MEMORANDUM

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SUMMARY

FRANÇOIS HOLLANDE AU MAROC POUR UNE VISITE DE "TRAVAIL" ET "D'AMITIÉ"

Le président français François Hollande se rendra à Tanger les 19 et 20 septembre à l'invitation du Roi Mohammed VI , « pour une visite de travail qui sera aussi une visite d'amitié », a indiqué lundi l'Elysée dans un communiqué.

Cette visite "permettra aux deux chefs d'Etat d'avoir un très large échange de vues et de faire progresser la coopération bilatérale dans plusieurs domaines, notamment la lutte contre la radicalisation, le développement économique, la préparation de la présidence française de la COP21 et de la présidence marocaine de la COP22", a-t-on précisé de même source.

Paris doit, en effet, accueillir en décembre une conférence internationale sur le changement climatique, la COP21, qui sera suivie d'une autre conférence en 2016 au Maroc. (APA 14-09-2015)

SOUTH AFRICA: FIRSTRAND SETS ASIDE R12BN IN CAPITAL, PART OF WHICH FOR ACQUISITIONS IN REST OF AFRICA

Banking group FirstRand said it had set aside R12bn in capital and this would be deployed towards among other things making small and medium sized acquisitions in the rest of Africa and protecting the local and lending businesses.

On Thursday FirstRand posted a 14% rise in full-year normalised earnings to R21.28bn. First National Bank grew its earnings by 16% to R11.3bn helped by continued growth in non-interest revenue and net-interest income.

Wesbank, which is SA's largest vehicle financier, reported a 10% increase in earnings to R3.3bn, boosted by continued new business volumes with its UK MotoNovo business continuing to perform well. Rand Merchant Bank showed a 7% rise in earnings to R5.8bn.

FirstRand remains SA's largest bank by earnings and market capitalisation. The company declared a final dividend of 117c per share, a 20% increase compared to the 2014 full-year period. This took FirstRand's total dividend in the year ended June 2015 to 210c per share. (BD 10-09-2015)

ANGOLA RE-LAUNCHES COTTON PRODUCTION WITH SUPPORT FROM SOUTH KOREA

The revival of cotton production in two locations in the city of Sumbe, the capital of Angola's Kwanza Sul province, will begin in January 2016, according to technicians from the Ministry of Agriculture assessing the progress of the project.

The project comprises 2,824 hectares and it began with land clearing, conducted between November 2012 and March 2013, and required an investment of US$30.737 million, of which US$15.981 million were granted by the South Korean government in the form of a loan. The remaining US$14.756 million dollars was provided by the Angolan State Budget.

The project to re-launch cotton production began between August 2006 and December 2009 and the second phase was between January 2011 and July 2014.

Last Thursday, according to Angolan news agency Angop, the Ministry of Agriculture technicians spoke with project manager, Abel Bala Kinzeca, who said infrastructure work would be completed in December that planting of cotton and other crops would begin in January.

At the end of the visit, the provincial director of Agriculture, Isaiah Nawela, said the revival of cotton production was of benefit to communities and boosted the trade balance of the province and the country. (14-09-2015))

NAMIBIA EMPLOYERS' FEDERATION ISSUES PHOSPHATE MINING WARNING

The Employers Federation of Namibia (NEF) has ended its voice to the public debate about phosphate mining along the Atlantic coast, with the representative body calling on thorough investigation about its effect on marine life.
NEF secretary general Tim Parkhouse Monday stressed that the evaluation report on phosphate mining and its long-term effect on sustainability of fishing sector is very critical for the country to make calculated decisions.

Several companies including the LL Namibia Phosphate, Namibian Marine Phosphate and New Zealand's Chatham Rock Phosphates (CRP) are itching to exploit the mineral and have been pressuring the government to lift a moratorium on phosphate mining on the country's seabed.

In a statement issued to APA on Monday, Parkhouse warned that fishing industry, which is the country's second biggest export earner of foreign currency after mining, could be compromised because of phosphate mining.

Are the authorities 100 percent certain that undersea mining like this (phosphate) will have no long term detrimental effect on the fishing industry? he said.

I sincerely hope and trust that international environmental experts who are completely unbiased will be contracted to look at the impact on the fishing industry and to do a cost-benefit evaluation of the relationship between the phosphate mining and the continuing life and long term sustainability of the fishing industry, he added.(APA 14-09-2015)

ANGOLAN CURRENCY DEPRECIATES RAPIDLY AGAINST THE US DOLLAR

The average exchange rate of US dollars sold by the National Bank of Angola in the week of 7 to 11 September reached 135.374 kwanzas per dollar, compared with 130.442 kwanzas per dollar in the first week of the month, the central bank said.
In a statement issued in Luanda, the National Bank of Angola also said in the same week it sold US$467.3 million.
On 10 September the central bank conducted a new auction of foreign currency for foreign exchange offices, selling US$10 million at an average exchange rate of 168.028 kwanzas per dollar, with maximum and minimum rates of 170 and 160 kwanzas.
In the previous auction of foreign currency for foreign exchange offices the average exchange rate was 149.870 kwanzas per dollar, with a maximum rate of 155 kwanzas per dollar and a low of 148.50 kwanzas per dollar.
Reuters news agency reported that the dollar exchange rate on the black market in Angola currently stands at 240 kwanzas. (15-09-2015)

AFRICAN NATIONS AIM TO BRAKE SURGING TRADE IN ILLEGAL TIMBER

Forest protection agencies in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Mozambique and Madagascar will step up joint efforts to combat the rapidly expanding trade in illegal timber under a new deal.
The Zanzibar Declaration on Illegal Logging, signed on Wednesday at a global gathering on forests in SA, aims to improve communication between customs authorities and collaboration among forest officials from the east and southeast African nations.

If properly managed, forests provide jobs for workers and homes for wildlife. They also act as a filter pulling planet-warming carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere, so protecting them is crucial for the broader environment.

Across the region, the illegal timber trade is flourishing at an alarming pace, said Juma S Mgoo, CEO of Tanzania’s Forest Service. Criminal groups are benefiting from the environmental destruction.

"Forests continue to dwindle at unprecedented rates in our region," Mr. Mgoo said in a statement.

"If we continue at the rate which we are going there will be nothing left for our children and their children to enjoy."

Kenya loses about $10m annually due to the illegal cross-border wood trade with Tanzania, while Tanzania loses more than $8m, according to studies cited by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), a green group backing the new agreement.

Between 2000 and 2012, forest cover in Tanzania shrank by 2-million hectares — an area the size of Wales in Britain — and by 2.2-million hectares in Mozambique, a WWF analysis showed.

Prior to Wednesday’s agreement, the fight against illegal logging had been "hindered by inadequate collaboration among national forest agencies and customs agencies across the region", said WWF spokesman Geofrey Mwanjela in a statement calling the new plan a "bold step".

In east, central and west Africa, criminal groups are thought to make more money from selling illegal wood products — up to $9bn annually — than through street-level drug-dealing, the United Nations Environment Programme (Unep) reported last year.

Violent armed groups and "terrorist organisations" in parts of east and central Africa use illegal logging and other forest crimes to finance their activities, Unep said. *(*Reuters 09-09-2015)

OIL PRODUCTION COSTS IN ANGOLA “MUST FALL”

The Director of Total E&P Angola, Jean-Michel Lavergne, warned that if oil exploration costs in Angola did not come down significantly, the country runs the risk of no longer having an oil industry, according to financial news agency Bloomberg.

“If there is not a significant reduction in costs, everything will stop,” Lavergne told Bloomberg adding that if conditions do not improve, the Angolan oil industry “will disappear,” assuming that the price per barrel of oil remains at US$60.

The issue involves several measures that the Angolan government has put in place in recent years, which made production costs increase by US$500 million a year, Lavergne said during a business forum in Luanda, where he announced a meeting had been requested with the government to address these concerns caused by the cost of regulation.

The new rules on emissions, combined with low prices, means that some companies are thinking about leaving the country, which is the latest member of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), said the director of the United States – Angola Chamber of Commerce, Pedro Godinho.

“Brent” oil, the benchmark for Angola, ended last week down 1.45 percent to US$48.18 and “West Texas Intermediate,” traded in New York, was down 1.79 percent at US$ 45.10. (14-09-2015)

MOROCCO, SENEGAL SEAL WATER, SANITATION DEAL

The Senegalese minister of Water and Sanitation, Mansour Faye and his Moroccan counterpart Charafat Afailal on Monday sealed a cooperation agreement in the fields of water and sanitation in Dakar.

"Water management is becoming increasingly challenging not only because of the precious liquid's growing scarcity but also due the degradation of its quality from such phenomena as salting. To address these challenges, our countries have no option but to exchange their experiences in a bid to strengthen water supply for our people. Morocco has made significant advances in the field of water management" Mr. Faye said.

The accord covers the improvement of the management of the quality of water especially its desalting as well as the desalination of sea water.

"The two countries will exchange know-how on hydraulic. We must make sure that this agreement is in line with the framework protocol signed by the Senegalese head of state and the Moroccan King during his visit in our country" he added, noting that the National Water Operator's Company (Sones) will implement defluorization plants across the country to improve the quality of urban water.

Charafat Afailal said the agreement was timely and will give new impetus to cooperation between Dakar and Rabat especially in the technical area.

"We are pleased to sign this MoU which lays emphasis on the exchange and sharing of experiences and reinforcement of skills of the human resources in the field of hydraulics and sewerage," Ms. Afaila declared. (APA 14-09-2015)

TATA MAY LEAD DRIVE OUT OF SOUTH AFRICA DUE TO ONEROUS VISA RULES

SA’s visa and work permit policies could be undermining its aim to be the headquarters base for multinationals wanting to expand their operations into Africa.

This conclusion can be drawn from the experience of Tata International, a subsidiary of the Indian industrial conglomerate Tata Sons. It has decided to base some of its key personnel in Tanzania because of the long delay in getting visas and work permits for its senior managers in SA. In the past, the company ran all its African operations from its Johannesburg head office.

The government has put in place a number of tax and other incentives to encourage multinationals to locate their African headquarters in SA. It is facing strong competition from Mauritius, which has a generous tax regime. SA’s government can ill afford to shoot itself in the foot with onerous visa regulations for corporate personnel.

New visa regulations for tourists have had a damping effect on tourist numbers and are hurting the industry.

Tata International MD Noel Tata told a delegation of African journalists at the Tata group’s headquarters in Mumbai on Friday that it took up to six months to obtain visa and work permits for its senior managers, strategic planners and financial managers. The problem first emerged about a year ago.

"We are finding it increasingly time consuming to get visas for our managers. We believe that for a supervisory business across Africa, we ought to be granted faster, quicker and more employment visas to enable us to grow the business the way we should," he said.

The company wanted the flexibility to transfer its staff within the company.

Mr Tata said it was too early to say whether the company — which employs about 40 people at its headquarters in Johannesburg — would reconsider moving its African headquarters out of SA entirely.

Tata International moved its African head office from Zambia to Johannesburg in 1995 shortly after the installation of the new government.

It derives $373m of its total annual revenue of $2.2bn from its African operations which are located in 14 countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

Mr Tata said Tata International believed it could double its revenue from Africa over the next five years.

Tata is a global trading and distribution company that is involved in motor vehicles, metal trading, importing thermal coal into India, exporting leather and leather products from India, and agri-products. (BD 14-09-2015)

ANGOLA MAY DOUBLE DIAMOND PRODUCTION WITH LUAXE KIMBERLITE

The exploration of the Luaxe kimberlite, in Angola's Lunda Sul province, an area of 100 hectares with diamond deposits estimated at 350 million carats, will cost a minimum of US$800 million, said the chairman of state-owned diamond company Endiama.

Carlos Sumbula, chairman of Endiama, said that the prospecting work carried out by company technicians and Russian group Alrosa should be completed in mid 2016, after which preparations will begin for its feasibility, technical, economic and financial studies and raising funds for completion.

The chairman of Endiama said the service life of the mine is estimated at 35 years, during which around 350 million carats of diamonds are expected to be extracted to a depth of 400 metres.

"The work done by teams from Endiama and Alrosa was satisfactory and showed that only 10 percent of alluvial diamonds come from known kimberlites, with 90 percent yet to be discovered," said Sumbula.

Within six years, Sumbula said, Angola may double diamond production from the current 8 million to 16 million carats per year with the exploration of this new kimberlite. (14-09-2015)

MYSTERIOUS DONORS' CHANNELED $56M TO KENYAN NGOS

The Kenyan government on Tuesday disclosed that mysterious donors donated a whopping 6 billion shillings ($56 million) to several Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the country, raising fears the funds are meant to fund terrorism activities in the country.

Addressing the media in Nairobi, the NGO Coordination Board chairman,
Fazul Mahamed said the funds channelled to the NGOs between 2013-2014 came from unspecified sources adding that the monies could be used to undermine the country's security.

We are investigating the actual donors of the 6 billion shillings ($56 million), the countries they have originated from and the purpose of those funds, he added.

He disclosed that the organisations failed to explain the source of their funds.

The Kenyan government has been monitoring NGOs activities in the country following revelations that some are funding terrorism activities.

Last December, the government deregistered 15 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for allegedly funding terrorism activities in the country and the region.

At the time, investigations revealed that once donors gave money to
the NGOs, the agencies in turn transferred the huge amounts to accounts where terror suspects access the funds.(APA 15-09-2015)

SOUTH AFRICA: SOCIAL UNREST FEARED AS MINES SLASH WORKFORCES

As mining companies in Africa bleed jobs due to plunging commodity prices, the ripple effect of redundancies has raised concern about social unrest amid declining economic growth.

Top mineral-producing countries such as SA, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo have seen cash-squeezed companies slash workforces, shut operations and reduce capacity.

In SA unions say 19,000 jobs are on the line. Most of the country's current mining layoffs are in the platinum sector, which has seen a price drop of about 40% since 2011, while the gold sector has also been badly hit.

"We are in crisis. Companies can't just let go of so many people," says Joseph Mathunjwa, the leader of the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (Amcu).

Amcu led the five-month strike over higher wages at Lonmin in Marikana in 2012.

Zambia and the Congo have also suffered from a sharp decline in international copper prices, which have slumped by 25% during the first eight months this year, compared to the average price last year.

"The contracting metal prices, especially copper and platinum, will continue to pressure companies to cut their costs," says Andrius Balsys, industry analyst at Euromonitor International.

In addition to job cuts, companies are "expected to re-evaluate expansion projects more carefully" and may halt those in the pipeline, says Mr Balsys.

Glencore this month suspended production at copper mines in Zambia and the Congo, as the company reels from what it describes as the worst commodities market since the financial crisis of 2008-09. The Congolese government has urged the firm to "respect its commitments" to the project and resume production.

Glencore's Mopani mine in Zambia is the largest employer in the country's mining sector, with a workforce of 10,000. Copper is the biggest foreign currency earner for Zambia, where the local kwacha has been in free fall.

Chinese-owned Luanshya Copper Mines also suspended operations, rendering about 1,200 workers jobless.

"The African mining industry's challenges have to be seen in the global context of a slowing China and weak commodity prices," says Sarah Boumphrey, head of strategic insight at Euromonitor International. "The difficulty in Africa is that many governments are overreliant on the industry as a source of export and government revenue."

The commodity crunch came as SA's mining sector was suffering from prolonged strikes, escalating wage demands and regular electricity cuts.

The industry relies on migrant labour from neighbours such as Mozambique, Malawi, Lesotho and Swaziland — making the effect of redundancies a regional problem. The government has brought together mine bosses and unions to find ways to avert job losses amid a 25% jobless rate.

"It is our collective responsibility to resolve the challenges as the mining sector is strategic to the South African economy," President Jacob Zuma told a meeting between unions, companies and the government last week. The parties have signed a pact that calls for the provision of alternative jobs for redundant workers and for the selling of troubled mines, as opposed to abandoning operations altogether. But the hard-line Amcu has refused to sign up with any government-led deal.

Labour mining analyst Mamokgethi Molopyane says the turmoil could not have come at a worse time. "The economy is ailing, unemployment is high, with increasing food prices. The massive job loses are certainly going to deepen the poverty levels and have a ripple effect."

Chamber of Mines data emerged in May revealing 35,000 job losses in the gold, platinum and iron-ore sectors between 2012 and last year. (AFP 14-09-2015)

CONSTRUCTION OF CATEMBE/PONTE DE OURO ROAD BEGINS IN MOZAMBIQUE

Road construction works between Maputo and Ponta do Ouro, a project that is part of the road network for the bridge between Maputo and Catembe, have begun according to Mozambican weekly newspaper Domingo.

On the Catembe side the road will have two lanes as far as Ponta do Ouro, over a distance of around 110 kilometres. At kilometre 100 the road will have a detour of 9 or 10 kilometres to reach the border with South Africa.

There are also plans to build another two-lane road between Bela Vista and Boane, which will be about 63 kilometres long.

This work has an estimated cost of US$780 million, which were obtained by Mozambique through loans granted by China, and the construction project was awarded to the China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC).

Ismael Suleiman, the engineer responsible for the road sector at Empresa de Desenvolvimento de Maputo Sul, owner of the work, said the contractor had completed the road foundation over a distance of 3 kilometres towards Bela Vista – Catembe.

Suleiman said that work the contractor will carry out between Catembe and the South African border and Ponta do Ouro is expected to be completed by December 2017. (14-09-2014)

MOZAMBIQUE LAUNCHES FOURTH CAMPAIGN AGAINST BLINDNESS

The Health Ministry in Maputo has launched a four-day campaign to treat 240,000 Mozambicans with cataracts, out of a total population of 25.7 million, APA learns on Tuesday.
The ministry said on Tuesday that the campaign involves simple operations on about 400 people previously diagnosed with cataracts and there will be 80 operations a day.

The head of the National Ophthalmology Programme in the Ministry of Health, Mariamo Mbofala, said patients had been operated on successfully.

Each operation lasts for about ten minutes and all precautions have been taken to ensure that everything runs smoothly, he said

A team of 22 medical staff are involved in the campaign, two ophthalmologists, three general doctors and ten nurses, plus seven doctors from Tunisia, organized by a Tunisian NGO, Nadi Al Bassar.

The campaign enjoys financial support from the Islamic Development Bank.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has recommended that governments throughout the world should undertake such campaigns.

Last year Mozambique managed to operate on about 6,000 people suffering from cataracts. (APA 15-09-2015)

GLENCORE’S ZAMBIA UNIT TO KEEP MOST WORKERS DESPITE SUSPENSION, SAYS SOURCE

Glencore’s Zambian subsidiary Mopani Copper Mines will retain most of its workers even after copper production is suspended following a drop in the metal’s price, a source close to the company said on Friday.
An electricity shortage in the southern African nation and weaker copper prices have put pressure on the mining industry, threatening output, jobs and economic growth in Africa’s second-biggest copper producer.
The source said Mopani was in talks with the government and unions over Glencore’s plan to suspend operations and invest to improve efficiency at the mine.
The president of Zambia’s largest mining union said the move by the government could help save thousands of jobs.
"Over the next 18 months, Mopani will invest $500 million in expansion projects. A large number of employees are expected to be kept for mine development and care and maintenance," the source told Reuters.
"We want Mopani to be efficient and competitive in the global copper market. It will also extend the mine life."
Mining and trading company Glencore said on Monday it would suspend dividends, sell assets and suspend some copper production at Mopani and its Katanga Mining division in Democratic Republic of Congo for 18 months.
Mopani is the second largest employer in Zambia after the government with about 21,000 direct and contract workers.
Mopani would offer workers at the mining firm voluntary separation packages in line with Zambian law after the talks with the government ended, the source said.
A second source said the company was talking to the government and unions, but job cuts had not been discussed.

"As far as we are concerned everything is normal. We are undertaking a study to optimise our production efficiency with the unions and the government. Until we conclude that study we can't make any pronouncements," the source at Mopani said.

Glencore, Vedanta Resources, China's NFC Africa and CNMC Luanshya Copper Mine have all said they will shut down some operations in Zambia because of the harsh business environment.

Electricity shortages and the slide in copper have driven the kwacha currency to record lows amid a sell-off in commodity-linked currencies as China's economy slows. (Reuters 11-09-2015)

TOTAL GROUP TO BUILD FUEL TERMINAL IN NACALA, MOZAMBIQUE

French group Total plans to build a fuel terminal in Nacala, in Mozambique's Nampula province, and the public presentation of the environmental impact took place a few days ago, according to Mozambican newspaper Notícias.

The project, to be built on a plot of three hectares, will require an investment of US$15 million, according to figures released at the public presentation of the study.

The terminal will be built in the area adjacent to other oil companies such as Puma Energy, Petromoc, African Petroleum and BP, and the fuel transferred from tankers to storage tanks via a pipeline of about 6 kilometres.

When in operation, the Total group's terminal will increase the number of vessels docked and cargo handled and contribute to consequent growth of Nacala-Porto, which was declared a Special Economic Zone by the government. (14-09-2015)

GERMANY INVESTS €9M TO BOOST MALAWI AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION

Germany, through GIZ, has invested €9 million to two projects implemented by the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources and Agriculture Research and Technology to strengthen innovations in agriculture.

The two projects include Green Innovations Centre for Agriculture and Food Sector (GICAFS) that which seeks to use innovations in the agriculture and food sector to boost the incomes of smallholder farmers while the More Income and Employment in Rural Areas Programme seeks to reduce unemployment and create more employment among rural people.

GIZ team leader Wolfram Jaeckel said Tuesday in the capital Lilongwe that improved and sustained value creations in agriculture and other productive sectors are more important to the people.

"These are well invested resources which will benefit Malawi through the development of innovations in agriculture sector and beyond," he said.

Malawi joins other countries globally to benefit within the GICAFS under One World: No Hunger Initiative of the Germany. (APA 15-09-2015)

NIGERIA LIFTS BAN ON OIL TANKERS

Nigeria has lifted a ban on 113 vessels into its territorial waters, a letter from national oil company Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) seen by Reuters on Thursday showed.

The letter, dated September 8, said the president had approved the consideration of all incoming ships subject to a letter guaranteeing that they would not be used for any illegal activity.

It added that the president had directed a review of activities of all affected vessels to determine culpability in illegal operations in Nigerian territorial waters.

The edict, sent out in July, to ban vessels came directly from President Muhammadu Buhari's office and was in line with a campaign pledge to crack down on corruption and theft.

Nigeria is Africa's biggest oil producer, exporting about 2-million barrels a day, but it is plagued by oil theft, with transparency groups saying that illicit revenue from oil went to individuals connected with the former regime.

Traders said that the ban caused confusion, while analysts said that it could cause more problems for Nigeria in its attempts to get the best price for its oil, than for the tanker owners who could choose not to send their vessels there.

Oil revenue, the government's biggest source of income, has been hammered by a slump in the oil price, which has fallen to about $48 a barrel from $115 last June.

The NNPC is also looking to overhaul the way in which it sources its fuel from overseas and has set up new crude swap contracts to replace the ones it cancelled in August. (Reuters 10-09-2015)

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