

# MEMORANDUM

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## THE LIGHTS GO OUT IN ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe experienced a widespread electricity outage due to a "system disturbance" on Sunday. Large parts of the country were left without power for up to six hours, the SABC reported on Monday. Power utility Zesa Holdings said in a statement that an unplanned loss of power to "most parts of the country" was "due to a system disturbance that led to a loss of one unit at Kariba Power Station, four units at Hwange Power Station, small thermals, power imports from Mozambique and the Zambian interconnection, leading to the destabilisation of the national electricity grid".

Zimbabwe needs about 2,200MW of power during periods of peak demand and imports about 300MW of power from Eskom.

Meanwhile, Eskom said on Monday the start of a wage strike had not yet affected operations at its 27 power stations.

Spokesman Khulu Phasiwe also reiterated Eskom's position that its employees were prohibited by law from going on strike.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) earlier on Monday said its members at three Eskom power stations had downed tools. (TMG Digital, Reuters 08-08-2016)

## ANGOLAN OIL SECTOR COMPANIES URGE RETURN TO DOLLAR PAYMENTS

Companies providing services to Angola's oil industry want to be authorised to receive payment in dollars, in accordance with a request to the National Bank of Angola presented on Friday by the head of the United States/Angola Chamber of Commerce (USACC).

Pedro Godinho was speaking at the First Friday Club, a monthly meeting of institutional and business representatives organised by the USACC. He said service providers should once again be able to be paid in foreign currency, to avoid losses and even bankruptcies due to Angolan currency devaluation.

"The lower oil price and lack of foreign currency mean companies are failing due to existing problems, especially those unable to make transactions on the international market, which see the value of their financial resources in national banks devalue daily," Godinho said, cited by the daily *Jornal de Angola*. The amounts sold by the National Bank of Angola to commercial banks are not enough and have little impact on the economy, as the oil industry is capital intensive and its operations move hundreds of millions of dollars, he added.

The 25-year old United States/Angola Chamber of Commerce promotes trade and investment exchanges between the two countries. (08-08-2016)

## SOUTH AFRICA: ELECTION REVEALS SHIFT IN POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Amid recriminations and celebrations, the final results of the 2016 local government elections late on Saturday showed that SA's political landscape has been fundamentally altered, with the governing party's share of the vote falling from 62% to 54%, and governing by coalition set to be the order of the day in key municipalities.

This is the first time since SA's transition to democracy in 1994 that the ANC's support has fallen below 60%, reflecting the lethal combination of a compromised president, a limping economy, factional battles within the party and poor service delivery in many municipalities.

The ANC will this week begin the difficult process of assessing where it went wrong, in a national working committee meeting which is scheduled for Monday. This will be followed by a national executive committee meeting on Friday, which will precede an ANC national executive committee *lekgotla*.

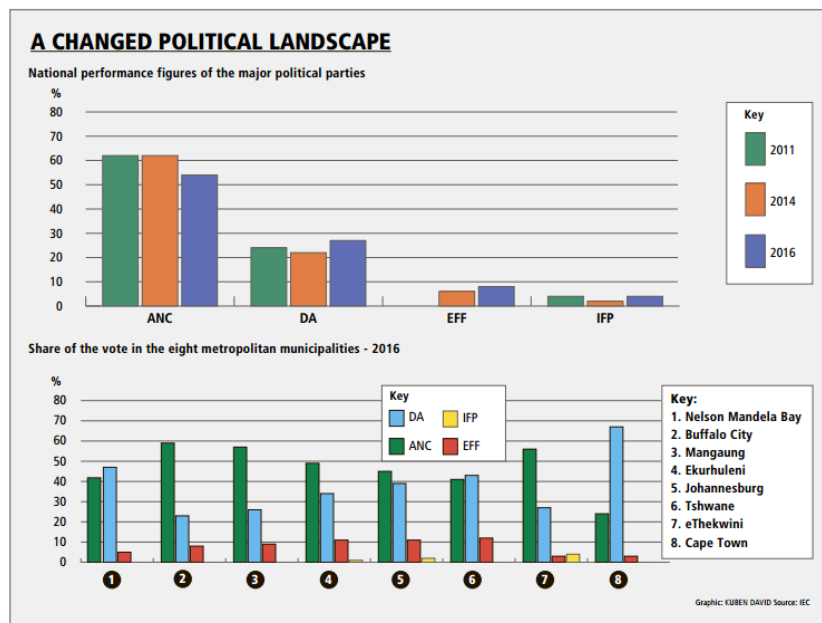
ANC secretary-general Gwede Mantashe on Sunday said it would be a long process of introspection for the party to assess what went wrong. He declined to provide an "ad hoc analysis".

In a significant development, several of the larger opposition parties are understood to be planning to meet in Gauteng on Monday to pursue potentially tough coalition talks.

For the official opposition, the DA, the poll results usher in a new era that has opened up the possibility of governing outside its Western Cape stronghold.

The EFF, which contested a municipal election for the first time, now has a footprint in municipalities across the country, and is set to be a kingmaker in key metropolitan municipalities as it decides whether to use its seats to bolster the ANC or the DA, particularly in Nelson Mandela Bay, Tshwane, Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni and Mogale City, where neither large party won an outright majority.

The results show that the ANC is losing its grip on urban areas across SA. Even in its stronghold provinces, which are largely rural, its support fell by unprecedented levels. In the North West, the ANC dropped from 74% in 2011 to 54% in 2016; in the Eastern Cape it fell from 71% to 65%; in the Free State from 71% in 2011 to 62%; in Limpopo from 81% to 69%; and in Mpumalanga from 78% to 71%.



Its support grew marginally in KwaZulu-Natal from 56.7% in 2011 to 57.4% in 2016. Zuma supporters have blamed the Gauteng ANC leadership for the decline in support in key metros in the province, and talk that the party will suspend the provincial executive committee has not abated.

At the results announcement on Saturday, four EFF members staged a silent protest in front of Zuma as he spoke, displaying posters harking back to the rape accusations of which he was acquitted 10 years ago. Insiders described the surprise protest as an embarrassment, and an illustration of why the ANC's support in urban areas was eroding fast.

The poll also suggested a revival in the fortunes of the Inkatha Freedom Party, after its breakaway — the National Freedom Party — failed to register on time.

The ANC's national support slipped from 61.9% in 2011 to 53.9% in 2016; the DA's from 23.9% in 2011 to 26.9% in 2016; and the EFF obtained 8.2% of the vote.

The final numbers suggest that many former ANC voters stayed away, split their votes or voted for the opposition, the EFF in the main, but also the DA.

Voter turnout at 57.9% was slightly higher than the 57.6% in 2011, but about 1.5-million more people registered to vote than in the last poll.

DA leader Mmusi Maimane said the character of the DA was clearly in flux, and the party had already started to adjust the way it operated, increasing its support in townships in Gauteng, the Western Cape and the Eastern Cape. Maimane said its presence in the country's economic hub of Gauteng had to be reviewed and beefed up — particularly ahead of 2019, where the party would move to capture the province.

EFF leader Julius Malema said the election would help the party ahead of 2019 as it now had a footprint and councillors across the country, who would assist the party with resources going forward to the next election. "This money thing is big," he said, describing how costly fighting an election campaign could be.

Malema's party would enter into coalition talks with anyone who approached it, he said. (BD 08-08-2016)

## **ANGOLA'S ECONOMY MINISTER PROPOSES STRUCTURAL CHANGE OF ECONOMY**

The economic, financial and foreign exchange situation of Angola, owing to an external shock, requires a structural change of the economy to ensure wellbeing of its citizens, said Economy Minister Abrahão Gourgel.

Gourgel made his comments at the National Pension Fund Conference on Friday in Luanda, an initiative of the Insurance and Pension Fund Academy. He explained that structural changes imply meeting domestic demand for goods and services with domestic production and increasingly higher levels of national added value, among other measures and options.

He also called for reducing imported labour to "what is necessary", a process that should be accompanied by technical and professional preparation of the national workforce.

Gourgel said that pension funds and social security are complementary, offering an alternative to the distribution system whereby younger generations pay the pensions of older generations, reported Angop news agency.

Pension funds are based on a capitalisation system in which the beneficiary receives pensions per the contributions made during years of service and respective income generated by those contributions, he added.

The National Pension Fund Conference was held on the occasion of National Insurance and Pension Fund Day on 5 August. (08-08-2016)

## **BUSINESS CONFIDENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA IMPROVES SLIGHTLY**

Business confidence in SA recovered moderately in July, supported by a firmer rand, slightly higher commodity prices and exports, along with improved energy supply.

The South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Sacci) business confidence index rose to 96 in July from 95.1 in June.

Sacci said that, apart from a stronger exchange rate and improved merchandise export volumes, investor and business confidence had to improve in order to propel the economy to higher activity levels.

The chamber called for caution to be exercised on "vulnerable economic issues" over the short to medium term, especially with SA facing the probability of a credit ratings downgrade in December.

"A concerted effort will be necessary to avoid even tighter economic conditions in 2017 as such lower economic growth holds additional repercussions for public finance, unemployment and the real cost of borrowing," Sacci said in a statement on Monday.

With the public sector experiencing constraints to act as employer of last resort, the only avenue available to create jobs was higher economic growth, Sacci said.

High inflation, lower vehicle sales and the construction of buildings dampened business confidence in July.

The index is based on developments around 13 economic indicators: energy supply, manufacturing, exports, imports, vehicle sales, retail sales, the construction of buildings, inflation, share prices, real private sector borrowing, real financing cost, precious metal prices and the rand exchange rate.

There were marginally fewer impediments in the real business environment in July 2016 compared to June 2016, Sacci said. (BD 08-08-2016)

## MOZAMBIQUE LAUNCHES PUBLIC TENDER FOR NATIONAL GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

The Mozambican government plans to launch an international public tender to contract a company to carry out a detailed geological survey of the country, the national director for geology and mines said. Elias Daudi told the Maputo-based daily Notícias that the Natural Resources Ministry was still committed to the geological survey at 1/50,000 scale. The aim is to ascertain existing mineral resources in detail, despite current financial difficulties.

The survey will complement the geophysical survey already carried out in the southern part of Nampula province and the northern part of Zambézia province.

“The geophysical survey using aerial means has been completed in those two areas. The second phase involving the geological survey at 1/50,000 scale is now being planned,” the national geology and mines director explained.

Daudi did not reveal figures for the amounts involved in the operation, indicating that everything would depend on the upcoming international public tender. But he added that the respective financing has been assured via the World Bank. (05-08-2016)

## DEVASTATING IMPACT OF EL NINO AND CLIMATE REQUIRES NEW RESPONSE MODEL

The newly-appointed United Nations Special Envoy on El Niño & Climate Mrs Mary Robinson, said in her remarks at a meeting with UN agencies and humanitarian donors on the impact of El Niño in Ethiopia that responses by governments and international partners to climactic events must urgently integrate humanitarian, development and resilience strategies to ensure effective, coherent and sustainable change.

“We must embrace the reality that climate change is increasing the frequency and ferocity of natural disasters and will continue to do so. It is no longer effective to view the devastating impact of these climate events from a humanitarian lens alone. Governments and the international community must urgently focus on reducing vulnerability of the poorest communities so that these events are not recurring humanitarian crises. Humanitarian, development and resilience interventions must be integrated in response planning to include institutional reforms, rural development, economic opportunities, increased access to energy, and strengthened public service management” Mrs Robinson said in her remarks at meetings in Addis Ababa with UN agencies, NGOs and donors.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon appointed Mary Robinson (former President of Ireland, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and founder of the Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice) and Ambassador Kamau (Kenya’s Permanent Representative to the UN in New York) as his Special Envoys on El Niño and Climate in late May, tasking them with calling attention to the more than 60 million people around the world affected by severe El Niño-linked drought and climate impacts, and mobilising an integrated response that takes preparedness for future climactic events into account.

Mrs Robinson completed a three-day visit to Ethiopia to witness the devastating impact of the El Nino drought, the worst in 50 years. During this mission the Special Envoy met with the Ethiopian authorities, international ambassadors, UN agencies, and development and humanitarian partners before visiting several projects in Tigray in northern Ethiopia. She acknowledged the enormous effort of government and partners to address the impact of the crisis, including malnutrition, which has helped prevent deaths. She also underscored that these efforts must continue and more resources will be required.

“The Ethiopian Government has taken important and impressive steps to respond early to the crisis facing their people, including with substantial amounts of funding from their own budget. This crisis is not over, nor will it be the last. It is critical that international donors stay engaged and focused on supporting efforts to respond both to the immense immediate needs and long term requirements to build resilience” Mrs. Robinson said.

In Tigray, Mrs Robinson observed firsthand how smart water management and innovative resilience schemes can mitigate the impact of El Nino even in a challenging environment.

Mrs. Robinson said: "This visit reinforced my belief that, when preparing for the inevitability of the next El Nino, we need to look more closely now at how we support local communities in the management of water systems and other natural resources, rendering them more resilient." (UN 07-08-2016)

## **CEMAC EXPRESSES OPPOSITION TO CAMEROON'S SIGNING OF INTERIM EPA WITH EU**

The Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) has warned Cameroon against the entry into force on 4 August of the stepping stone Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union (EU).

In a letter to the Minister of Economy, Planning and Regional Planning (MINEPAT), Louis Paul Motaze dated August 2, the chairman of CEMAC, Pierre Moussa recommended that Cameroonian authorities must "delay the start of the tariff dismantling process slated for 4 August 2016 until the conclusion of a regional agreement."

CEMAC conference justifies this measure by the desire to ensure the implementation of this commitment and ensure the consolidation of the Customs Union instruments in the region.

Based on the relevant provisions of the Convention governing the UMAC, Pierre Moussa recalled that "a State wishing to depart from the rules of CEMAC's Economic Union and common commercial policy should seek authorization from the competent Community bodies."

On the occasion of the conference of CEMAC Heads of State, held 30 July in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, the President of Gabon Ali Bongo was appointed to "undertake the necessary steps with the authorities in Cameroon, together with the EU, in order to continue negotiations between states." (APA 06-08-2016)

## **BURKINA FASO GETS CFA5BN US AID TO FINANCE HEALTH PROGRAMS**

The United States has made available to Burkina Faso, 5 billion CFA for the implementation of the Global health security agenda (GHSA), the Health Ministry told APA on Saturday.

This program, which aims "to achieve a safe and secure world against health threats of all kinds," will strengthen the existing health structures with the creation of a center in Bobo-Dioulasso that will lead to an intensive training in management of epidemic-prone diseases.

Global health security aims to accelerate projects that would make the world secure against the threat of infectious diseases.

This program also aims to promote global health security as an international priority and boost progress towards the full implementation of the World Health Organization (WHO) and other instruments' guidelines.

Burkina was selected among 17 countries to receive funding to implement this American financed program.

Burkina Faso has been enjoying American support in the fight against epidemic prone diseases since 2008, with support from the Atlanta Center for Prevention and Disease Control. (APA 06-08-2016)

## GUINEA'S FOREST REGION FACES FUEL SHORTAGE



The storage tanks of gas stations in the province of N'Zérékoré, southeast of Guinea have run dry for several days, on-site sources said.

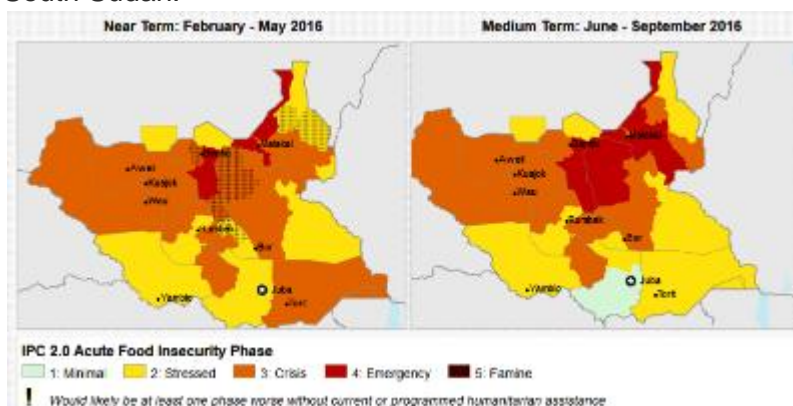
This situation favors the emergence of black market petrol with a liter which traded for 15,000 Guinean francs (1.5 Euro) instead of the official price of 8,000 Guinean francs a liter.

This is reportedly caused by the delay of tankers to reach the forest region where road infrastructure is very poor, especially during rainy season.

The shortage, which seriously affects the transport sector in the province, concerns the region's administrative authorities who, according to our information, alerted the national services responsible for the management of petroleum products in order to find affirmative solution. (APA 07-08-2016)

## UNICEF WARNS OF 'CATASTROPHIC' FOOD INSECURITY IN S. SUDAN

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said it had started responding to the growing food security emergency causing malnutrition in children in both rural and urban areas of, a month after violence broke out in South Sudan.



"The situation in South Sudan is catastrophic, and even more so for children," UNICEF spokesperson Christophe Bouliercac said in a statement on Friday.

This year, UNICEF has reportedly treated 120,000 children under age five for severe malnutrition, a figure higher than what the agency had in the same period last year.

"Initially, UNICEF had been planning to provide support to 166,000 children in 2016, but that figure has been revised to more than 250, 000," the official said.

Last month, clashes between South Sudan's rival forces in the capital, Juba displaced over 40,000 civilians, the world body said.

Seven out of the country's 10 states have reached the malnutrition-rate-emergency threshold of 15 per cent, while in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, the malnutrition rate stands at 33 per cent, noted Bouliercac.

According to agency, a sharp rise in malnutrition in urban areas, including Juba, where the rates of children admitted for malnutrition to UNICEF-supported Al-Sabbah children's hospitals were some 20% higher in the first six months of 2016 than for the same period last year.

The official, in the statement, also cited the country's inflation rate as one of the main reasons for the high increase, explaining that it made basic household staples too expensive for many families.

He, however, said although UNICEF could not provide the numbers of children dying from starvation, "one quarter of a million children in South Sudan are facing severe malnutrition."

Inaccessibility of roads due to the ongoing conflict has further limited UNICEF's ability to respond in the most urgent cases, leaving the more expensive option of air transport to deliver supplies, said Boulierac. "Due to insecurity and the rainy season, UNICEF staffs in South Sudan are unable to be fully mobile and deliver their goods and services," he stressed.

Meanwhile, of the \$154.5 million UNICEF needs for South Sudan in 2016, the agency has reportedly received only \$52 million to assist with water and sanitation, child support services, nutrition, health and education.

More than 900,000 children, Boulierac further disclosed, have been displaced in the country, which – with 1.8 million children, or 51 per cent of school-age youngsters out of school – also had the highest proportion of out-of-school children in the world.

"An estimated 16,000 children had been recruited by armed groups, and there were concerns that the renewed violence would lead to a further expansion of that practice," he explained.

Meanwhile the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said a total of 917, 418 South Sudanese refugees have been displaced, mostly in Uganda. (Sudan Tribune 06-08-2016)

## NEW REPORT RANKS COUNTRIES ON FINANCIAL INCLUSION

"Were you happy with your service today?" The question that bank tellers often ask customers after a routine transaction might seem commonplace to many. But to a native Ugandan unfamiliar with customer service in U.S. retail banks, it could be a pleasant culture shock.

"Financial institutions in Uganda can be intimidating — for women, they're even worse," said Oliver Wonekha, the country's ambassador to the United States, at a [Brookings Institution](#) event last week. "In the U.S. you feel welcome."

Negative perceptions toward banking experiences are just one reason why so many in the developing world are excluded from formal banking institutions. Low disposable incomes, high transaction costs and a lack of branch banks are also major factors. All told, around 2 billion adults worldwide do not hold accounts at formal financial institutions, according to the [World Bank](#).

Bringing them into the financial fold requires a host of interventions by business and governments to break down the barriers that inhibit financial inclusion. And there has been significant movement over the last year on that front, as innovations in mobile banking and the proliferation of digital payment platforms take hold, according to a new report by the Brookings Institution, a Washington-D.C. based think tank. To keep pace with the wave of mobile coverage, governments have been strengthening regulatory frameworks around financial inclusion and setting bold national targets to increase formal banking channels.

The [new report](#), released last week, rates the progress of middle income and developing countries in providing affordable, formal financial services to the unbanked.

The report is the second installment of an annual Brookings study that ranks financial inclusion efforts around the world. The study surveyed 26 countries — by no means an exhaustive list — that vary across geographies and national income levels.

Countries were judged on four broad criteria. One was mobile phone penetration, which has become increasingly synonymous with financial inclusion because digital banking services allow the poor to process payments and transfers using even simple feature phones. Beyond the ubiquity of mobile coverage, countries were also judged by their so-called commitments — the existence of national financial inclusion goals, targets or pledges — regulatory environment and, of course, adoption — how much of their adult population actually uses traditional and digital financial services.

The survey results reveal promising trends and important lessons for countries looking to boost financial inclusion.



“Substantial progress has been made toward advancing financial inclusion in many countries,” the report notes in one of its opening lines. Countries generally improved their scores from the 2015 survey, indicating that financial inclusion policies have gained traction. And those that scored high last year tended to maintain or improve their ranking.

Kenya, Colombia, Brazil, South Africa and Uganda were ranked the top five most financially inclusive when measured by all four criteria.

Other countries scored high on individual measures. The Philippines, for example, ranked high in the commitment category due to its recently launched national financial inclusion strategy. Peru and Rwanda rated well for regulatory environment. And the Dominican Republic scored high in adoption.

As the report notes, there is no one single path to financial inclusion. Instead, having a combination of a supportive regulatory environment and a strong blend of buy-in from public and private sector stakeholders will often translate into financially inclusive policies and actions. The study suggests that this is true regardless of a country’s place on the development ladder. Colombia, Brazil and South Africa — all upper middle income countries — ranked in the top five overall. But Uganda, a much poorer country, was also in the top five, and Rwanda ranked seventh overall.

Uganda’s high ranking was driven largely by its decision earlier this year to amend a key piece of legislation that governs financial institutions. Among the changes, the revision allows certain financial institutions to adopt Islamic banking practices, which by catering to a sizable religious population, increases the potential customer pool.

Rwanda, meanwhile, has drawn strong investment from public and private bodies into mobile banking platforms as part of a broad strategy to expand domestic connectivity.

“We have to transform our constraints into opportunities,” Mathilde Mukantabana, Rwanda’s ambassador to the U.S. said at the Brookings event last week. “We are a landlocked country and need to [better] connect our people, so we are investing in technological infrastructure.”

Interoperability — bringing competing banks and telecommunication network providers together into the same payment system — remains a tall hurdle. It is critical challenge in Uganda, Wonekha said, as well as in many other countries.

True financial inclusion, banking experts say, is not just accessing a service digitally to make payments and process transactions, but having the flexibility to do it across an entire ecosystem of banks, merchants and commercial institutions.

“If financial inclusion is having an account at one institution with no freedom to leave the closed loop and compare products and services elsewhere — that’s not real inclusion,” Jeffrey Bower, a former digital finance specialist with the United Nations-based [Better than Cash Alliance](#), told Devex.

A recent standout model among mobile money systems is Peru, which earlier this year launched a digital banking platform called [BIM](#). The platform brings three of Peru’s main telecommunication companies and 32 of its largest bank together into one interoperable network.

But, Bower said, Peru’s model was a perfect storm of factors, precipitated by a legal framework that gave nontraditional banks more freedom to launch digital money systems. Traditional banks, wanting to protect their turf, decided to band together under a single mobile payment project.

In general, fully interoperable payment systems are much harder to come by.

“Everyone talks about collaboration,” Bower said. “It’s one thing to say you want to do something and another thing to actually do it.”

Not surprisingly, promoting an environment that can lead to greater interoperability and competitive collaboration was one of the recommendations that the Brookings report put forward as a way to further financial inclusion in developing countries.

“Regulators should engage in sustained dialogue with private sector representatives and other financial inclusion stakeholders to develop and refine regulations that promote a level playing field for providers and ensure adequate consumer protection for customers,” according to the report.

The report also advocates for greater data collection by governments, civil society and industry to better understand key trends in financial inclusion.

“The lack of consistent, multinational data constrains the ability of researchers to identify what approaches to advancing financial inclusion are working and why,” the report notes.

Digital and mobile services will inevitably continue to gain ground. And with that, the potential of mobile banking to boost financial inclusion will also grow. But ubiquity of coverage alone does not guarantee that inclusive banking models will take hold. For that to happen, governments, business and civil society

will need to advocate clear national targets around financial inclusion and collaborate on the regulations to advance them. (DEVEX 08-08-2016)

## IVORY COAST ON RIGHT TRACK TO ECONOMIC GROWTH

Ivory Coast is on the “right track” to achieving a “new economic miracle” which will mark the second miracle after in 1970s, President Alassane Ouattara said Sunday.

“Our country remains a safe destination. Our country is experiencing strong growth among the highest in the world,” Ouattara said in speech on the eve of the celebration of Cote d’Ivoire’s 56th anniversary.

According to him, “all indicators eloquently reflect” this “performance recognized by major institutions which are dedicated to assess macroeconomic policies.”

“Without being triumphant, we are proud that our country has returned to sustainable prosperity.”

However, “we will not relent in our efforts. Instead, the results achieved and recognized by all should encourage us to work harder,” he said.

Mr. Ouattara said his goal is to ensure that the living conditions of its citizens “continue to improve every day” and that “the fruits of our country’s growth be redistributed fairly.”

In the same vein, he welcomed the reported fall in land transport prices. (APA 07-08-2016)

## WE KNOW MORE ABOUT EPIDEMICS THAN EVER BEFORE. NOW WHAT?

The first reports started coming in by mobile phone. Concerned users in Syria opened up the website of [HumanitarianTracker.org](http://HumanitarianTracker.org) and filled out a basic web form. Someone was sick; it looked like polio. Taha Kass-Hout, a co-founder of the platform, recalls how the spotty initial data trickled in. Concerned, he reached out to the Syrian opposition’s aid body — the Assistance Coordination Unit. Soon, they were sending him nightly spreadsheets of reported cases. He and his team manually pulled the figures and updated Humanitarian Tracker’s open source database. Polio, a nearly eradicated disease, had returned to Syria.

Within months, it was clear that crowd sourced reports such as this had noticed something that traditional epidemic surveillance systems had missed — or at least vastly underestimated. The [World Health Organization](http://WorldHealthOrganization) reported 36 cases of polio in 2013-14. Researchers writing in the *Annals of Global Health* [found 46 more](#) using nontraditional surveillance methods, including data collected by Humanitarian Tracker.

The key to spotting the outbreak was what Kass-Hout calls the data “mosaic effect.” WHO polio surveillance relies heavily on government data from confirmed cases of a disease. But those monitoring networks have blind spots: where health systems have collapsed, where states are weak, where medical testing centers are lacking or where politics gets in the way.

Over the last half decade, researchers have begun to demonstrate that the gaps can be filled by adding in a variety of data sources, from local news to user-generated reports. “Every piece is telling you something about the bigger picture,” Kass-Hout said.

Mosaic data could transform epidemic response, providing real-time information about where a disease is spreading, who’s affected, and what control methods are most effective. But for now, that revolution remains only tentative. Even as data tools have proliferated, they haven’t yet been linked to policymaking except in isolated cases. Governments, organizations, and public health agencies are grappling with how to connect information with action.

## The data evolution

Information is among the most vital weapons public health systems have during epidemics. But throughout history, such data has also been limited by surveillance methods, testing capabilities, and often, politics.

During the SARS epidemic of 2002, for example, China was accused of [withholding data](#) that would have indicated the severity of the infection, for fear of economic fallout. The resulting information vacuum delayed an international response and may have exacerbated the overall toll of the outbreak.

Tech firms were among the first to see the potential of online sources to supplement deficient surveillance networks, and even avoid politicized data. Sick people often turn to the internet for help, searching for “flu” or posting about it on social media; [Google.org](#) began looking at ways to use that data more than a decade ago.

One of the tools that emerged was [Riff](#), an open source data platform that allowed organizations to “separate signal from noise” when monitoring an assortment of sources. Created by a Google.org-funded startup, the [Innovative Support to Emergencies, Diseases and Disasters](#), Riff was deployed first during the [swine flu outbreak of 2009](#), and then during the devastating earthquake that hit Haiti in 2010. “We paired the need with the resources” using Riff, recalls Kass-Hout, who helped develop the tool. “Somebody [on the ground] can say there is a water sanitation issue, and immediately via text message, we can identify groups that were able to help.”

By the start of this decade, a number of agencies and organizations were looking for ways to exploit big data analytics, including the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and the U.S. military, as well as researchers at Boston Children’s Hospital who built [HealthMap](#) and at the University of Oslo who built [DHIS](#).

But it was the Ebola epidemic in 2014 that elevated data monitoring tools from a niche corner of public health to center stage. The epidemic surprised public health systems, which had never seen an Ebola outbreak larger than a [few hundred people](#). The primary countries affected — Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea — lacked government surveillance to effectively track the spread of the disease.

Responding organizations literally didn’t know where to go. At [UNICEF](#), field officers in Sierra Leone turned to their organization’s innovation team. “We need to know where people are,” ventures lead Christopher Fabian recalls them saying. His group within UNICEF began using a text-messaging system called [uReport](#) that asked users for information about their communities and offered information about epidemic response in reply.

“The thing we know about epidemics is that they move fast and they move big, and if we are really trying to deal with a global health crisis the most important tool we have is information,” he said. “During Ebola, if we had had these systems [such as uReport] in place [before the crisis], we may have been able to know better where to set up our resources, because we work with a finite set of resources.”

## Potential interventions

As data sources have grown, so too has their potential to inform policy. Ebola provided an obvious example: If organizations and governments had known where and how quickly the disease was spreading, they could have positioned resources and communication strategies accordingly.

Messaging is among the most powerful applications of epidemic data, particularly for new or emerging diseases. Educating communities not to touch Ebola patients or wash corpses, for example, was vital to stemming the spread of the disease; that messaging could have gone out more quickly and in a more targeted way with better data about who was affected.

Organizations and governments could also use data sources to better position and allocate resources, something that Kass-Hout says he saw start to happen during the Haiti earthquake. A number of NGOs shared information using the Riff platform, which allowed them to coordinate deployments and link them directly to user-generated reports of need.

Once those basic applications are checked off, policymakers could take the data a step further with the growing sophistication of mathematical modeling. The CDC, for example, used its [BioMosaic platform](#) to help predict and track Ebola infections in the United States by following diaspora populations’ movements in and out of West Africa.

“We also can pair the information we are using with other types of information to build risk projections,” said John Brownstein, chief information officer of Boston Children’s Hospital and director of HealthMap. “When you pair on mathematical modeling, you can look at what various mitigation strategies might be

able to scorch out an epidemic, or to use transport data and the risk of movement to project where a virus could spread.”

### Catching up

Organizations and governments are now expanding their informational arsenals for tackling epidemics. But for now, both the data and the policy are playing catch-up to the speed of disease spread.

“The challenge for surveillance as a whole is turning it into action,” said Brownstein. HealthMap, for example, produces a large amount of high quality, open-source data, yet the data team knows relatively little about if and how it is used.

“One of the big challenges we face as HealthMap is that we push out a lot of information but we don’t get a lot back” in terms of how organizations are utilizing it to inform policy.

The success of data mapping projects may, in fact, be one of the reasons that policymakers have been slower to translate information into action. The proliferation of sources means there are few unified databases — a fact that can overwhelm both consumers and producers of the data. Phone users in West Africa during Ebola, for example, often received multiple text messages per day requesting information about their communities’ health situation, Kass-Hout recalls. “If 20 different organizations are asking you to send data, there is a lot of confusion,” he said. “One group is trying to push one software, other groups push another.”

Still, there are examples of cooperation. Some [30 governments](#), mostly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, have adopted [DHIS](#), a platform developed at the University of Oslo, to track disease outbreaks. Mobile provider Orange — one of the largest mobile networks in those regions — is now looking for ways that they can help augment that data by providing metrics about user mobility, said Nicolas de Cordes, vice president of marketing anticipation.

UNICEF Innovation also offers a model; its data tools are crafted with specific field applications in mind. The uReport tool, for example, spotted [rampant sexual exploitation](#) in schools in Liberia after the Ebola outbreak ended; UNICEF leveraged that data to help put a response system into place. “If it doesn’t link back into action, it’s useless,” Fabian said. “We are already drowning in reports.”

The Zika virus offers an immediate test case for the growing importance of using data to craft policy. A few basic mitigation techniques can help slow the spread of the disease, for example limiting standing water in homes. Women in affected areas are also being advised to put off pregnancy. Governments and responding organizations could target their messaging with precision using big data to pinpoint the most affected communities.

UNICEF, which is now partnering with tech firms to link mobility and weather data with epidemic responses, expects the learning curve to get steeper and shorter. With Zika, “we are very much at a preliminary stage,” Fabian said.

“If you look at the arc, it takes a little bit of time to figure out how best to use these systems. We know that having these data sources allows us to be more powerful and effective; we now have a good set of partnerships including with Google, IBM, and Amadeus, and we have requests from our country officers. All this comes together to mean that in the very near future, [we can] be much more efficient,” he said. (Devex 08-08-2016)

### EGYPT NEGOTIATES \$100M LOAN FROM AFDB

Egypt is negotiating a \$100 million (1\$=8.87 EGP) loan from the African Development Bank (AfDB) to finance the country’s plan to upgrade slums nationwide, international cooperation minister Sahar Nasr announced Sunday.

Nasr further said her ministry would dedicate part of the \$500 million World Bank loan to develop slums.

Earlier, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said in June that the government would complete the development of slums and poor villages in the next two years.

Egypt’s official statistics agency CAPMAS recently said in a statement that slums make up 38.6 percent of the inhabited land mass across Egyptian cities. Slums are spread over 226 out of Egypt’s 234 cities.

Only eight cities in the provinces of Suez, Sharqiya, Kafr al-Sheikh, and Giza are clear of slum areas, the agency added.

Unsafe slum areas occupy 2.8 percent of all slums in Egypt, with unsafe slums of the second degree of risk occupying 71.5 percent of the country's unsafe slums.

The state-run agency added that 33 of the unplanned slum areas in the capital, Cairo, and adjacent Giza have undergone development work funded by the Slum Development Fund.(APA 07-08-2016)

## ZAMBIA: GLENCORE RESUMES MINING AT MOPANI COPPER MINES



Glencore's Zambian Mopani Copper Mines unit has lifted its suspension of production at an underground mine that followed the death of three miners in an accident, a labour union official said on Saturday.

"The suspension of output across all Mopani Copper Mines operations was lifted at midnight after all employees involved in production were briefed on the importance of following safety rules," the official from the Mine Workers' Union of Zambia told Reuters. He declined to be named.

Glencore's said on Friday that it had halted production at all its operations after four miners were killed in two separate accidents.

MCM on Thursday suspended production at its Mufulira underground mine after three miners were electrocuted, a company official, who declined to be named, said on Friday.

Last week another miner was killed in an accident at a Mopani shaft in Kitwe, local media reported.

"The latest position is that we have suspended all production related operations across all Mopani facilities to facilitate investigations into the severe mines accidents that we have experienced in the recent past," the official said.

Apart from the Mufulira underground shaft in Mufulira, Mopani also owns the Nkana underground shaft, South Ore Body shaft and the Mindola shaft in Kitwe. (Reuters 06-08-2016)

## INTERNATIONAL MEDIATORS RETURN TO MOZAMBIQUE FOR POLITICAL DIALOGUE

Foreign mediators in the political dialogue between the Mozambican government and the main opposition party, the former rebel Renamo movement, for a definitive peace in the country, have started coming back in Maputo and are expected to resume talks on Monday, APA learns here on Sunday.

The two delegations in the dialogue are preparing a face-to-face meeting between Mozambican President, Filipe Nyusi, and Renamo leader, Afonso Dhlakama, in their search for definitive peace in the country, after the first one signed in Rome in 1992 failed.

The first group of the foreign mediators to return to Maputo is composed by two representatives of South African President, Jacob Zuma.

All foreign mediators, including representatives of the European Union, the Catholic Church and the Chester Crocker Foundation, left Maputo for their countries of origin on July the 27th allegedly because of logistical problems.

In the meantime, they recommended the two delegations in the dialogue to separately look deeply into the first of the four point agenda in the talks, the Renamo demand to govern the six of the country's 11 provinces where it claims to have won more votes in the 2014 general elections.

One of the representatives of President in the group of mediators is Thandize Chilize. He hoped the two sides in the dialogue could reach consensus for peace in Mozambique.

"Our hope is to unite Mozambicans and bring an end to hostilities for the country to move forward", said Chilize on arrival at Maputo international airport on Sunday.

Thandize Chilize is one of the representative of South African President, Jacob Zuma, in the mediation of the political dialogue in Mozambique between the government and the main opposition party in the country, the ex-rebel Renamo movement. (APA 07-08-2016)

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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, HTCC, NABA, NABC (by posting selected news) and SwissCham-Africa to their Members.



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Our longtime supporting organisation NABA - Norwegian African Business Association has just published their August 2016 update. Read more at:

<http://us9.campaign-archive2.com/?u=46eae243570069ed572b9c6ba&id=4b6e0f7ffa&e=c75d000ff4>

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