

MEMORANDUM

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GABONESE AWAIT RESULTS OF SATURDAY'S POLL



Gabonese are awaiting the results of Saturday's presidential election whose main rivals are the 57-year-old incumbent President, Ali Bongo Ondimba and 73-year-old Jean Ping, a former Chairman of the African Union Commission.

No major incident was reported during the voting exercise despite a huge voter turnout, causing some polling stations to be closed later than scheduled.

On Saturday evening, both the Bongo and Ping camps were engaged in a fierce battle of figures, with their supporters declaring their respective leaders as the winner of Saturday's poll.

According to the rules of the National and Permanent Electoral Commission (CENAP), all duly signed reports must be compiled locally before being conveyed to Libreville, where the final votes tallying will be made in the presence of representatives from all parties and coalitions as well as poll observers.

The results are expected by Tuesday, according to several sources.

Defeated candidates have eight days to challenge the outcome before the court which has two weeks to rule on their complaints.

Some 628,000 Gabonese were registered to go to the polls to choose their president for the next seven years. (APA 28-08-2016)

THE NIGHT RUN: HOW ZIMBABWEAN TRADERS ARE DODGING IMPORT RESTRICTIONS



On June 17, Zimbabwe's authorities imposed restrictions on imports of foreign dental fillings, kitchen sinks, baby formulae, pencils and much more. Cross border vendors, dependent on this trade to survive, have become desperate.

Long distance buses with empty trailers can now be seen on the Zimbabwean side of the border. Angry traders set ablaze a warehouse full of seized tomato cans, blankets and farming implements at the Beitbridge border crossing in July, as police ran for cover.

According to Zimbabwe's Minister of Industry and Commerce, Michael Bimha, the restrictions have been implemented to "allow our local companies to retool and increase production. It is temporary, and we will remove the law after some time."

Officers at Zimbabwe's land borders seize items like wheelbarrows, cement, or jars of olive oil from travellers and bus crews, and put these goods in warehouses. This has been a blow to informal traders who travel to SA or Mozambique to source cheaper food and clothes for resale, so that they too can buy food, medicine and send children to school. This way of making a living has become massive, because

according to Gideon Shoko, the deputy secretary of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, "the unemployment rate hovers close to 80% in Zimbabwe. Buying wares from abroad to resell is a lifeline for thousands."

Traders have therefore subverted the restrictions by running goods at night from towns like Manica in Mozambique, located just 28km from Mutare, Zimbabwe's eastern border town.

Manica is a major transport hub for land traffic crossing from Beira, on the Mozambican coast, to Zimbabwe, Zambia and onwards to Botswana. Here, 100kg containers of used clothes coming from the US or Europe known in the local lingo as "bhero" are what attracts small buyers from Zimbabwe.

The traders pool finances to buy the containers. Upon return to Zimbabwe the clothes are separated into smaller units of used underwear, ties and jeans for sale in street stalls, often next to large chains like Jet or Truworths.

If you cross back into Zimbabwe with "bhero" clothes now, the wares will be seized and destroyed according to finance minister Patrick Chinamasa.

Traders and transport couriers are finding ways around the ban though. For a fee of \$40 (almost R550), in Manica, shoppers from Zimbabwe give their clothes, bulky food or potato bags wares to "night couriers" and return home to Zimbabwe, appearing to be empty-handed when they get to immigration controls.

"We try as much as possible to appear like holiday travellers not small trade importers," says Chiko (not his real name), a 34-year-old Zimbabwean and informal vendor who for the past four years has earned a living buying crates of eggs and baby powder from Mozambique for resale. His job as a security guard ended after one of Zimbabwe's larger companies retrenched workers. "We pay \$40 fees to van drivers on the Mozambique side of the border, abandon our goods to them, and return home as if we got nothing."

Joao (name changed), 45, a veteran Mozambique van courier, who employs three drivers to manage his old Peugeot trucks, says the law-busting scheme runs like this: Unregistered van runners, connected to border custom officers on the Zimbabwe side, stay behind with shoppers' goods. Through bribery and deal making, these van runners smuggle goods on behalf of departed shoppers – only at night time – past the immigration controls. "I call my drivers 'runners' because they run customers' wares at night," says Joao.

Why night time delivery? "Because Zimbabwe's highway police are usually absent at night, and 'fees' are easier to negotiate."

Some officers accept gifts and bribes to ease the good-carrying vehicles through. A senior immigration officer at the Mutare/Mozambique Forbes border crossing Richard Tambandini says sometimes they watch helplessly as some trucks enter Zimbabwe without clearance and dealers use irregular pathways to dodge import bans.

Last week Zimbabwe police bosses in Harare relocated 600 officers away from the Beitbridge border crossing because of the suspicion that some of them were involved in corruption and the warehouse burning incident.

Once inside Zimbabwe, the runners make door-to-door errands, distributing goods to their customers. An enterprising night-time import courier industry is taking shape, creating jobs and new profits. It is dangerous work though. "My 'runners' must drive at tremendous speeds at night and slip back to Mozambique before dawn," says Joao.

"The runners are a relief," says Stella (name changed), 39, a widowed mother of two. She supports her family by importing baked beans and hair weaves from Mozambique for resale at one of the many street tables that dot Mutare. "At 2am you hear the courier from Mozambique zooming, drivers knocking at your door, paper list in hand, delivering buckets of flour, bags of shoes, packets of candles from Mozambique."

"We are powerless after this ban. We are poor. We will go naked if we are prevented from importing cheap garments for resale," says Stella.

Her anguish is shared by Promise Mkwanzu, a prominent human rights activist and director of the Zimbabwe Informal Sector Traders' Organisation: "It is because of compelling hardships and economic collapse that people try to defy imports of second hand clothes and food. We must address the symptoms of these hardships, and attract investors so our people stop being cross-border vendors."

He says even well-educated teachers, nurses or churchmen are trying to beat the bans on imports.

"Professionals are also desperate to buy second-hand clothes from Mozambique. The pain is serious."

But some lawmakers support the restrictions. In 2015, Priscilla Misihairabwi, a Movement for Democratic Change legislator, waved used underwear inside Parliament in a bid to ban imports of used undergarments for fear that they would bring disease to poor women.

But police say vehicles that distribute illegally imported wares will be seized. Spokesperson Charity Charamba admits this is challenging: "It is hard to arrest people selling used clothes or building tools. We have no proof the items were sourced abroad."

Runners like Joao are not deterred though. "If we obey these bans, drivers will be out of work in Mozambique. On the Zimbabwe side, our customers complain they can't buy simple shirts that cost \$45 each. These night time deals are a way of finding common purpose." (TMG Digital/GroundUp 26-08-2016)

BELGIANS DUE IN GUINEA FOR PROJECT TALKS

A Belgian Flemish delegation is expected in Conakry on Sunday for talks with the Guinean government and the private sector on investment projects in the agricultural, industrial and port sectors, an official source has disclosed to APA.

In addition to the areas covered by Guinean-Belgian cooperation, technology, science and public works are also included.

A forum was recently held in Belgium to showcase Guinea's agricultural and mining potential. (APA 26-08-2016)

JOINT UN PROGRAMME AIMS TO EMPOWER OVER 1 MILLION GIRLS IN MOZAMBIQUE



"Before I entered the safe space, I was shy, and it was difficult for me to express myself. I spent my free time after school with vulnerable girlfriends my age who had left school to marry, and some were even pregnant," 16-year-old Amelia Abadala Salimo told UNFPA. "I felt afraid to become one of them."

Then last year, she joined UNFPA's Action for Adolescent Girls initiative. At a safe space, she and other girls learned about life skills, entrepreneurship, leadership and human rights – including the right to live free of violence and child marriage. The girls also learned about sexual and reproductive health, and how their bodies and lives could be affected by early pregnancy.

"In the safe space, I felt empowered and understood, and I learned to express myself, and suddenly new doors opened," Amelia said.

Today, she will be playing a key role in guiding other girls through similar sessions as part of the first joint UN programme to empower girls in Mozambique.

"Now," she said, "I will be a mentor myself."

Turning girls into leaders

Girls in Mozambique face a wide range of challenges, including entrenched gender discrimination, harmful practices such as child marriage, widespread gender-based violence and high rates of adolescent pregnancy.

According to a [2015 survey](#) by the health ministry, 46 per cent of girls aged 15 to 19 have been pregnant at least once. Child marriage and early pregnancy multiply the risks to girls' health, increasing the likelihood that they will experience pregnancy complications such as obstetric fistula, or even die from pregnancy-related causes.

Pregnancy can also force girls to drop out of school, limiting their future potential. In Mozambique, girls' primary school enrolment stands at 85 per cent, but by secondary school, their enrolment drops to 18 per cent, according to the [2015 State of World Population report](#).

The first joint UN programme on adolescent girls, called "Action for Girls and Young Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights," addresses these problems at the individual, community and policy levels.

With \$14 million from the Government of Sweden, this four-year programme will build on UNFPA's Action for Adolescent Girls initiative, bringing in the involvement of UNICEF, UN Women and UNESCO. Led by Government of Mozambique, the program will include the participation of civil society, youth organizations, community and religious networks, and the media.

"The programme is a significant milestone towards more collective efforts towards the empowerment of Mozambique's most vulnerable adolescent girls," said Bettina Maas, UNFPA's Representative in the country.

Reaching 1 million girls

The programme aims to reach more than 1 million girls in Zambezia and Nampula provinces, which have some of the country's highest adolescent pregnancy rates, according to the 2015 government survey.

The launch, on 15 August in Nampula City, was attended by 830 mentors, who were carefully selected and trained to guide girls in sessions on life skills, human rights and other topics. The mentors are young, from 15 and 24, and live in the communities they serve, making them more effective role models and counsellors.

"I want to be a part of the change in my community – and also to break the silence of the harms happening to adolescent girls next door," said Nilza Armando, a 19-year-old mentor, at the launch event. Each mentor will reach 60 girls a year through the safe spaces. The campaign will be rapidly expanded, with more mentors trained throughout the year. Girls will also be reached through radio and television.

Working on every level

The programme additionally works with communities to keep girls in school and to return out-of-school girls to the classroom. And it holds dialogues with parents, men and boys, helping whole communities to collectively embrace the importance of girls' education and rights.

Forums will also be created at the local, provincial and national level, enabling girls to advocate on issues affecting them.

"I want to demonstrate to the most vulnerable adolescent girls in my community that a different path exists," said Idris Jamal, a 13-year-old member of Mozambique's Children's Parliament. She will be a mentor to younger girls and will also spread her message of girls' empowerment on the radio.

"Adolescent girls can be in school, pursue dreams, engage in sports, dance or play an instrument," she said, "instead of marrying when still a child or becoming young mothers."

-(UNFPA 23-08-2016)

GAMBIA PROHIBITS RAM SALES ALONG MAJOR HIGHWAYS

The authorities in The Gambia have warned against the use of major highways as selling points for rams ahead of the Muslim feast of Tobaski which falls on the second week of September.

A statement on Thursday by the Kanifing Municipal Council (KMC), the biggest municipality in the country said the sale of sheep along the Banjul-Westfield highway and Kairaba Avenue is being strictly prohibited.

The two highways are Gambia's busiest thoroughfares, located in the municipality which is the biggest business hub in the country.

The KMC mayor Yankuba Colley said the move is in line with the country's anti-littering regulations aimed at keeping the environment clean.

He said alternative open spaces have been identified opposite the Social Security and Housing Finance Corporation complex, the Independence Stadium in the town of Bakau and the Livestock grounds in Abuko as selling venues for Tobaski rams in the Greater Banjul Area.

Over the past few years, ram sales have been organized along major highways, obstructing vehicular and pedestrian movements and encourage muggings aside from accidents.

Meanwhile, the Department of Livestock Management has issued a statement encouraging livestock dealers to this year's 'Tobaski' ram promotion, which started on Wednesday.

Muslim-majority Gambia imports sheep from neighbouring Senegal and Mauritania to meet the demand for the rams during the feast of Idhul Adha.

They are slaughtered as religious sacrifice in a reenactment of the same ritual by the Prophet Ibrahim centuries ago.(APA 25-08-2016)

CHINESE BANKS ANALYSE OPPORTUNITIES IN CABO VERDE



Chinese banks are studying the opportunities available to them in Cabo Verde (Cape Verde), said the Ambassador of Cabo Verde in China adding that contacts underway are still at a “very embryonic” stage. Ambassador Tania Romualdo said in an interview in the latest Macau Forum newsletter that in addition to banking, Cabo Verde offers potential investors from China opportunities in tourism and the maritime economy, which are “privileged sectors and have enormous potential and interest for the country.”

Romualdo also mentioned renewable energy, information and communication technologies and the provision of financial services as attractive areas for those who want to invest in the archipelago.

Cabo Verde, an island state, according to the ambassador, has comparative advantages such as political, social and economic stability coupled with an acceptable climate of legal and institutional safety. The ambassador said these advantages had been presented to potential Chinese investors considering that Cabo Verde “is a good platform for other regional markets.”

The diplomat also mentioned 5th Ministerial Conference of Forum Macau, due to be held in the first half of October, saying it is of “importance not only to Cabo Verde but also for the other member states of the Forum.”

Romualdo also said that at the next Forum summit Cabo Verde would call for the adoption of measures “aimed at giving greater dynamism and efficiency to this important instrument of cooperation, which has produced positive results in areas such as the economy and trade, culture and training, among others.”

The ambassador also referred to the opening in December 2015, of a delegation at the Confucius Institute in Praia, noting it “will help support and promote Chinese language teaching in Cabo Verde, as well as improve mutual understanding through an extensive programme of activities and linguistic and cultural exchanges.”(26-08-2016)

MALI: ACCESS TO POWER GRID IMPROVED BY 44.8 PERCENT

Access to electricity in Mali increased from 9.1 percent in 2001 to 44.8 percent in 2015, the National Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) said in its report on consumption, poverty and household well-being for last year published on Thursday.

The report which covers all of Mali's regions except Kidal, said that the district of Bamako clearly stands out with access to electricity making a big leap from 36.1 percent in 2001 to 84.9 percent in 2015.

"All the other regions also witnessed the same trend but to a lesser extent" the report noted. (APA 25-08-2016)

MOZAMBIQUE FIRMS STRUGGLING TO REPAY LOANS

Successive increases in benchmark interest rates decided by the Bank of Mozambique are leading some companies having difficulties in repaying their loans, according to independent newspaper Mediafax.

Since October 2015 the central bank has been raising interest rates to contain inflationary pressures, and with the latest increase, last July, the lending rate was increased by 300 basis points to 17.25%. Commercial banks followed the decision of the central bank and increased their interest rates for customers, making the cost of borrowing, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises, increasingly expensive.

A spokesman for the Confederation Economic Associations of Mozambique (CTA), economist Eduardo Sengo, confirmed to the newspaper that there are companies struggling to repay loans, although he did not identify them or give a figure.

Sengo also said that the CTA is recommending companies in difficulties analyse their financial situation and draw up a plan to present to the banks where loans were contracted. (26-08-2016)

EGYPT: EU PROJECT STEPS UP EFFORTS TO INTRODUCE RESOURCE EFFICIENT PRACTICES FOR SMES IN THE FOOD SECTOR

A group of 23 staff from 10 selected demonstration companies from the Egyptian manufacturing food sector, had the opportunity to take part in the first workshop on environmental and resource efficient production practices organised under as part of the Med Test II project, funded by the EU under the SwitchMed programme.

The workshop was held in Cairo under the lead of UNIDO and the national partner for MED TEST II, the Egyptian National Cleaner Production Center (ENCPC). It gave the opportunity to national trained MED TEST II service providers to apply their newly learned capacities in Resource Efficiency & Cleaner Production (RECP), Environmental Management Systems (EMS), Environmental Management Accounting (EMA), and Material Flow Cost Accounting (MFCA), to selected staff from the Egyptian food sector.

The selected companies from the food sector were given the fundamental aspects in how to utilise tools of the TEST approach into the manufacturing processes of their production facilities in order to save costs and reduce wastage. Introducing the best available techniques for this sector, along with the tools from TEST, gives the SMEs of the Egyptian food sector an opportunity to strengthen their competitiveness by reducing costs for energy and resources, safeguarding the economic stability of their businesses, and to increase their environmental performance.

The **SwitchMed sustainable consumption and production programme** aims to promote a switch of the Mediterranean economies towards sustainable consumption and production patterns and green economy, including low emission development, through demonstration and dissemination of methods that improve resource and energy efficiency. It also seeks to minimise the environmental impacts associated to the life cycle of products and services, and, as opportune, to promote renewable energy. (SwitchMed 26-08-2016)

[Press release](#)

MALI: 47.2 PERCENT TRAPPED IN POVERTY LAST YEAR

8,334,442 people in Mali constituting 47.2 percent of the population, whose purchasing power was beyond the CFA177, 000 required to meet basic needs had been trapped in poverty last year, a new report says.

The results of the Modular Permanent Household Survey (EMOP) reveal incidence of poverty estimated at 11.2 percent in Bamako, against 47.7 percent and 53.1 percent, respectively in other cities and the rural areas.

Regional results suggest that incidence of poverty is higher in Sikasso, Mopti and Segou at 65.1 percent, 63.6 percent and 59.1 percent respectively.

Households led by men dabbled in more poverty than those headed by women (48.3 percent against 28.5 percent).

“The results indicate that within poor households, the primary sector (77.8 percent) mainly composed of farmers is the most dominant. This sector is followed by trade (9.2 percent), industry (7.4 percent) and services (5.6 percent)” the EMOP’s 2015 Annual Report says.(APA 25-08-2016)

PORT OF LUANDA, ANGOLA, HANDLES LESS CARGO, CONTAINERS AND SHIPS IN THE 1ST HALF

The port of Luanda in the first half of the year handled 3.1 million tonnes of containerised cargo, a drop of 35% or 1.7 million tonnes over the same period of 2015, according to an official from the infrastructure management company.

Rosas Silverio, head of the statistical control and logistics department of the Port of Luanda, told Angolan news agency Angop that the fall was due to the sharp drop in the products that the country imports, and this trend occurred in both containerised cargo and bulk cargo.

The number of containers handled in the first six months of the year totalled just over 128,000, a decrease of 44% over the same period of 2015 when the port handled over 290,000 containers.

One official said that the current economic crisis in Angola, which is affecting the country’s ability to secure foreign currency, has also reduced the number of ships visiting the country.

In the first half 2,437 ships docked at the port of Luanda, including 346 long-haul and 2,091 coastal shipping vessels, a drop of 1,217 vessels compared to the number recorded from January to June 2015. (26-08-2016)

ETHIOPIA: WHY IT'S RIGHT TIME TO INVEST IN ETHIOPIAN HOTEL INDUSTRY?



Growing the number of hotels is part of the plan to make Ethiopia one of the top five tourist destination in Africa

While the Ethiopian economy continue enjoying double digit growth, the hospitality sector is poised for further growth in the wake of increased number of inbound travelers into the country with expected opening of the AU Grand Hotel, Pullmann, Crowne Plaza, Wyndham Hotel Group, Crowne Plaza, Accor Group and Best Western.

Being the third largest diplomatic community in the world, following New York and Geneva, Addis Ababa has become home to several new star hotels. Conferences in the African Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa have increased the demand for brand hotels bringing a huge chunk of foreign currency to the tourism economy. The city is home to the world's third highest concentration of embassies bringing the majority of the diplomatic missions into the country. Large global bases for NGO's, embassies and aid agencies also created massive market for the hotels.

In order to increase the number of hotels and lodges, the country encouraged investors through tax and land incentives to bank loan arrangements. Such initiatives are to increase the current three international chain and seven internationally branded hotels. For the hotel industry, the best has come with the erection of new hotels all over the country. Despite the growing hotel constructions, Ethiopia is ranked among the top 10 largest African untapped markets for international chain hotel development according to the W Hospitality Group survey.

As number of diplomats, corporate and leisure travelers are growing the chain hotel groups are expanding in the capital. Growing the number of hotels is part of the plan to make Ethiopia one of the top five tourist destination in Africa in the coming four years enabling the country to use its tremendous tourism potential. To date the contribution of tourism to income revenue to Ethiopia's economy has increased over the last three years from 17 billion Birr (US \$ 814,730) in 2012 to 18.7 billion Birr (US \$ 896,203) in 2013 and 22.2 billion Birr (US \$ 1,063,941) in 2014. The direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP is 1.2 percent however with the development of infrastructure its contribution is expected to be 4.8 percent in 2024. On the other hand its job generation capacity by far exceeds that of the other labor-intensive sectors such as leather, floriculture and construction.

Addis Ababa has attracted significant investment into the Ethiopian hotel sector from major international brands and locals who are investing in hotels. This has largely shaped the type of supply in the hotel market aspiring to attract more luxuries accommodation facilities to come to business in Ethiopia. The growing number of investment permits issued for international brands evidence that in few years the accommodation facilities will meet the goal of having hotel variety that will satisfy every segment of travelers.

The easier access to finance, land and technical service expertise associated with attracting a brand hotel are driving the sector development. The latest branded entrants include Marriott Executive Apartments, Golden Tulip, Radisson Blu and Ramada. The remarkable economic growth and increasing corporate entry is driving hotel demand in the business and conference segment. The aid and diplomatic missions continue to provide the majority of the market demand in the capital and beyond.

Although there has been progress still branded hotels are very low. Last year only the capital city included 295 new rooms with quality supply of 31 hotels and a total of 3,130 rooms currently in the market, giving an average number of 100 rooms per hotel. Addis Ababa received an occupancy of 58

percent at an average daily rate of USD 220 in 2015 says JLL Hotel market outlook survey. Branded supply is still low, even with the soon to be additional presence from Starwood, Rezidor, and Louvre. However, according to the Ethiopian investment commission the upcoming supply is predominantly branded.

Addis Ababa hotel market is mainly led by corporate, aid and diplomatic markets. The corporate market is primarily domestically driven, with a few presence of international companies such as Jumia Travel. Majority of the customers use 3-star unbranded hotels. Nevertheless, with anticipated further economic growth of the country aligned with increase in international corporate entry into the market more branded hotels will come to the Ethiopian market to serve business travelers from all over the country. The 4- and 5-star markets are in turn primarily driven by the aid and diplomatic markets.

The government gave enduring promise to hotel development and tourism to reap the full advantage of the sector reducing infrastructural deficits. The capital city which previously had two branded hotel supply, have seen hotels in the pipeline which are expected to be operational in the next five years bringing the branded hotels number to more than a dozen.(Ethiopian Herald 26-08-2016)

AFREXIMBANK APPROVED \$83M FOR AFRICAN FACTORS

The African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) has approved \$83 million for African businesses engaged in factoring since 2012, Ms. Kanayo Awani, Managing Director of Afreximbank's Intra-African Trade Initiative, has announced in Abidjan.

In factoring, an exporter or supplier sells his accounts receivable or invoices at a discount to a third party, called a factor, in exchange for immediate cash with which to finance continued business.

Speaking during a sensitization workshop organized by Afreximbank to promote the Model Law on Factoring on Wednesday, Ms. Awani, who is also the Chairperson of the Africa Chapter of the International Factors Group (now IFG+FCI Union), said that \$48 million of the amount had already been disbursed and that the Bank was also assessing additional factoring lines totaling \$90 million for African factors and factoring companies.

A statement by Afreximbank on Thursday quoted Awani as saying that the approved amounts included \$23 million for factors in Mauritania, \$35 million for those in Senegal, \$5 million for those in Mauritius, \$10 million for those South Africa and \$10 million for those in Zimbabwe. The credit lines under assessment were for institutions in Burkina Faso, Kenya, Egypt, Botswana, Cameroon, Mauritius, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Ms. Awani explained that in its effort to promote factoring in Africa, Afreximbank was offering lines of credit to factors, providing them liquidity and offering payment risk protection. In addition, it was raising awareness through educational and training activities and was helping to create enabling infrastructure, including improving the legal environment.

She noted that Africa was still not a significant player in the global factoring market and accounted for only 0.7 per cent of the 2.3 trillion Euros of world factoring transactions in 2015, with South Africa, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt and Mauritius accounting for almost all the African transactions.

She, however, said that the opportunities for factoring in Africa were broad and that factoring volumes in Africa were estimated to grow from 24 billion Euros in 2012 to 90 billion Euros in 2017 and 200 billion Euros in 2020.

To take advantage of those opportunities, there was need to implement regulatory reforms, create awareness, expand credit insurance, attract factors from outside the continent, conduct training and ensure government support, said Ms. Awani.

More than 40 participants representing major law firms and leading financial institutions in the West African Economic and Monetary Union and Central African Economic and Monetary Community regions attended the seminar. (APA 25-08-2016)

MONTEPIO GERAL TRANSFERS ASSETS IN ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE TO HOLDING COMPANY ARISE

Montepio, a Portuguese mutual bank, will join Arise, a company set up by banks supporting the Norfund development fund of Norway and FMO of the Netherlands and by the Rabobank banking cooperative, Portuguese daily financial newspaper Diário Económico reported.

Arise is a holding company (SGPS) that brings together the holdings of each institution in the African market, which according to a source from Montepio will be established this year to launch operations on 1 January 2017.

Montepio will transfer its shares in Finibanco Angola and Banco Terra in Mozambique, in which it holds 51% and 44.537% of the share capital.

Participants in Arise currently hold stakes in financial institutions and financial service providers in sub-Saharan Africa and the holding company will start operating with a presence in 20 countries and assets of US\$660 million.

A recently released statement said the aim of founding Arise is to build sound and stable financial institutions geared to the retail market, small and medium enterprises, the rural sector and customers that have not had access to financial services. (26-08-2016)

IS WI-FI REALLY THE ANSWER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES IN AFRICA?

The short answer is yes. However, it can never be as simple as that, as there are many factors, broader than the telecommunication space that need to be addressed. However, as many of Africa's population reside in rural communities, just like citizens living in urban areas they must be afforded the same opportunities and benefits – and providing access has been noted to go a long way in driving economic development and social inclusion.

In fact, the ICT sector plays a significant role – connectivity means citizens have access to information, knowledge to innovate, do business differently etc but ultimately, build a knowledge-based and socially connected community – which certainly has positive socio-economic benefits. In fact, according to the World Bank* for high-income countries, a 10-percentage-point rise in broadband penetration adds a 1.21 percentage point rise in economic growth – an added 1.38 percentage points for low- and middle-income countries.

Providing infrastructure and connectivity allows businesses to gain a footing and start to thrive and as the opportunities grow – so too does the innovation. The more businesses thrive and innovation is at the heart of entrepreneurs, the more people or communities are able to connect, do business or receive necessary help or assistance. In turn, the more development and upliftment takes place. The more this happens, the more quality of life is increased – and so the cycle repeats for generations to come.

We all know that fixed-line access is virtually unheard of in rural communities and people rely on their mobile phones for anything from staying in touch with loved ones to doing business. Having Wi-Fi networks in place in these communities suddenly presents people with options they would not normally have had due to the high cost and limitations of other broadband solutions.

Wi-Fi has a significant role to play here as, not only is it a cost-effective way on connecting citizens, but it can be easily deployed as there is no license required to carry out this function. Additionally, there isn't a massive infrastructure requirement so it's achievable especially across geographically dispersed rural areas. What's more, many rural towns have no broadband, purely from a cost perspective, and as such Wi-Fi provides an alternative to bring broadband to rural areas for much less than what they would pay for 3G for fibre.

Running fibre to tens of thousands of small cells just isn't feasible. And while microwave is useful, it requires licensed spectrum and line of sight. Wi-Fi is ideal for this application because it can provide high-speed, non-line-of-sight connectivity between nodes much more economically. However, it must have carrier class reliability, be able to adapt to always changing wireless environment and it must be high speed. There's nothing worse than having bad Wi-Fi – especially when the expectation for connectivity is there.

Fibre will certainly provide another necessary means to connect Africa to the world and, just like the current undersea cables, will add additional speed, capacity and in maturity, decrease costs of broadband. However, while fibre and 4G/LTE services will certainly help increase network capacity, it still won't be enough because as history has taught us there is an insatiable appetite for bandwidth and now, for spectrum as well.

As a result, Africa is now taking a much more strategic view of Wi-Fi as we are seeing that Wi-Fi access has so much potential to shape the business and consumer landscape in Africa and as such, it only makes sense to implement the technology in such a way to draw the most benefit from it.

It's simple – citizens should have the right to access information – no matter where they are based. We live on a continent where data is very expensive and while you may access information via your mobile devices – you're paying for that, as such, it can be limited. So there needs to be ways where citizens are able to connect even when they don't have the data to do so – a complementary medium if you will and Wi-Fi provides exactly that. (IT News Africa 26-08-2016)

S/LEONE: EU GRANTS \$314,000 FOR ELECTION MONITORING

The European Union (EU) has announced that it will provide \$314,000 to the umbrella body of local civil society organizations for the monitoring of the 2018 general elections in Sierra Leone.

In a statement on Thursday, the EU said the move was part of its effort to strengthen the country's democratic process.

The fund is being provided through the European Instrument for Human Rights and Democracy.

The National Elections Watch (NEW) comprises various organizations, which monitor electoral processes in the country.

It is expected to use the funds to prepare the grounds for the elections through civic and voter education and provide domestic observation, media monitoring and post-election scrutiny.

"The EU family believes that domestic elections are essential for fostering peace, social cohesion, security and sustainable development," the EU representative to Sierra Leone, Ambassador Peter Versteeg, said in the statement.

"Vibrant CSOs facilitate free and fair elections and promote domestic good governance, transparency and accountability, creating an enabling environment where democracy and political stability are sustained," it added.

The EU said the project would help the civil society coalition to build up its presence through mobilizing and renewing its membership structure across the country in good time for it to participate in adequate and timely manner in the preparations for the electoral process. (APA 25-08-2016)

AFRICA'S POPULATION SET TO DOUBLE BY 2050, SAYS NEW REPORT



Africa's population will double by 2050, according to a [new report](#) from the Population Reference Bureau (PRB) in Washington – posing serious questions about the sustainability of the world's poorest continent.

PRB's projections show Africa's population will reach 2.5 billion by 2050, by far the biggest increase in any of the globe's continents.

By contrast, the report suggests, Europe's population will actually shrink in that time, from 740 million to 728 million.

Overall, the study finds that the global population will reach 10 billion by the year 2053 – up from 7.4 billion currently.

“Despite declines in fertility rates around the world, we expect population gains to remain strong enough to take us toward a global population of 10 billion,” said Jeffery Jordan, President of PRB.

“Significant regional differences remain, though. For example, very low birth rates in Europe will mean population declines there while Africa's population is expected to double.”

Although Oceania (essentially Australia and New Zealand) rises by more than one third, that only takes it to 66 million from a current 40 million.

Asia will gain around 900 million people, taking its population to 5.3 billion.

Drilling down through the data, it emerges that the combined population of the world's least developed countries will double by 2050 to 1.9 billion. Most of the 48 “least developed countries”, by UN criteria, are in Africa.

Some 29 countries will see their populations more than double – nearly all of them in Africa. Niger, already the country with the world's highest birth rate, will see the population more than triple.

The top ten fertility rates are all in sub-Saharan African countries, with nearly all above six children per woman. In Europe, the average is 1.6.

In the least developed countries, some 41% of the population are aged under 15 – compared 25% globally and 16% in developed countries.

Within Africa, some of the most startling increases are seen in countries such as Ethiopia, projected to increase from 101 million now, to 168 million people.

Nigeria rises from 186 million to 387 million, the Democratic Republic of Congo from 79 million to 213 million, and Tanzania from 54 million to 134 million.

Within Europe, the UK is predicted to rise from 65 million to 77 million, whilst Germany actually slips back, from 82 million to 81 million, as does Spain, from 43 million to 39 million.

Similarly worrying, from a development perspective, the ten countries with currently the lowest access to electricity were again all in Africa: Sudan (5%), Chad (6%), Burundi (7%), Malawi (10%), Liberia (10%), Central African Republic (11%), Burkina Faso (13%), Niger (14%), Sierra Leone (14%) and Tanzania (15%).(EurActiv 26-08-2016)

SENEGAL: COTTON YIELD DROPS BY ALMOST 10 PERCENT IN SIX MONTHS

Senegal's cotton production declined by 9.4 percent during the first six months of 2016 compared to the same period last year, a Dakar-based economic forecasting office disclosed.

In a report released on Thursday based on data from the Senegalese Textile Fibers Development Corporation (Sodefitex) the Directorate of Forecasting and Economic Studies (DPEE) said production amounted to 18,822 tons against 20,765 tons in the first six months of 2015.

It attributed this situation to the decline by 14.7 percent of export sales which went from 10,311 tons in 2015 to 8794 tons a year later.(APA 25-08-2016)

The Memorandum is supported by the ACP-African, Caribbean, Pacific Secretariat, Chamber of Commerce Tenerife, AHEAD-GLOBAL, Business Council for Africa, Corporate Council on Africa, ELO - Portuguese Association for Economic Development and Cooperation, Hellenic-African Chamber of Commerce and Development, HTTC - Hungarian Trade & Cultural Centre, NABA - Norwegian-African Business Association, NABC- Netherlands Africa Business Council, SwissCham-Africa and other organisations.

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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Fernando Matos Rosa

fernando.matos.rosa@sapo.pt
fernando.matos.rosa@skynet.be