

MEMORANDUM

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EU STEPS UP AID FOR NIGERIA, NIGER AND CAMEROON AS HUMANITARIAN CRISIS WORSENS

The European Commission is providing additional humanitarian assistance to help address the worsening situation in the Lake Chad region.

Today the European Commission has announced an additional €12.5 million in humanitarian aid to support people in Nigeria, Niger and Cameroon as they face a deteriorating humanitarian crisis. Today's additional emergency assistance will help vulnerable populations in the Lake Chad region. €9 million will be provided to support people in Nigeria, €2 million in Cameroon and €1.5 million in Niger.

The new funding comes as violence by the terrorist group Boko Haram from northern Nigeria has severely destabilised the Lake Chad region, causing the displacement of millions of people.

"When travelling to the region last month, I witnessed the plight of people in the Lake Chad Basin. Millions have been displaced and the number of those struggling to find food is increasingly alarming. The situation in Nigeria is especially dramatic. As always, children are hit the hardest and we must urgently intervene to stop their suffering. This additional EU funding will focus on emergency assistance, primarily in the areas of food and nutrition, water and sanitation, and health. All efforts should be made to ensure that humanitarian organisations can safely reach those who need urgent help." said Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides**.

The EU aid announced today comes on top of the €58 million previously allocated to the Lake Chad Basin crisis, bringing overall EU humanitarian aid to over €70 million for the region in 2016. The European Union is a major humanitarian donor in the region, providing assistance to local, host and displaced populations in various humanitarian aid sectors in recent years.

TABLE - Total EU humanitarian aid to populations in the Lake Chad basin and in the Sahel in 2016: €216 200 000.

Country	Type of assistance		
	Resilience and food	Support for conflict affected population in Lake Chad Basin	Additional emergency assistance
Burkina Faso	15 300 000		
Cameroon	2 000 000	9 000 000	2 000 000
Chad	41 000 000	9 200 000	
Mali	17 500 000		
Mauritania	10 700 000		
Niger	29 000 000	9 000 000	1 500 000
Nigeria		31 000 000	9 000 000
Senegal	6 400 000		
West Africa regional programmes	23 600 000		
Total EUR	145 500 000	58 200 000	12 500 000

Background

Nigeria is the worst hit country by the regional humanitarian crisis. The United Nations estimates over 7 million Nigerians have been affected by the conflict in the north-east of the country alone – including over 2 million displaced who rely on humanitarian assistance to survive. Already vulnerable host communities are also deeply affected, as is the local population in Nigeria, and increasingly so.

The Far North Region of Cameroon currently hosts 65,100 Nigerian refugees and 191,600 internally displaced persons, 158,500 of whom have fled attacks by Boko Haram. Meanwhile, the violence has forced some 167,000 people from their homes in Niger, which also hosts 82,000 Nigerian refugees. At the same time, some 4.4 million Nigerians are estimated to be severely food insecure in the north-east of the country. The number of children suffering from Severe Acute Malnutrition is reported to be particularly alarming –at least 244,000 are estimated to be affected in the state of Borno alone. Aid agencies are reporting that one in five children may die if not provided with urgent life-saving treatment. In Nigeria specifically, the European Commission has been scaling up its aid continuously to meet the increasing humanitarian needs. EU humanitarian assistance to Nigeria since 2014 amounts to €73 million.

While the needs are immense, providing humanitarian assistance in Nigeria and the region as a whole remains challenging as demonstrated by the attack against humanitarian responders in north-east Nigeria only last week. (EU 04-08-2016)

ANGOLA EXPORTS CUT DIAMONDS TO UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

The state-held company Angola Polishing Diamonds exported 4,462 carats of cut diamonds to the United Arab Emirates last June, invoicing US\$3.098 million at an average price of US\$694.5 per carat, informs the Ministry of Geology and Mines in Luanda.

June diamond production in Angola amounted to 753,000 carats, with participation of eight of the twelve operational mines, bringing in US\$75.35 million at an average price of US\$100 per carat.

The Catoca mine accounted for 620,500 carats, Camatue 41,200 carats, Cuango 39,700, Chitotolo 20,000, Calonda 12,800, Somiluana 9,000, Luo 8,700 and Lulo 808.

Compared to May 2016, when 736,700 carats worth US\$74.9 million were produced at an average price of US\$101 per carat, respective increases in quantity and value of 2.23 percent and 0.51 percent were recorded.

Between industrial tax and royalties paid by diamond companies, the activity brought in tax revenue of 934.1 million kwanzas (US\$5.6 million), up year-on-year though down 11 percent over May. (03-08-2016)

NIGERIAN AGENCY RAISES ALARM OVER MULTIPLE TAXATION

The Vice-Chairman of the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), Prof. Umar Danbatta, has warned that the multiple taxation by states and Local Governments Areas across the country is threatening the operations of the telecom companies.

Danbatta told the Governor of Ogun State in south-western Nigeria, Mr. Ibikunle Amosun, who paid him a courtesy visit in Abuja on Tuesday that the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Nigerian Governor's Forum and a former Minister of Communications, which covered all the issues, was not adhered to.

He lamented that the sector was affected by vandalism and pilfering of telecoms equipment and that this development was hampering expansion of the networks of the operators.

According to him, some of the government agencies across the country often threaten to shut down the operators' Base Transceivers Stations over alleged refusal to comply with their tax regime.

Danbatta warned that that unless these challenges were tackled with pragmatic approach, subscribers in the country will continue to witness erratic services.

He appealed to state governors to find a permanent solution to these challenges.

Responding, the Governor assured Danbatta of his assistance and stressed the need to harmonise taxes payable by telecom operators in the country.(APA 03-08-2016)

EUBAM LIBYA MISSION EXTENDED TO AUGUST 2017



On 4 August 2016, the Council extended the mandate of the planning mission EUBAM Libya **until 21 August 2017**. It also approved a budget of **€17 million** for the period from 22 August 2016 to 21 August 2017.

As part of the EU's comprehensive approach to support the transition to a democratic, stable and prosperous Libya, EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) Libya is mandated to plan for a possible future EU mission providing advice and capacity-building in the area of criminal justice, migration, border security and counter-terrorism.

Any future civilian mission in Libya would seek in particular to address law enforcement aspects of irregular migration, smuggling of migrants and trafficking of human beings while promoting longer term efforts on security sector reform, including governance. It would be conducted at the request of the legitimate Libyan authorities, with their full ownership.

The civilian planning capacity co-operates closely with, and contributes to, the efforts of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya.

In February 2016 the EU amended the mandate of its integrated border management assistance mission in Libya (EUBAM Libya) to focus on civilian planning activities.

The mission is currently located in Tunis and has established contact with the relevant Libyan authorities. The mission's budget approved by the decision provides for the activities and staff in Tunis as well as for the possibility to deploy to Libya as soon as the security situation allows.

The decision was adopted by written procedure. (EUBAM 04-08-2016)

CANADIAN COMPANY RAISES FUNDS TO MINE DIAMONDS IN ANGOLA

Canada's Gem International Resources raised 1.2 million Canadian dollars upon completion of the second phase of a private share placement that earned 400,000 dollars, the company announced in a recently released statement.

The company aims to use the proceeds to prospect for diamonds in Angola, specifically at a concession identified as Dala, situated near the Catoca mine, the world's fourth largest.

Gem International Resources investor relations director Andrew Philips explained that the region where the company has a concession is among the "most coveted" in Angola, adding "we're in the right spot." Philips said the company's chief executive, Denis Hayes, had decided to focus on diamond mining in Angola after exploration work in other African countries. (03-08-2016)

ZIMBABWE GEARS FOR PROTEST AGAINST PROPOSED NEW CURRENCY

Zimbabwean opposition political parties and pressure groups will on Wednesday stage a march in the capital Harare to protest against the impending introduction of "bond notes" by the central bank.

The march, which had initially been blocked by the police, was cleared by High Court judge Lavender Makoni following an application by the opposition Transform Zimbabwe party for an order forcing law enforcement agents to allow the protest to give ahead.

The Zimbabwe Republic Police had earlier on banned the demonstration which they argued would obstruct traffic in the city centre.

Transform Zimbabwe said in a statement that the High Court ruling was victory for Zimbabweans who are unhappy about alleged economic mismanagement by the government.

"This clears the way for Zimbabweans to show their disapproval of the much disliked bond note, which analysts have argued will destroy completely the nation's economy," the party said.

The protesters are expected to hand over a petition to Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) governor John Mangudya in which they will call on him to drop the planned introduction of "bond notes".

The RBZ has said the "bond notes" will come into circulation in October as part of measures to ease a crippling cash shortage that has been devilled the economy since the beginning of the year.

Most Zimbabweans however fear that the government is trying to use the introduction of the "bond notes" to sneak in through the back door the defunct Zimbabwe dollar.

The Zimbabwe dollar evokes sad memories for the majority of Zimbabweans who had to endure long queues at banks and food shortages caused by the free-falling currency whose use was stopped in 2009.

The country has used a basket of more stable currencies for the past seven years, mostly the United States dollar, South African rand and the Botswana pula. (APA 03-08-2016)

NAMIBIA FORMULATES RENEWABLE ENERGY POLICY

In southern Africa, Foibe Namene, CEO of the Namibian Electricity Control Board, has indicated that the country's renewable energy policy is almost complete.

Last week, Namene presented the final draft of the renewable energy policy to stakeholders during a one day workshop held in the capital Windhoek, reports local media.

The policy will serve to provide guidance to the government on how to develop the renewable energy sector and scale up the contribution of power from renewable sources in the country's electricity mix.

Establishment of the renewable energy policy

Namene stated that the assignment of the [policy](#) began in February this year, which was tabled under a strict timeline of six months.

She said strategy involved three main activities, namely the inception phase, the gaps and needs analysis, and lastly the policy formulation.

It is reported that the final draft contains four main scenarios that have been developed: the Reference Scenario; a Pro-Wind/Solar Scenario with Kudu; a Pro-Hydro Scenario without Kudu; and a 70% [Renewable Energy](#) (RE) in 2030 Scenario.

These scenarios express different possible paths that Namibia can take, with varying levels of installed capacity of renewable energies.

While the first three scenarios are developed for information and comparison purposes, the 70% RE in 2030 scenario will enable Namibia to reach the target of 70% renewable energy in terms of annual generated electricity in 2030.

Key goals of the policy

- Namibia must address the problem of inadequate access to electricity (especially in rural areas), the challenge of extending affordable energy services to underserved populations and the need for self-sufficiency and energy independence.
- The country must also ensure that the energy sector development is climate-resilient and able to secure energy access even in a non-stationary natural environment.
- Renewable energy, if developed strategically and with foresight, holds the solution to all these challenges.

Mines and energy minister Obeth Kandjoze said the renewable energy policy is long-overdue and is essential for Namibia to increase the endorsement of renewable energy technologies in the country's energy mix and address security of supply.

"It is my hope that the implementation of the policy will be accompanied by the same vigour. Policy implementation is not always easy; the real work starts now," he stated. (ESI 03-08-2016)

CANADIAN FIRM TO RESTART OIL DRILLING IN POST-EBOLA LIBERIA

The Canadian Overseas Petroleum has disclosed that it will restart the drilling for oil in Mesurado-1 in Liberia in late 2016 or early 2017.

According to a report by the local media on Wednesday, interest in Block LB-13 has increased in recent months following ExxonMobil's discovery of the prolific LIZA oil field in the conjugate basin in Guyana.

Mesurado-1, according to the report, has been de-risked through the use of modern seismic techniques, as well as the discovery of oil in offset wells.

ExxonMobil and other companies exploring for oil in Liberia suspended operations due to the Ebola Virus Disease in Liberia two years ago. (APA 03-08-2016)

DESERTIFICATION WOES OVERSHADOW NIGER INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATION



Niger has been celebrating 56 years of independence from colonial rule on Wednesday amid a frantic national campaign to head off desertification.

Niger marked the day with a so-called 'Festival of the Tree' in which every citizen is encouraged to plant a tree, to preserve the environment and fight encroaching desertification which endangers the country's ecosystem.

President Mahamadou Issoufou presided over the tree-planting ceremony held near the Tanimou Boulevard, right next to the Nigerien-Turkish Friendship Square.

By planting a tree, the president had given the official green light for thousands of trees to be planted along the newly built 10 km boulevard, which complements the current facelift to the capital, Niamey.

The Festival of the Tree, whose 41st edition was observed on August 3, was introduced in 1975 by the Supreme Military Council (MSC) led by the late President General Seyni Kountche to fight desertification.

This year's theme: "Let us mobilize and change behaviour for the sustainable management of our natural resources," and this, with the aim of raising people's awareness of the need for environmental preservation.

Every Nigerien is being encouraged to plant a tree, but most importantly to tend it.

Since the introduction of the festival, hundreds of thousands of tree seedlings have been planted across Niger. (APA 03-08-2016)

JAPAN GIVES US\$2.7M TOWARDS MOZAMBIQUE EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE

The Japanese government has donated US\$2.7 million to Mozambique in response to food shortages caused by the El Nino phenomenon, APA learns here on Wednesday.

Japan said in a statement that the amount is part of a US\$5-million programme that the Japanese government has decided to grant to a group of southern African countries facing the worst drought in over 35 years.

The money will be channelled through the United Nations World Food Programme.

"The Government of Japan expresses its solidarity with the Mozambican people and with this food aid, hopes to improve the nutritional status of the population located in areas plagued by this phenomenon," reads part of statement.

At least 1.5 million people in Mozambique are in urgent need for food aid and do not have water for their consumption and for livestock watering, according to the National Institute of Disaster Management.

The statement added that besides Mozambique, Japan would provide food and nutritional support to

Malawi, Lesotho and Swaziland where needs have been growing due to drought caused by El Nino.(APA 03-08-2016)

NEW ALLIANCE TO SHORE UP FOOD SECURITY LAUNCHED IN AFRICA



As over 20 million sub-Saharan Africans face a shortage of food because of drought and development issues, representatives of the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the Pan African Parliament (PAP) met in Johannesburg to forge a new parliamentary alliance focusing on food and nutritional security.

Monday's meeting here came after years of planning that began on the sidelines of the Second International Conference on Nutrition organised by the FAO in late 2014.

"The first port of call when there are food security issues is normally the parliament. We should be at the forefront of moving towards what is known as Zero Hunger." -- Dr. Bernadette Lahai

Speaking at the end of the day-long workshop held at the offices of the PAP, its fourth vice president was upbeat about the programme and what she called the "positive energy" shown by attendees.

"We have about 53 countries here in the PAP and the alliance is going to be big," she said. "At a continental level, once we have launched the alliance formally, we'll encourage regional parliaments so the whole of Africa will really come together."

"This will be a very big voice," she said on the sidelines of the workshop.

FAO Rome Special Co-ordinator for parliamentary alliances, Caroline Rodrigues Birkett, said her role was to ensure that parliamentarians take up food security as a central theme.

"The reason why we're doing this is because based on the evidence that we have in the FAO, is that once you have the laws and policies on food and nutrition security in place there is a positive correlation with the improvement of the indicators of both food and security of nutrition," she told IPS.

"Last year we facilitated the attendance of seven African parliamentarians to a Latin American and Caribbean meeting in Lima, and these seven requested us to have an interaction with parliamentarians of Africa," she said.

A small team of officials representing Latin America and the Caribbean had traveled to Johannesburg to provide some details of their own experience working alongside the FAO in an alliance which had focused on providing food security to the hungry in South America and the island nations of the Caribbean.

These included Maria Augusta Calle of Ecuador, who told the 20-odd PAP representatives that in her experience working alongside officials from the FAO had helped eradicate hunger in much of the region. Caribbean representative Caesar Saboto of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was also forthright about the opportunities that existed in the developing world to deal with hunger alleviation.

"It's the first time that I'm traveling to Africa," he said, "and it's not for a vacation. It's for a very important reason. I do not want to go back to the Caribbean and I'm certain that Maria Augusta Calle does not want to go back only to say that we came to give a speech."

Saboto delivered a short presentation where he outlined how a similar programme to the foundation envisaged by those attending the workshop had drastically reduced hunger in his country.

"In 1995, 20 percent of my country of 110,000 people were undernourished," he said. "Over 22,000 were food vulnerable. But do you know what? Working with communities and within governments we managed to drive down that number to 5,000 in 2012 or 4.9 percent of the population. And I'm pleased

to announce here for the first time, that in 2016 we are looking at a number of 3,500 or 3.2 percent,” he said to applause from the delegates.

PAP members present included representatives of sectors such as agriculture, gender, transport and justice as well as health. Questions from the floor included how well a small island nation’s processes could be used in addressing the needs of vastly larger regions in Africa.

“Any number can be divided,” said Saboto. “First you have to start off with the political will, both government and opposition must buy into the idea. If you have 20 million people you could divide them into workable groups and assign structures for management accountability and transparency,” he said. African delegates queried the processes which the Latin American nations have used to set up structures in particular. Dr. Lahai wanted the Latin American delegates to assist the African parliament in planning the foundation.

“Food security is not only a political issue but a developmental issue,” she told IPS in an interview.

“The first port of call when there are food security issues is normally the parliament. We should be at the forefront of moving towards what is known as Zero Hunger,” she said.

But major challenges remain. After a meeting in October last year, the FAO had contracted the PAP with a view to targeting hunger in a new alliance. The PAP is a loose grouping of African nations and members pointed out that they were unable to get nation states to support an initiative without a high-level buy in of their political leadership.

Dr. Lahai was adamant that the workshop should begin addressing issues of structure. She stressed that co-ordination between the PAP, various countries and other groupings such as Ecowas (the Economic Community of West African States) and SADC (Southern African Development Community) should be considered.

“We need a proper framework,” she said. “It’s important to engage our leaderships in this process. With that in mind, I would suggest that we learn a great deal from our visitors who’ve had a positive experience in tackling nutrition issues in Latin America.”

In an earlier presentation, FAO representative for South Africa Lewis Hove had warned that a lack of access to food and nutrition had created a situation where children whose growth had been stunted by this reality actually were in the most danger of becoming obese later in life. The seeming contradiction was borne out by statistics presented to the group showing low and middle income countries could see their benefit cost ratio climb to 16-1.

Africa’s Nutritional Scorecard published by NEPAD in late 2015 shows that around 58 million children in sub-Saharan regions under the age of five are too short for their age. A further 163 million women and children are anaemic because of a lack of nutrition.

The day ended with an appeal for further training and facilitation to be enabled by the FAO and PAP leadership. With that in mind, the upcoming meeting of Latin American and Caribbean states in Mexico was set as an initial deadline to begin the process of creating a new secretariat. It was hoped that this would prompt those involved in the PAP to push the process forward and it was agreed that a new Secretariat would be instituted to be headquartered at the PAP in South Africa.

Dr Lahai said delegates would now prepare a technical report which would then be signed off at the next round of the PAP set for Egypt later this year.(IPS 02-08-2016)

DIFFICULTY OBTAINING CURRENCY AFFECTS CEMENT PRODUCTION IN ANGOLA

The difficulty of obtaining foreign currencies to import raw material means the Secil Lobito cement company’s production and sales should this year drop 25 percent to 150,000 tons, company managing director Augusto Miragaia said.

Miragaia told the Angolan newspaper O País that the company did not have enough exchange resources to import clinker, a raw material used in cement production, or to acquire other materials and hire skilled labour.

Other challenges include tripled fuel costs and the doubled price of electric power, factors which affect production costs, he said.

During the last three months the factory has been operating with clinker purchased from the Cuanza Sul Cement Factory, which stopped supplying it in late June.

Angola currently has five cement plants and an installed capacity of about 8 million tons per year, which in 2015 exceeded demand by 2.7 million tons.

The Lobito cement plant is controlled by Secil-Angola – Investimentos e Participações, with a 51 percent stake; the remaining 49 percent pertain to Angola's state-held Empresa Nacional de Cimentos (Encime). (04-08-2016)

MICROFINANCE CREDIT HITS OVER \$1.5M IN UEMOA ZONE IN MAY



Microfinance institutions issued over \$1.5 million credit in the West Africa Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) zone, records showed in late March 2016, according to the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO) on Wednesday.

Compared to the same period last year, when it stood at FCFA 796.4 billion, the outstanding loan increased by 15.6 percent (1 FCFA equivalent to 0.0017 dollar). "It represents 7 percent of loans granted by microfinance institutions", BCEAO says.

Based on a sample of 135 SFDs, the Central Bank noted that the loans rose by 15.6 percent from their level in late March 2015, to stand at FCFA 828.8 billion in late March 2016.

The recorded increases totaled 34.9 percent in Cote d'Ivoire, 21 percent in Benin, 14.5 percent in Mali, 11.7 percent in Burkina Faso, 11 percent in Senegal, 9.6 percent in Togo and 8.6 percent in Niger. However, a decline of 6.5 percent was recorded in Guinea-Bissau.

The average outstanding loan per member increased slightly to stand at FCFA 87 951 at the end of March 2016 against 86 579 FCFA at the end of March 2015. (APA 03-06-2016)

HIGH-SPEED CONNECTIVITY – KEY TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY IN AFRICA

A country's capacity to connect its economy to the internet, and make these services available and accessible to its citizens and businesses, is key to its success in the digital age. Fresh from the relief that South Africa has dodged a ratings downgrade, at least for now, the latest [Network Readiness Index](#) from the World Economic Forum offers more heartening news, namely that South Africa is in fact improving in this regard. More particularly, the country has gained ten spots within the rankings, now sitting at 65th place.

No less encouraging is the reason behind this progress: improvements to infrastructure and affordability. On both fronts, gains are being made. In Johannesburg it is difficult to drive through a neighbourhood, at least in the northern suburbs, and miss the many trenches being dug for optical fibre cables. On the affordability front, we have also slowly but steadily seen the positive impact that increased competition is bringing to the market, with high-speed connectivity becoming considerably more palatable financially than it was two years ago.

Business driving progress

Not the least bit surprising is that businesses appear to be driving digital transformation in the country. In the Network Readiness Index, South Africa's best rating by a wide margin was for business usage, coming in at 32nd.

At DFA we have seen a clear indication of the pivotal role businesses are playing in accelerating digital transformation over the past two years. In 2014 we connected 1181 buildings and 3966 end points. Last year those figures almost doubled and tripled respectively, with 2046 buildings and 11 706 end points being connected.

Clearly, small and medium enterprises have a key role to play in South Africa's development, and it is well within all our interests that this momentum of fibre to the business (FTTB) continues unimpeded. Indeed, one of the key findings in the Index is that businesses will need to innovate continuously, and this is fueled by high levels of business ICT adoption. Network stability and high-speed connectivity are both critical to ICT adoption and to innovating in a digital age – a fact that cannot be overstated.

Gains and benefits

Even as deploying widespread connectivity throughout the country is not a small task, ensuring that FTTB deployment continues on an upward trajectory is largely expected to be well worth the effort. According to the World Bank, every 10% increase in high-speed connectivity in a developing country might result in a 1.3% increase in GDP.

More particularly, auditing and consulting company Deloitte has [noted](#) that if developing countries, such as those in Africa, could bridge the gap in Internet penetration to reach levels that developed economies enjoy today, they would experience significant benefits. These include large increases in GDP growth and productivity along with improvements in health conditions and education opportunities.

The Department of Telecommunications appears to be cognisant of the pivotal role that high-speed connectivity plays in fostering economic growth. Earlier this year it announced that, under its SA Connect programme, R1.6 billion has been allocated to the national broadband infrastructure network programme.

On the down side, the World Economic Forum pointed out that innovation and the business environment in South Africa seems to be on the decline – especially regarding technology and venture capital availability, government procurement of the latest technologies, and procedures to start a business. As noted, it would be unfortunate if these impediments hampered further investment in infrastructure, especially as infrastructure remains one of the keys that has enabled the country to enjoy an increase in international Internet bandwidth.

Misses and losses

The Index also found that governments and businesses alike are still missing out on a growing digital and mobile-savvy population. This is despite the fact that mobile tariffs have more than halved and broadband tariffs dropped slightly, reducing barriers to adoption also in terms of affordability.

Furthermore, skills, or the lack thereof, is still South Africa's Achilles' heel, ranked 95th, even as infrastructure and affordability improvements pushed the country up in the overall ranking. This points at another major issue where there is much room for improvement.

Call to action

Even as individual countries grapple with network readiness in their own unique way, clearly South Africa still needs to address its pain points of limited skills, the need for adequate education to ensure digital skills in the long run, and reversing a seemingly unfriendly business-creation and -investment environment.

At a time when the country's economy has contracted with fears about a looming recession, decisive stakeholders need to take decisive action to use every advantage to its fullest. Connectivity plays a key role here, particularly with regards to enabling new businesses to grow and existing businesses to more fully take advantage of the digital economy – and thus foster employment.

Doing so should not only go a long way towards addressing the single biggest concern in South Africa with regards to network readiness according to the Index – that of a deteriorating business and innovation environment – but also ultimately help spur on much-needed economic growth and African innovation once again. (IT News Africa 04-08-2016)

EU PACKAGE DEAL INTERRUPTS IVORIAN MPS' RECESS

Ivorian parliamentarians on Friday cut short their recess to consider a bill authorizing President Alassane Ouattara to ratify the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union, APA learnt from Abidjan.

Chaired by First Vice President, Sara Sako Fadika, this first extraordinary session of 2016, on the partnership agreement signed in 2008, will end next Friday with a open session.

“Our next meetings were normally scheduled for October 5 but the Assembly Speaker convened this session to meet President Alassane Ouattara’s request” Ms. Fadiga told her peers. (APA 05-08-2016)

SASOL GROUP CONTRACTS TRAINING SERVICES FROM MOZAMBIKAN COMPANY

South Africa’s Sasol group has contracted Futuro Skills Mozambique Ltd to train its workers and those of its subcontractors operating at Inhassoro in Inhambane province, Australia’s RBR Group Ltd announced.

The Australian group, which controls 100 percent of Futuro Skills Mozambique Ltd, explained that its subsidiary would provide training in two fields, with classes to begin this coming September.

RBR chief executive Richard Carcenac said he hoped that this first contract obtained with a major company would be followed by others as Mozambique’s abundant resources and natural gas are progressively exploited.

Several days after awarding the first contract to Futuro Skills Mozambique Ltd, the Sasol group requested a new proposal for additional training, Carcenac added.

The Perth-based RBR Group Ltd (<http://www.rbrgroup.com.au/>) is listed in the Australian Securities Exchange. It supplies services to companies operating in the natural resources, construction, gas and oil sectors. (04-08-2016)

NIGERIA URGED TO RESTORE MONEY TRANSFER SERVICES

According to a report via [TelecomPaper](#), WorldRemit has called for the urgent restoration of money transfers to Nigeria as draconian new rules leave virtually all money transfer operators unable to provide services to the West African country.

The report reveals that only three companies – Western Union, MoneyGram and Ria – will be able to continue operations, following an “extreme and unexpected” move by the Central Bank of Nigeria. The company, in common with all other international MTOs, has been instructed by its local correspondents that transfers to Nigeria will no longer be processed and is, accordingly, suspending services immediately.

According to [AllAfrica.com](#), WorldRemit founder and CEO, Ismail Ahmed said: “This move is arbitrary, inexplicable and hugely detrimental to the Nigerian diaspora who rely on hundreds of money transfer companies and banks, providing them with choice, convenience and competitive pricing.

“Even now, as we suspend our service, there is no clarity on why this sudden change has happened. If it is on the basis of new rules, there was no warning. If it is a re-interpretation of old rules, local correspondent networks and banks should have been forewarned.

“This reverses the progress made by the country when the Nigeria Central Bank banned Western Union’s exclusivity agreements that had created a near-monopolistic position in the international money transfer market. Western Union controlled 78% of the market share when CBN outlawed exclusivity agreements with local banks.” (IT News Africa 04-08-2016)

EU contributes CFA32.7 bln to anti-Boko Haram war chest



The European Union has agreed to grant some CFA32.7 billion to help strengthen the Joint Multinational Force (JMF) in its fight against the Nigerian Islamist sect Boko Haram.

The JMF Office in the Cameroonian capital Yaounde told APA on Thursday that the grant buttresses the “Peace Facility” Program initiated within the framework of the mandate of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and is aimed at strengthening the regional response against the jihadist movement.

It also comes against the backdrop of the redeployment of efforts by member countries of the Commission of the Lake Chad Basin (LCBC) and Benin, with a view to eliminating the threat posed by Boko Haram and thereby secure the people and areas affected by the insurgents.

According to the EU, the attacks by the sect against people have severely affected the north-east of Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon and Niger, with over 13,000 people killed since the insurgency began in 2009, 2.5 million internally displaced people (IDPs) and around 250,000 others forced to flee to other countries.

The regional force, instituted by the heads of state directly affected by the wave of terrorist attacks, under the aegis of the United Nations, consists of 8,700 soldiers, including 3,750 from Nigeria, 3,000 from Chad, 2,650 from Cameroon, 1,000 from Niger and 750 from Benin. (APA 04-08-2016)

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The Memorandum is also made available by AHEAD-GLOBAL, BCA, Chamber of Tenerife (by posting it at the Africa Info Market), CCA - Corporate Council on Africa (USA), ELO,HTTC ,NABA,NABC (by posting selected news) and SwissCham-Africa to their Members.



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