MEMORANDUM

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ECOWAS LAUNCHES ACADEMIC MOBILITY SCHEME

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in collaboration with the Association of African Universities (AAU) has launched its Academic Mobility Scheme in a brief ceremony in Abuja on 22nd September 2015.

According to a statement by the ECOWAS Commission on Wednesday in Abuja, the scheme aims to promote regional integration through a fellowship and Staff Exchange Programme by facilitating academic mobility and encouraging networking among regional institutions.

The ECOWAS President, Mr. Kadré Désiré Ouedraogo, who was represented at the event by the Commissioner for Education, Science and Culture, Dr. Jean-Pierre Ezin, noted that the launching ceremony was very symbolic for ECOWAS with history showing humanity that the main pillar of social and industrial development is knowledge.

According to him, it is the main reason why ECOWAS Heads of State and Government do place emphasis on education helping the West African region to accelerate development and eradicate poverty in the process.

In his remarks, the President of the AAU, Professor O. Oyewole, disclosed that the programme would not only promote mobility of students, but also the internationalization of universities in West Africa.

The Programme to be funded by ECOWAS and managed by the AAU would have staff from universities in West Africa or West African academics in Diaspora sponsored to undertake visits to universities in the region to offer services such as teaching, graduate theses supervision, serving as external examiners or engaging in joint research.

Similarly, the ECOWAS Fellowship Programme (EFP) for Masters and PhD will seek to promote capacity building within the region by providing full fellowships for training and educating of nationals of member states in education institutions of ECOWAS.

On hand for the launch were the head of European Union Delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS, ambassador Michel Arrion, a representative of the Nigerian Ministry of Education, Professor Jonathan Mba and Professor E. Ehile of the AAU as well as Vice-Chancellors from universities in the region .(APA 23-09-2015)

KENYANS MARK WESTGATE ANNIVERSARY

Kenyans held prayers and lit candles in Nairobi on Monday to mark the second anniversary commemorations of the Westgate shopping mall attack by militants from Somalia's al-Qaeda-affiliated al-Shebab.

In the Nakumatt supermarket inside the mall, where many of those who died in the attack were killed, staff held prayers, as shoppers went about normal business in the redecorated building.

"We are commemorating a time where many of our friends were lost, many of our friends had their destinies shattered," said preacher Dennis Pamba, as staff in the supermarket lit lines of white candles to remember those killed.

The attack began on September 21 2013, when four gunmen entered the mall, spraying shoppers and staff with machine gun fire and tossing grenades into crowds of Saturday shoppers and diners. The attack left 67 dead.

"Though they killed the 67, they never killed our spirit," said supermarket manager David Muturi.

"My appeal to all Kenyans all over the world is people to come and shop at Westgate, Westgate is safe... we will continue with the same spirit."

Apparently inspired by the Mumbai attack of 2008, the gunmen hunted down shoppers in supermarket aisles and singled out non-Muslims for execution. They then fought it out with Kenyan security forces before the siege was finally declared over four days after the first shot was fired.

"If we work together towards the good of the Lord, we shall always be victorious in our war with terrorism," Nakumatt worker Francis Kimotho said.

The Shebab said the attack was revenge for Kenya's sending of troops to fight the extremists in Somalia. They have launched a string of subsequent attacks in Kenya, including their biggest attack to date earlier this year — the massacre of 148 people, most of them students, at Garissa university in the northeast.

All four gunmen were believed to have died in the mall, their bodies burnt and crushed by tons of rubble after a section of the complex collapsed following a fierce blaze started by the fighting.

The Westgate mall, Nairobi's most upmarket shopping centre and a magnet for the east African nation's growing middle class and expatriates, reopened in July after extensive renovations.

Prayers were also held on Sunday in Nairobi's Karura forest at a site where a memorial stone and a plaque bearing the names of the dead, as well as newly planted trees, was unveiled a year ago.

Survivors and relatives of those killed remembered the attack.

"We cannot even understand how it happened, and we honestly hope that it will never happen again," said Rupal Mital Shah, whose husband was killed, speaking at the memorial on Sunday.

"We miss him dearly, we still love him and we are just here because we planted all these trees for all the victims."

"It was absolutely horrendous," said attack survivor Amanda Belcher.

"I think everyone who was there will be scarred in their memories for the rest of their lives." (AFP 21-09-2015)

AU LAUNCHES ITS LEARNING, DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Africa Union (AU) launches its Learning and Development Strategy as a critical step towards the achievement of the Agenda 2063 Vision, the AU said here in a statement on Wednesday.
The strategy aims to support AU staff to be agile learners, continually exposed to opportunities and enhance their skills and knowledge needed to deliver excellence in an ever-changing context.

In her message, the African Union Commission Chairperson, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, expressed its gratitude to the AUC staff for being part of this crucial process that will lead to a more collaborative and effective organization.

With this in mind, we are launching the Year of Leadership as a first step in our journey toward the realization of Agenda 2063, said AUC Chairperson. People need to be ready to learn. We are a learning organization, stressed Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma in her letter to AU Staff.

The AU L&D Strategy is rooted in core values including Pan-African Optimism, Professionalism, Integrity, Learning and Empowerment that were identified by the staff as pivotal for a more cost effective and impact oriented African Union.

It is a method that reflects the changing needs and priorities of the Commission and other AU organs as articulated in the AU's strategic plans and priorities.(APA 23-09-2015)

SOUTH AFRICA: CURRO MAKES FIRST CROSS-BORDER SCHOOL ACQUISITION

Private education group Curro Holdings has acquired its first school outside its home market, the company said on Tuesday, signalling it wants to expand into the rest of the continent.

Curro, which abandoned a takeover bid for smaller rival Advtech in July, will pay R180m for Windhoek Gymnasium, an independent school in the capital of neighbouring Namibia.

If approved by antitrust authorities, the transaction will add 1,500 students to the 36,000 Curro has on 42 campuses in SA, the company said.

Curro, which raised R740m in May to buy new schools, said it wants to expand enrolment at Windhoek Gymnasium to 2,600 as it pushes toward a goal of 80 schools and 90,000 students by 2020.
Before letting go of its bid for Advtech due to opposition from the target's management and parents, Curro CEO Chris van der Merwe referred to a possible merged entity as a "continental champion" of $1.5bn.
Advtech earlier this year bought a school in Botswana and this month said it plans to raise R850m for further acquisitions.
Growing African economies have created a surging market for education among an expanding middle class unsatisfied by underfunded state schools.
Shares in Curro were down 1.36% at R36.99 at 1pm GMT, compared with a 1.81% fall in the JSE's all share index. *(*Reuters 22-09-205)

MALAWI: HEALTH EXPERTS URGE GOV'T TO RE-EMPLOY HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Malawi's Human Resource for Health Coalition (HRHC) has on Wednesday urged government to rescind its decision to allow over 300 new cadres of nurses and doctors to start practicing to save lives in hospitals of the country.
Government through Ministry of Health recently withdrew the redeployment list and offer letters to newly recruited nurses, midwives, technicians and doctors due to lack of funds needed to sustain them.

HRHC President Dorothy Ngoma said Wednesday in Lilongwe that government should reverse the decision at the same time review its commitments it made in improving the lives of its people because there cannot be meaningful growth if citizens are spending hours in hospitals due to shortage of staff.

"The acts by our government can lead to brain drain as our health care workers are demotivated ending up in private hospitals sector or leaving the country," she observed.

She added that Malawi's patient to nurse ratio is the most shocking in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region with over 2,700 patients being cared by 1 nurse as opposed to internationally accepted standard of 1 Nurse to 1000 patients.

Malawi Congress for Trade Union (MCTU) General Secretary, Pontius Kalichero, said the act by government to withdraw offer letters from health care workers is a violation of labour practices of the country.

"We urge government to call them back and save lives of people most of whom live in rural areas," he said.

He vowed that the Union will never relent but fight on until the newly recruited health care workers are back to their stations of duty.(APA 23-09-2015)

ACSA CLOSE TO SECURING ADVISORY TENDER IN GHANA

State-run Airports Company SA (Acsa) is finalising a deal to advise the operator of Ghana's main airport on the construction of a new international terminal, possibly with funding from the Development Bank of Southern Africa.
The proposed deal to advise Ghana Airports Company on a new terminal at Accra's Kotoka International Airport would be Acsa's first major project in Africa. The company plans to increase revenue from nonaeronautical services to 53% by 2020.

The consultancy talks follow a memorandum of understanding signed last year between Acsa and its Ghanaian counterpart.

Acsa derives about 37% of its revenue from nonaeronautical operations and the rest from tariffs charged to airlines. The tariffs are often contested, with little agreement between the regulator and Acsa on the appropriate levels.

Acsa is awaiting a determination on new draft tariffs.

The company argues that a proposed sharp drop in tariffs in 2015-16 could cause it to default on R11bn of debt or ask government for a bailout or guarantee.

A new tariff was expected to be effective from October 1 but no determination has been made and Acsa is using an interim tariff.

"We are not against a tariff cut. We long accepted that tariffs need to go down. But it is important how they go down," Acsa CEO Bongani Maseko said on Monday.

The chairman of the airport regulating committee, Unathi Mntonintshi, said finalisation of the tariff had been delayed.

"However, it is a matter for us and the Department of Transport to resolve," he said.

Acsa has airport concessions in Brazil and India, but a concession in Ghana was not on the table as the country did not want to privatise its airports, Mr. Maseko said.

Last month, Acsa said it was looking for construction companies to partner with to expand its footprint on the continent.

Also last month, national carrier South African Airways (SAA) introduced a new route to Washington from Accra, Ghana.

Mr. Maseko said Ghana had an aggressive strategy to improve its international airport offering partly influenced by the SAA route.

There are more than 200 airports in Africa but most handle fewer than 1-million passengers a year, according to Airports Council International. About 70% of the continent's airports are expanding or creating new terminals.

BOTSWANA BUSINESSES CALL FOR REVIEW OF ALCOHOL LEVY

Business Botswana, a Non Governmental Organisation that represents the voice of the business community in Botswana, has called for the review of the alcohol levy saying it is unpredictable and therefore causes inefficiency in business, APA learnt here Wednesday.

In its position paper on the impact of levies on doing business, the organisation expressed concern over the levy's utilisation, its management and accountability of its use.

Business Botswana says various reports have indicated that a sizeable amount of the fund is not targeted in a programs linked to the abuse of alcohol.

It is recommended that the alcohol levy should not be used as surrogate, or substituted for direct or targeted parliament sanctioned interventions. We believe that more resources should be put on public education rather than focusing on one tool: being the increase of the price of alcohol to control substance abuse, Business Botswana said.

Since its introduction in 2008 by President Ian Khama, the levy has increased from 30 percent to 55 percent.(23-09-2015)

PHILIPS SWITCHED ON TO GROW IN AFRICA

Electronics group Philips is eyeing further expansion in the rest of Africa where it sees the demand for its healthcare and lighting products.

Philips has changed its model from consumer electronics to products for the healthcare industry, where it derives 45% of its turnover.

The company is separating its lighting business and its healthcare division.

It has been working with governments and hospitals in countries such as Kenya to connect its hospitals with its high-end medical equipment such as ultrasound and X-ray machines.

"The whole market is changing and as an innovative company we need to change with the times," said JJ van Dongen, senior vice-president and CEO of Philips Africa.

Philips was growing at double digits in many countries on the continent and expected to maintain the growth through its geographic expansion, he said.

Last year Philips opened an innovation and research hub in Kenya. It launched an innovation competition in SA seeking new solutions and ideas.

"Africa is filled with opportunities and we have long seen this potential. Upon entering SA over 100 years ago, we have been committed to delivering meaningful innovations," he said.(BD 23-09-2015)

MALAWI: PORTUGUESE FIRM TO CONSTRUCT $200M DRY PORT

Malawi Government has given a go-ahead to the Portuguese company, Mota-Engil to start constructing a $200 million dry port at Liwonde in Machinga a district in southern Malawi.
Minister of Transport and Public Works Francis Kasaila told local journalists in the capital Lilongwe on Wednesday that the project will have a significant impact on the transport sector.

"We have given the company an approval to commence the construction of a dry port which will reduce the transportation costs of goods from the Port of Nacala in Mozambique by 60 percent," he said.

He added that many people will be employed and there will be increased business opportunities through the project.

Mota-Engil Communications Consultant Thomas Chafunya said the company is happy with the approval such that the project's construction will start very soon.(APA 23-09-2015)

LEBANON: EU CONTRIBUTES MORE THAN €37M TO BACK TO SCHOOL CAMPAIGN

The EU is supporting the Lebanese Education Ministry's Back to School Campaign, which campaign aims to offer free access to education in public schools to 200,000 Lebanese and non-Lebanese children for the school year 2015/2016.

Thanks to EU funding of €37.9 million, 46,000 Syrian refugee children will be enrolled in first and second shifts in public schools, where they will benefit from learning, educational materials, psychosocial support, trained teachers and child friendly classroom management. Special focus will also be on access to safe spaces in host communities for Syrian children, to counter the risk of dropout, discrimination and violence.

This EU support is part of a collective effort to bring Lebanese children and Syrian refugee children back to school, which has been defined in constant dialogue with the Ministry, UN agencies, other international donors, civil society and local institutions. (EU Neighbourhood 22-09-2015)

BRITISH ENVOY SUGGESTS INDUSTRIAL HEMP FOR MALAWI

British High Commissioner to Malawi, Michael Nevin on Wednesday asked the country to consider production of Indian hemp for commercial production.

In a statement made available to APA, he said local policy makers and the public to consider whether industrial hemp has potential to be a Malawi's growth crop.

"The hemp being suggested is an industrial variety which is potentially and economically viable not the illegal cannabis or marijuana," he said.

He said the industrial variety of hemp practically cannot induce the effects seen in the other varieties.

British envoy added that Malawi's focus should be on whether Malawi can make an economic success of the industrial type of hemp which came into existence thousands years ago and was sought after for its strong fibres.

Before mechanization, he said, the British Navy relied on Hemp Bast fibre for its sails, ropes and uniforms. The hemp is also a nutritious food ingredient and can be good improving soil conditions. Its stems are used for making fibre building material.(APA 23-09-2015)

LTE VOICE SERVICE LAUNCHED IN NIGERIA

Smile Communications Nigeria, in partnership with Samsung Electronics West Africa, has launched a LTE voice over broadband service in the country.

According to both parties: “This is proof that the LTE ecosystem is set to become the global standard for delivering voice over LTE networks, revolutionising the way mobile communication is enabled in Nigeria and West Africa.”

Part of the promise of the new technology is high quality and improved voice and video communications, enabling faster, better video calls, faster music, video streaming and conferencing, faster downloads and more pictures. A bonus for consumers to do more and an end to the frustration of drop calls.

According to Smile, the giant stride is in line with Smile’s vision of providing superfast and reliable internet service to Nigerians.

Managing Director, Smile Communications Nigeria Limited, Michiel Buitelaar, while speaking at the service and product launch in Lagos described the partnership as historic and will benefit millions of Nigerian telecom subscribers.

Mr. Buitelaar said after securing the US$365 dollars funding, Smile is repositioned to transform Nigerians’ telephony experience.

He said, “This partnership is significant to us in an effort to transform subscribers’ telephony experience. It’s is going to change the face of broadband to assist Nigerians in their different endeavours.”

“With the US$365 dollars funding, we are ready to double our network output; spread to different cities and continue enhancing our network capacity by next year. So, we are excited to work in partnership with Samsung which invests in R&D, understands the market and has unleashed the first LTE compliant smartphone in Nigeria.”

Also, Director, Information Technology and Mobile, Samsung Electronics West Africa, Emmanouil Revmatas, underscored the need for both companies to enhance the customer experience through their product propositions.

According to Revmatas, the Galaxy S6 edge has the world’s first-ever dual curved edge display, which distinguishes the device as the ultimate premium Smartphone.

“This partnership with Smile on S6 edge is the first of its kind in Nigeria, offering consumers the opportunity to drive productivity with a unique smartphone coupled with the 4G experience that Smile LTE network offers.

A joint statement signed by Alero Ladipo, Chief Marketing Officer, Smile Nigeria and Emmanouil Revmatas, Director, Information Technology and Mobile, Samsung Electronics West Africa, says there is the need for both companies to enhance the customer experience through their product propositions. The statement underscored the noble pedigree and innovative streak of both companies which they are determined to harness in serving the best interest of their customers. The offer will be available at all Smile Stores and some selected Samsung stores.

Speaking on the partnership, Mrs. Ladipo stated that Smile Communications is specifically focused on the importance of partnerships of this nature to deliver on the end-to-end needs of the customer. “The customer experience at our shops should create a lasting impression with the customer. A customer must enjoy the simplicity of the service and leave ready-to-go. Our partnership with Samsung gives the customer the opportunity to own the latest Samsung LTE compliant smartphone (Samsung Galaxy S6 edge with a Samsung complimentary clear cover), a 5GB bundle SmileOn plan for a fixed price,” Ladipo added. (IT News Africa 22-09-2015)

STOLEN UK CARS WORTH £1 MILLION FOUND IN UGANDA

Detectives trying to trace a Lexus car stolen from London have ended up tracking it in Kampala, the Ugandan capital – where it was found alongside a fleet of British cars worth more than £1 million.

The £50,000 SUV was fitted with a state-of-the-art tracking device, which activated as soon as it was taken from outside a property in west London.

As a result, the National Crime Agency was able to use a smart phone application to trace the journey of the stolen car 6,000 miles to the Ugandan capital where they were stunned to find it alongside 28 other luxury cars which had been stolen from the UK by a car-smuggling gang.

The tracking application even allowed the police to identify how corrupt officials in both Kenya and Uganda, infiltrate the criminal syndicate and understand its operation.

The officer who led the tracking team to Uganda, National Crime Agency Regional Manager, Paul Stanfield, said in a statement Wednesday morning that they had cracked an international syndicate that steals mostly SUVs like Range Rovers, Audis and BMWs.

It is believed that all of the stolen vehicles were equipped with keyless ignition, which the criminals managed to breach by using reprogrammed keys to start the cars up and drive off.

This is not the first time the issue of stolen foreign vehicles is coming up; in September 2013 the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) impounded 27 cars with foreign number plates, some of which were reportedly stolen.

In February this year, the URA again impounded 47 foreign-registered cars, two of which had been stolen from the UK. Also, in September last year, a BMW belonging to the Presidential Escort Unit (PEU) of Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta was stolen from Nairobi, only to be found ‘abandoned’ in Tororo, Uganda.(APA 23-09-2015)

AFRICAN MINES STRUGGLE FOR FUNDING

SUB-SAHARAN Africa, along with the inhospitable Arctic, remains the most underexplored region on Earth, geologically speaking. Yet the continent accounts for about 30% of global mineral reserves.

The geographical and logistical difficulties of locating and accessing Africa’s resource wealth have been worsened by the constrained economic climate since 2008.

Investors have been reluctant to fund new projects in far-flung geographies despite the rich rewards such projects offer in the medium to long term.

One lingering consequence of the 2008 global financial crisis has been that equity markets have largely closed up, says Wickus Botha, a mining and metals expert at EY.

Companies in high-risk, long-term industries such as mining have a harder time finding funding. This applies even more for projects in more remote regions.

Two factors have compounded the decline of interest in mining investment, Botha says. Many investors claim they did not benefit substantially from mining investments during the commodities super cycle of the early 2000s, when there was a boom in prices of foods, fuels and other resources.

Second, commodity prices have fallen considerably since 2008. A drop in demand for metals and minerals, particularly from the Asian market, followed the commodities boom. This was followed by a general slump in commodity prices. As a result, willingness to invest in exploration and mining projects has waned considerably, Botha says.

Prices of energy-related commodities fell 41.7% between the first quarter of 2014 and the first quarter of this year, according to the World Bank. Those for metals and precious metals decreased 13.4% and 3.4%, respectively, over the same period.

If the price of a commodity drops, mining companies will notice the difference in their profit margins. This influences the amount of money they can use for other projects.

"Although there is still funding available for brownfield expansion and some for acquisitions, there is virtually no investment capital for greenfield projects," Botha says.

Tony Zoghby, a mining industry expert at Deloitte SA, says mining companies now have to pay far more for project financing than they did a decade ago because investment capital is scarce.

"This of course drives up the cost of the investment and reduces returns, which might then lead to the project not meeting the hurdles and requirements set," he says.

Mining companies around the world are encountering reluctance from investors, but African companies face additional obstacles.

One of these is a lingering perception that African governments may nationalise resources that mining companies spend huge amounts on extracting. Others are unhelpful legislation, poor infrastructure, insufficient skills, corruption and a dearth of geo-mapping and mining data. As a result, the continent's mining sector has experienced limited growth since the downturn.

Yet, investment in African mining projects has not fallen away. About 30 large-scale projects are expected to be commissioned from this year until 2018, including nine in copper, four in gold, four in diamond, three in platinum and two in uranium, according to a Deloitte February report. These projects alone will account for $18bn in investment.

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GIVEN the economic climate, commodity slump and investor scepticism, mining firms need alternative methods to raise capital.

Innovative approaches are crucial when funding projects in financially constrained times, says Nivaash Singh, the international mining finance head at Nedbank Capital.

If a company cannot turn to a traditional source of investment funding, such as a large bank, it could go to a private company, such as a venture debt provider that will lend it the money it needs under strict conditions, including a fixed repayment date.

Such a loan may also involve a promise to let the lender buy shares in the company at a favourable rate if the loan is not repaid.

If a mining company does not want to risk a promise to sell shares in its business, it could raise money by taking out other kinds of loans, known as subordinated and mezzanine debt. But these come with a higher risk to the lender because they will only be paid after other creditors have been paid. This makes them more expensive.

"Senior debt providers always have the 'first bite' of project cash flows before mezzanine and lastly fully subordinated debt providers," Singh says. "Second-and third-ranking debt providers often take more risk than senior debt providers."

This may require them to demand a share in the business in addition to repayments on the debt.

Development finance institutions from the developed countries are another possible source of funding for African mining companies, he says.

They may be willing to provide funding for such projects because they have an interest in the strategic nature of the commodity or because they see a substantial developmental benefit.

African banks may also have a bigger appetite for mining risks if a solid development case exists. In contrast, their counterparts in the developed world may feel that their understanding of African funding is too limited to justify such risks.

African banks, according to Botha, can allocate more funds to mining than other areas because they understand the continent's environments. They are also more likely to operate their lending business throughout the commodity cycle.

Singh agrees. Nedbank maintains its resources lending business throughout the commodity cycle, he says. "We hold the view that good, robust projects will always attract debt and equity finance. There is appetite for African mining risk where a solid development case exists."

But African banks will want to ensure that their criteria for financing are met, he adds. "Due to the economic climate, they may have to do so at higher rates and with fairly restrictive covenants," Singh says.

"So the pressure is still on the mining companies to keep their cost of funding as low as possible in order that their returns still meet the investment return hurdles."

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DEVELOPMENT finance institutions are the most prominent sources of capital for African mining projects. But companies in the sector have other possible sources of project funding, including internal funds and resources debt funds — which are professionally managed programmes that invest in resources-related debt.

Mine houses may also turn to large metal financiers such as royalty and streaming companies. A company interested in royalties buys the right to share a producer's annual revenue, while a streaming company makes a payment upfront in exchange for an annual slice of mine production at a fixed, discounted price.

In both cases, the money received upfront could fund the technical development of a new mining project.

Companies looking for investment may also be able to generate interest in African mining projects among commodity traders who have an eye on the strategic future of a particular resource, Botha says.

Mining companies interested in African projects face greater difficulties in raising project finance than their counterparts in the developed world, Singh cautions. But this can have a considerable "positive effect", as he sees it: the challenges will generally separate genuine project developers from the pure market speculators, whose main interest is in short-term profit.

Many African miners face bleak prospects. Several major mining companies involved in operations on the continent have recently announced plans to scale back on their African operations and retrench thousands of workers.

The consensus among African financial institutions, Botha concludes, is that African mining projects will attract capital more easily when resources demand increases and rises in commodity prices are sustained enough to generate profit levels that investors regard as worth the risk. (BD 22-09-2015)

ZIMBABWE COURT RULES AGAINST CONTROVERSIAL BAIL REVOCATION LAW

Zimbabwe's Constitutional Court on Wednesday ruled as unconstitutional a law giving the police powers to detain suspects for a further seven days after they are granted bail by a magistrate.

The court ruled that the State should not invoke the controversial Section 121 (3) of the Criminal Procedures and Codification Act after a competent court has granted bail to an accused person.

The section has been used by the police to revoke bail and detain suspects for a further one week while the prosecution sought to appeal the granting of bail.

The Constitutional Court struck down the controversial section, arguing that prosecutors were abusing the clause.

The section has on several occasions been used by the state against opposition activists, resulting in them languishing in remand prison.(APA 23-09-2015)

EU-ALGERIA: CLOSER COOPERATION TO IMPROVE JUSTICE SYSTEM AND REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT

Two financial agreements were signed by the EU and Algeria last week aiming to strengthen the justice system and to adapt training provision with labour market needs.

The programme to support the reform of the justice system (with a €9 million EU contribution) will run for a period of 48 months, and will be in line with the strategy of the Algerian government, focusing on three objectives: independence of justice through the modernisation of the judiciary and its good governance, access to law and justice, and professionalisation of the sector and support for a more effective management of training institutions and human resources.

As part of the fight against unemployment (particularly among first-time job seekers), the Support Programme Training-Job-Qualifications (€10 million EU contribution) aims to ensure a better match between training and employment through a greater involvement of enterprises and economic sectors in the training of young people. With a planned duration of 36 months, the programme focuses on three aims: Matching qualifications to requirements expressed by businesses, repositioning of enterprises and economic sectors at the heart of the vocational training system, and contribution of the economic sectors to the higher education system. (EU Neighbourhood 22-09-2015)

LESOTHO TAKES LEAD IN UN SDGS SURVEY

Lesotho has garnered a total of 20,000 responses from Basotho about Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) during “My World Survey” organised by the United Nations in southern Africa, making it the country with the largest number of participants in the region, APA learns here on Wednesday.
The survey started in October last year and ended in May 2015 with an assistance of the UN volunteers based in all the 10 districts of Lesotho.

The report says Lesotho was followed by South Africa and Zimbabwe.

About 35 countries in Africa took part in the survey and a total of 205 countries globally. (APA 23-09-2015)

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