistance Projects. They are for the "Installation of a Geothermal Wellhead in Aluto Langano," "Construction of Secondary Schools in Tigray Region" and "Improvement of Water Supply in Bahir Dar City."

Ambassador Saida after the signing ceremony said the government of Japan is determined to contribute to Ethiopia's vision of becoming a lower middle-income country by 2025, as outlined in the Second Growth and Transformation Plan of the country.

The "Installation of Geothermal Wellhead in Aluto Langano" project will help diversify power sources, and realize the power supply from a geothermal power plant through the introduction of wellhead power system. The project is expected to benefit 300,000 people.

The "Construction of Secondary Schools in Tigray Region" project is expected to improve access to secondary education in rural areas, and to mitigate overcrowded classrooms in existing schools in the urban areas of the Tigray Region.

The project will establish seven new secondary schools and preparatory schools in Tigray National Regional State, with the project benefiting 8,956 students in the region.

The "Improvement of Water Supply in Bahir Dar City" project will improve the volume of the water supply through the development of deep wells, expansion of distribution networks, construction of distribution reservoirs, among others, in Bahir Dar City, thereby contributing to decreasing water borne-diseases and reducing labour for drawing water in the target area. (APA 11-08-2017)

## GREEN STARTUPS MEET INVESTORS: ENTREPRENEURS PITCH IDEAS AT SWITCHMED EVENTS IN JORDAN AND CAIRO



The two first national 'Green start-ups meet investors' events took place in Amman and Cairo in early August, with the aim of bringing together entrepreneurs and financial actors in order to promote access to finance for green entrepreneurs.

After two-day training workshops in which the entrepreneurs enhanced their communication skills, a total of 15 companies (8 in Jordan, and 7 in Egypt) presented their business ideas in a demo day event before potential investors and relevant stakeholders, such as the National Microfinance Bank in Jordan, Oasis500, Alexandria Business Association, Arab Science and Technology Foundation, Injaz and UN representatives.

*"For the entrepreneurs, this is an excellent opportunity; some of them are inexperienced when it comes to pitching in front of potential investors, thus allowing them to improve their performance. In addition, the investors who attended the events shared with them valuable knowledge and tips and provide them feedback on how to improve the business and the presentation,"* explained SwitchMed project manager Claudia Pani.

During the events, the entrepreneurs also had the opportunity to network with the potential investors, aiming at closing deals in the future.

Out of the 15 companies that pitched, one company was selected per country to win a trip to SwitchMed Connect 2018 in Barcelona. The winner in Jordan was Amina Abu Hamdeh, the project's incubated green entrepreneur, who is launching an enterprise called Golden Grass, the first locally produced wheat grass extract to make health & personal care products. In Egypt, Daa Adham and Abdelnasser Farrag, who both were trained by SwitchMed, are the founders of VWaste, who came with an innovative way of transforming orange waste into raw orange peel powder.

The **SwitchMed** sustainable consumption and production programme aims to promote a switch by the Mediterranean economies towards sustainable consumption and production patterns and green economy, including low-emission development, through demonstration and dissemination of methods that improve resource and energy efficiency. It also seeks to minimise the environmental impacts associated with the life cycle of products and services and, where possible, to promote renewable energy. (Switched 11-08-2017)

[SwitchMed website](#)

## UNITED STATES KEEN TO DO BUSINESS WITH NAMIBIA

American businessman and US President Donald Trump advisor on North Africa and the Sahel has expressed a keen interest in Namibia and plans to bring over investors from America and China to do business in manufacturing, energy and agriculture.



Christopher Cox who paid a courtesy call on President Hage Geingob on Thursday afternoon, told the media he was satisfied with his discussion with the head of state.

“This is me as a private citizen; I am here as a private citizen of the USA. The president (Donald Trump) does not know that I am here. I think the important thing is we work together because the people who are going to need jobs will be in Africa.

“So as the world community, we need to work together to bring those jobs to Africa and Namibia to be specific. I think that would ultimately benefit the world,” said the American businessman, who is involved in partnerships with Chinese manufacturers.

He said he will bring to Namibia the first delegation of American business delegation as of next year, and that will be followed by one from China.

“My goal is to bring a delegation from the USA and China next year. I am particularly interested in the areas of manufacturing, agriculture and also energy.”

Namibia’s ideal location on the west coast of Africa will result in faster shipment of goods to America than China.

Cox noted that political stability and geographical location make Namibia ideal for investment.

“Why I am here is because I want to bring US investors to Namibia and investors from around the world to take an advantage of this land of opportunities. I want to work with the Chinese government to lure Chinese businesses to bring factories to Africa, and particularly to Namibia. I can feel good talking about a place like Namibia. The political system works so very well here. That’s why I am interested particularly in Namibia,” he said.

Queried about the tense relationship between China and the United States, Cox who left for London on Friday explained his business initiative is a private venture, and that it is important to bring economic development to Africa to deal with the expected demographic bulge in the continent.

“This is me as a private citizen; I am here as a private citizen of the USA. The president (Donald Trump) does not know that I am here. I think the important thing is we work together because the people who are going to need jobs will be in Africa. So as the world community, we need to work together to bring those jobs to Africa and Namibia to be specific. I think that would ultimately benefit the world,” said the American businessman, who is involved in partnerships with Chinese manufacturers. (APA 11-08-2017)

## UCT AND UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN FIGHT FUNGAL INFECTIONS IN AFRICA

The world’s first international research centre for tackling fungal infections — which kill about 1.3-million people globally every year — opened at the University of Cape Town (UCT) on Friday.

The majority of deaths related to fungal infections are in Africa, particularly sub-Saharan Africa where about 50% of deaths are caused by invasive fungal infections.

In 2008, 1-million cases of cryptococcal meningitis were reported in patients with HIV, resulting in more than 500,000 related deaths, UCT said in a statement on Friday.

Prof Mark Nicol, head of UCT's division of medical microbiology in the department of pathology, said: "This is a wonderful opportunity to develop a centre of excellence for [researching] fungal infections on the African continent. We will have the opportunity to extend the pioneering clinical research on fungal infections taking place at UCT by collaborating with scientists studying the biology and immunology of fungal infections at the world-leading centre [at the University of] Aberdeen (UA) in Scotland."

"Now, the UA's internationally recognised Aberdeen Fungal Group (AFG), in collaboration with UCT, have established the world's first research centre focused on tackling these diseases in Africa. The R10m (£600,000) UA's AFGrica Unit will be based at UCT's Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine, headed by Prof Valerie Mizrahi."

Prof Gordon Brown from the AFG, who led the establishment of the AFGrica Unit, said: "Fungal infections are under-studied and under-diagnosed compared with other infectious diseases, despite their contribution to so many deaths every year. Fungal infections kill more people in Africa than anywhere else on the planet. The AFGrica Unit is a unique opportunity to address the urgent need to improve basic knowledge and clinical management of fungal infections in Africa." (BD 11-08-2017)

## **GHANA'S ELECTRICITY FIRM SOLD TO PRIVATE CONCESSIONAIRE**

After heated agitations between workers of the state-owned Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) and the government over sale of the company, the deal has been signed sealed, APA has learnt here on Friday.



This came to light when the Minister of Energy Mr. Boakye Agyarko in his inauguration of the Board of Directors of the ECG on Thursday charged the Board Members to hand over all assets of the company to the private investor.

This is as a result of Ghana securing a grant of US\$498.2 million from the Millennium Challenge Account from the United States of America for the concession agreement which span 20 years of lease of the ECG.

He said the funds would be disbursed over five years period and would be used to invest in the power sector.

Meanwhile political analysts say the deal would result in laying off of some workers of the ECG which will exacerbate already high unemployment in the country. (APA 11-08-2017)

## **INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY: UFM INVESTING IN YOUTH FOR DEVELOPMENT AND STABILITY**

Almost 60% of the population in the southern Mediterranean region is currently under the age of 30, and the number of young people under the age of 15 is forecast to increase by over 18% by 2020. 2.8 million young people enter the job market each year in the region. With an average of about 30% youth

unemployment and around 50% for young women, the region has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the world. In this context, the the Union for the Mediterranean embraces the celebration of International Youth Day on 12 August, under the theme “Youth Building Peace”, to underline the urgent need to enhance the untapped capacities of young people for the socio-economic development and stability of both shores of the Mediterranean.



Youth is at the core of the UfM’s regional strategy. Under the active leadership of the UfM Co-Presidency held by the EU and Jordan, the UfM offers a unique platform for regional cooperation based on common strategies that represent the commitment of its 43 Member States to a regional agenda for peace, stability, inclusive growth and sustainable development.

Responding to the challenge, the new action-oriented [Roadmap](#) of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) is centred on young people’s potential to promote stability and development.

In concrete terms, over 15 regional cooperation projects are endorsed by the UfM to empower youth. The activities range from promoting entrepreneurship and access to finance to vocational training, employability, mobility and social engagement. Of the 200,000 beneficiaries directly targeted by UfM-labelled projects, more than 100,000 are young men and women.

In the words of UfM Secretary General, Fathallah Sijilmassi: *“It is unfair to limit our region only to the negative dimensions. It would be an injustice to the millions of Mediterranean young people whose daily achievements are remarkable in so many fields. They are the very people, in the South and in the North, who represent the best assets and success stories of the region. They must be at the centre of a positive agenda for the Mediterranean.”* (EEAS 11-08-2017)

[Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs \(Med4Jobs\)](#)

[Higher Education on Food Security & Rural Development](#)

[Euro-Mediterranean University of Fes](#)

[Eastern Mediterranean International School](#)

## **LIBERIA, SOUTH AFRICA TO BOOST COOPERATION**

Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf during her state visit to South Africa reviewed with President Jacob Zuma a wide range of bilateral, continental and global issues of common interest.

According to the joint communiqué issued at the end of the visit, based on a dispatch from Pretoria on 11th of August 2017, the two sides acknowledged the historical and strategic relations that happily exist between the two countries.

Both Sirleaf and Zuma noted the devastating impact of the Ebola virus epidemic, and President Zuma congratulated Liberia and her neighbours for successfully managing the epidemic.

They further recalled the role played by South Africa and the African Union under the stewardship of Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, under whose guidance as AU Commission president the “Africa against

Ebola Solidarity Trust” was established and pledged US\$34 million, to which MTN a South Africa-based company contributed US\$10 million.



The two presidents, the communiqué said, noted the signed bilateral mechanism of cooperation between Liberia and South Africa, including a general framework agreement for bilateral cooperation, and a memorandum of understanding on economic and technical cooperation.

These instruments are aimed at strengthening economic relations, as well as enhancing trade and investment between the two countries, the communiqué said.

Both Sirleaf and Zuma have committed to prioritize areas of bilateral cooperation which cover, among others, trade and investment, agriculture, health, construction, energy, telecommunications, finance and mining.

The two presidents decided to expedite the finalisation and signing of a bilateral agreement on exemption of visa for the holders of diplomatic and official passports, and also the joint trade and investment commission, which will enable both countries to service the MoU on economic and technical cooperation already signed.

The two leaders noted their economic cooperation, and the huge potential to increase trade volumes, as well as private sector investments.

In this regard, they took note of the major South African businesses that have large investments in Liberia such as MTN and DSTV.

In line with the AU vision of promoting intra-African trade and enhancing economic cooperation among countries, both presidents agreed that in the next few months the Liberia-South Africa joint trade and investment commission (JTIC) will be established. (APA 13-08-2017)

## BEIJING'S NEW PARTNERS: HOW CHINA WORKS WITH TRADITIONAL DONORS

In 2015, China and Australia quietly announced a landmark program to help tackle malaria in Papua New Guinea. Over three years, Australia would invest \$4 million Australian dollars (\$3.2 million), while China would provide technical assistance and an unspecified in-kind contribution. Working closely with Port Moresby, the program utilizes Australian and Chinese expertise to assist with the implementation of [PNG's National Malaria Strategic Plan](#).

*As China continues to grow as a global power, so too does its footprint on the development sector. Its rise comes at a moment when the status quo is shifting in the aid industry. Traditional standard bearers such as the U.S. and EU may still drive the majority of funds and set the agenda, but protectionist policies and changing domestic priorities are setting in motion significant changes.*

*In this six-week special series, Devex examines China's expanding role in aid and development across the globe. From tensions in Ghana to projects in Pakistan, from climate financing to donor partnerships, from individual philanthropy to state-financed investment, this series traces the past, present and future of Chinese aid and development.*

Tentatively, but with increasing success, China has been partnering with countries such as Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom on third-country development projects. In doing so, they are shifting from donor-recipient relationships to partners in development.

“Australia’s engagement with China on development cooperation has been positive and constructive,” a spokesperson for the [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade](#) told Devex of the relationship between the two nations.

In PNG, the countries have worked side-by-side to strengthen national laboratory institutions, improve malaria diagnostic products and services, conduct research to inform policy and share lessons from the cooperation.

In February, a senior management meeting took place in Beijing to review and progress work for the year ahead with attendees [including Minister Counsellor Benedict David from the Australian High Commission in PNG](#).

A month later, China and Australia updated their 2013 memorandum of understanding on development cooperation. With no end date, the latest memorandum opens the possibility for a range of collaborations supporting developing nations. The new agreement — which takes into consideration changing priorities in the era of the Sustainable Development Goals — underscores Beijing’s interest in expanding its relationships with other donor nations.

### Testing the waters

Dr. Merriden Varrall, director of the East Asia program for the [Lowy Institute](#), was in China working for the [United Nations Development Programme](#) in 2013 when the two countries put ink to paper.

“Australia’s [memorandum of understanding] set the framework for their trilateral cooperation with China,” she told Devex. “That represented a massive shift from the bilateral donor-recipient agreement that had been in the past to this new model of cooperating together. The cooperation was new, and signaled a good relationship between the two.”

At this time, Australia was seen as a trusted partner, along with countries including the U.K. and New Zealand. This was key for China to develop relationships, build trust and set the foundation for future projects and development cooperation.

But it was also a time to learn more about development needs and the criticism it was facing, particularly in its delivery of aid to Africa.

“[The Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China](#) began to be open to the idea of learning from others and cooperating with others around the 2010 mark,” Varrall said. “We understand that this was when African government officials were communicating they were not entirely happy with how Chinese aid was being delivered. China listened and thought they could do better.”

Under agreements with traditional donors, however, the selection of projects has been strategic.

“As far as I understand, MOFCOM have been pretty cautious on selecting projects,” Varrall said. “They didn’t want to do projects in high-profile places such as Africa to begin with. They wanted smaller areas that did not receive as much attention to see what worked.”

Along with the PNG initiative, China has also been dipping its toes in development cooperation initiatives elsewhere — with New Zealand in the Cook Islands and with the U.K. in Africa and through development research initiatives.

[Research on Chinese foreign aid in the Asia Pacific](#) by Denghua Zhang, a student with the school of [State, Society and Governance in Melanesia](#) at the [Australian National University](#), showed the importance of China’s engagement with traditional donors in learning about planning, monitoring and maintenance of development projects. But Zhang [acknowledged in an interview with Radio New Zealand](#) that it was too early to determine the impact these partnerships were having on China’s development program.

In the cooperation projects engaged in to date, scale and impact has been less of a priority for China than testing the waters of partnerships. And Zhang believes that while further projects may be seen in the future, they will remain small scale.

“If they do have this kind of trilateral aid cooperation in the future I expect that that will happen in those less sensitive sectors, such as the sectors of agriculture, public health and even climate change,” he said. “It could be more difficult for China and the traditional donors to pilot projects in those big infrastructure projects, because that will involve a lot of economic interests there and for the large

infrastructure projects they are very, very complicated and very, very difficult to manage, compared with current small-scale trilateral projects.”

The projects so far have not just been a learning curve for China, but for their partners who have gained a firsthand insight into the Chinese view of development assistance.

### **The challenge of partnering with China**

*“China’s aid may be demand driven, but the weakness is it is government-demand driven. If you don’t have the most responsible government, projects may not be advantageous to development concerns.”*

— Dr. Merriden Varrall, director of the East Asia program for the Lowy Institute

China’s process for identifying and engaging development projects can create issues for donor partners, including Australia. “China has a principle of their aid being demand driven,” Varrall explained, saying they insisted this in trilateral partnerships, including with Australia. MOFCOM have limited resources and are cautious in taking on new projects — and they are not interested in taking on tasks beyond their capacity. So it is important for China to ensure the assistance they are delivered is desired within the country and by the government. In comparison, while countries such as Australia will consult with recipient countries, there will also be a political agenda they push.

The differences in approaches have had unintended consequences of a perceived negative relationship between China and traditional donors.

“There were a couple of occasions where bilateral partners wanted to do trilaterals with China,” Varrall said. “They’d go to China and discuss a project for country x. China would then go to that country and confirm it was something they wanted. And if it wasn’t, China would reject the project.”

Projects China chooses to engage in, meanwhile, may also create controversy. The country has given more than \$12 million to Tonga to construct a lavish government building — St George Palace — used to house Tonga’s ministry of finance, the prime minister’s office and the ministry of foreign affairs. While this was a desire of the government’s, few deem it an appropriate use of development assistance.

“China’s aid may be demand driven, but the weakness is it is government-demand driven,” Varrall said. “If you don’t have the most responsible government, projects may not be advantageous to development concerns.”

But when it is advantageous to development concerns, China’s approach can open the door to better discussion and delivery of aid that can complement and not compete with other donors. And understanding that a different approach is important in understanding and leveraging what China does well in development.

### **What is the value of formalized donor agreements?**

For Varrall, the value of memorandums between China and other donors is more likely symbolic. “The MOUs themselves are not particularly useful, but they are representative of cooperation,” she explained.

There was a reputational advantage for China in engaging in formalized development agreement — and looking like they were interested in cooperating with traditional donors. “But I really think their openness to learning and doing aid better is an important driver,” Varrall said.

Trilateral development partnerships, including partnerships with Australia, New Zealand and the U.K., were primarily about mutual learning — for all parties involved. They give both parties the opportunity to understand what they do well and to learn from mistakes.

For Australia, this has certainly been identified as a priority in their memorandum by DFAT.

“The MOU recognizes Australia and China have different skills and strengths in planning and delivering development assistance,” the spokesperson for DFAT said, saying they have prioritized poverty reduction, health and health security, environmental protection, economic development, trade facilitation, food security and disaster management in the development focus of their agreement with China.

But for bilateral and trilateral cooperation, a memorandum is not a necessary item. New Zealand and China have successfully been collaborating for their water project in the Cook Islands, [Te Mato Vai](#).

Yet, [according to government documents](#), the two countries are only now scoping a formalized development agreement for further collaborations in the Pacific.

Where memorandums do exist, their success depends on the people involved. “When you have people on both sides of a partnership that have the time and are open to prosecuting it, you have better learning outcomes,” Varrall said. But MOFCOM only have a staff of approximately 60 to 70 people working in development assistance, and resources to build relationships between donor countries is limited. On the part of the traditional donor, if the country is not committed, the results can also be limited.

## How are projects identified and prioritized?

Identifying and prioritizing development projects to engage in under these arrangements has been ad hoc to date. But there are formalized opportunities for discussion. Under the memorandum between Australia and China, senior officials meet each year to discuss their development priorities and objectives.

According to DFAT, it is important for Australia to be engaging other donors such as China to support its aid program. “Australia’s development objectives in the Indo-Pacific region cannot be achieved by working in isolation,” the spokesperson for DFAT said. “Australia works with other donors to maximize the impact of its development activities, share experience and expertise and avoid policy fragmentation and duplication of effort.”

But Australia also has agreements with Canada, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, the U.K. and the United States. And with only one project engaged under the memorandum with China, there are questions over the partnership being productive and a priority in the development sphere.

## What makes a successful donor partnership with China?

In Australia’s partnership with China, quantity is certainly not the grounds for success. But “success” may not be the same for all sides.

For China, Varrall believes simply engaging in a partnership is the definition of success. For Australia, the memorandum offers a forum for discussion and collaboration — and this makes the collaboration a success. And DFAT said that they are hopeful for future projects.

“Australia will seek to undertake further joint development projects with China where there are complementarities,” they said, [echoing the sentiment of former Foreign Minister Bob Carr when the partnership was first announced in 2013](#).

Whether or not China is successfully working with donors to improve development outcomes is still a question for discussion. But they are willing to be at the table to listen, learn and share. And traditional donors, including Australia, need to be willing to work on that partnership and create success beyond the signing of a document. (DEV 11-08-2017)

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