

MEMORANDUM

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AFRICA'S POOR HAS GROWN BY 100-MILLION SINCE 1990, SAYS WORLD BANK

The number of Africans trapped in poverty has surged by around 100-million over the past quarter century, the World Bank said on Friday, despite years of economic growth and multi-million dollar aid programmes.

The report's figures, described as "staggering" by the bank's Africa head Makhtar Diop, showed widespread malnutrition, and rising violence against civilians, particularly in central regions and the Horn of Africa.

"It is projected that the world's extreme poor will be increasingly concentrated in Africa," Mr. Diop added in a foreword.

A surge in population meant the proportion of Africans in poverty had actually fallen since 1990, but the actual numbers were up.

In a major study of households taking stock of African economies and societies after two decades of relatively strong growth, the Bank said 388-million — 43% of the sub-Saharan region's 900-million people — lived on less than \$1.90 a day.

In 1990, at the start of the study period, the ratio was 56%, or 284-million.

The findings present a mixed bag for countries that, on average, enjoyed economic growth of 4.5% over the last two decades, dubbed the era of 'Africa Rising' in contrast to the post-independence stagnation, war and decay that typified the 1970s and 1980s.

A child born in Africa now is likely to live more than six years longer than one born in 1995, the study found, while adult literacy rates over the same period have risen four percentage points.

Obesity new threat

However, the Bank defined Africa's social achievements as "low in all domains" — for instance, tolerance of domestic violence in Africa is twice as high as other developing regions — and noted that the rates of improvement were leveling off.

"Despite the increase in school enrolment, today more than two out of five adults are unable to read or write," the report said.

"Nearly two in five children are malnourished and one in eight women is underweight," it continued. "At the other end of the spectrum, obesity is emerging as a new health concern." Perhaps most disturbingly, the study presented more evidence of the 'resource curse' that afflicts states endowed with plentiful reserves of hydrocarbons or minerals, often the source of internal or external conflict, or corruption and government ineptitude.

Citizens of resource-rich countries tended to be less literate, live 4.5 years less and have higher rates of malnutrition among women and children than other African states, the study found.

Although the number of full-scale wars afflicting the continent is down, the report also noted that outbreaks of violence against civilians were on the rise, especially in central Africa and the Horn of Africa. (Reuters 16-10-2015)

CASH FLOW CRISIS AND MINISTERIAL TRAVEL BAN DOMINATE NAMIBIAN NEWSPAPERS

The Namibia government's cash flow problem, the redeployment of health permanent secretary and ministerial ban on foreign travel by board members of public enterprises were the main headlines in newspapers on Friday.

The Namibia government has admitted its spending plans over the past few years have put pressure on the level of foreign exchange reserves held at the Bank of Namibia.

According to The Namibian, Finance Minister Calle Schlettwein told parliament on Thursday that "prolonged fiscal expansion has exerted pressure on the stock of official international reserves held at the Bank of Namibia and also, to some extent, on the liquidity position in the domestic market."

Andrew Ndishishi, the health ministry's accounting officer, has confirmed to New Era that he will leave the ministry to take up a similar post at the Cabinet Secretariat.

This came on the heels of media speculation on Thursday about his impending departure from the ministry where he was implicated in tender and procurement scandals.

However, the long serving senior public official has challenged anyone accusing him of dishonesty to produce evidence of their claims, the state-owned daily quoted Ndishishi as saying.

"The gravy train gets shunted" is one of headlines in Namibian Sun about a directive given by Leon Jooste, the Public Enterprises Minister that board members of state-owned enterprises have to seek authorisations from him before traveling abroad.

This, according to Jooste, is to avoid unnecessary waste of taxpayers' money. (APA 16-10-2015)

SOUTH AFRICA 'LOSING IMPORTANCE IN GLOBAL MINING RANKS'

Anglo American nonexecutive director Jim Rutherford, an outspoken critic of SA, warned on Thursday of the country's dwindling significance in global mining equity allocations.

The diminishing importance of the sector was driven by bad decisions coupled with falling commodity prices, and SA needed urgently to tackle policy uncertainty to attract investment, he said at the Joburg Mining Indaba.

The sharp reversal in South African mining equity was, however, part of a broader global decline spurred by poor management decisions around capital allocation and to prop up balance sheets with debt and equity, he said.

Global mining equity market capitalisation had fallen 45% in the past 12 months, with the return on capital employed, a ratio that measures the efficiency of a company to generate profit, dropping from 43% between 2003 and 2006 to 14% in the next four-year period, and then to a negative 12% between 2011 and 2014, Mr. Rutherford said.

Until 25 years ago, SA accounted for 40% of the world's mining industry. It has now fallen to 4%. Globally, mining makes up 1% or less of the world's equity markets, meaning SA was equivalent to 0.04% of global equity markets, down from 1.75% two or three decades ago.

"When you are a fund manager, that is what you call statistically irrelevant," he said.

PwC's latest annual mining report, which surveys the world's top 40 mining companies had no South African companies compared to seven in 2003 when the report was first published, he said, though Anglo American and Glencore, which had large exposure to South African minerals, were in the list.

The South African mining sector's market capitalisation had fallen R371bn since last June, dragged down by the slide in global commodity prices, PwC said in a report released on Wednesday.

Slow global economic growth, a slump in commodity prices, volatility and regulatory uncertainty, were blamed for the downturn, the report said.

"Where investors do not see the prospect of a return, they become cowards and they simply won't invest. When you look at SA, the one issue constantly being cited as a deterrent to investment is policy uncertainty," Mr. Rutherford said.

"The incremental impact of that on SA has been very material," he said.

Policy uncertainty came in many forms and included the "inconsistent and what is perceived at times as somewhat arbitrary enforcement of existing legislation", he said, adding this included the way section 54 safety stoppage notices were used by the Department of Mineral Resources at mines.

Hulme Scholes, a lawyer who has approached the courts to overturn two mining charters, has claimed in his affidavit these notices were sometimes used to punish companies speaking out against the department — a claim it has denied.

Efforts to legislate for the ring-fencing of yet-to-be-defined strategic minerals, developmental pricing to sell minerals cheaply to domestic industry to bolster growth, and continued rumblings around nationalisation of mines were contributing to the uncertainty, Mr. Rutherford said.

"What is really needed here is a policy framework underpinned by clarity, consistency and certainty. It sounds simple, but it's hard to achieve in practice," he said, singling out Chile as an example where successive governments since the turbulent 1980s put policy in place that met those criteria.

Modernisation; updated operating practices including mechanisation; improved labour, community and government relationships; and strengthened linkages to suppliers of the industry that would meet the state's demands around beneficiation, were some of the changes needed in SA, Mr. Rutherford said. The trust deficit between government, business and investors needed attention.

"The price of inaction here is very high," he said. Investment confidence was needed to drive growth and employment to tackle poverty and inequality, two leading problems in SA.

Joseph Mathunjwa, president of the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union, said at the same conference, the industry could not be modernised until the "ills of the past" had been addressed. These included the wages paid to miners while improving their skills levels as well as the migrant labour system.

Companies failed to develop workers, so workers were always treated as a cost to the company and not a resource because not much had been invested in them, Mr. Mathunjwa said. (BD 16-10-2015)

UGANDA: SAMSUNG SOLAR SCHOOL TO BE UNVEILED AT AFRICAN SUMMIT

Samsung Africa has revealed that it will be taking part in the fifth Innovation Africa Summit in Uganda from 30 September to 2 October.

During the course of the summit, Samsung will showcase the Solar Powered Internet School (SPIS) solution that has been rolled out throughout the continent in countries such as South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana and Mozambique.

At the end of the Summit, Samsung has revealed that it will surprise a Ugandan school by donating an SPIS to them, adding Uganda to the growing list of countries benefiting from the SPIS.

According to Samsung, all meetings that Samsung has secured with the delegates will take place in the SPIS, built in a 12-metre renovated shipping container that can accommodate up to 24 pupils, and fitted with solar panels that power the equipment.

The SPIS is equipped with a 65-inch large-format display screen, a teacher's laptop, Samsung notebooks, a printer, and fans to cool the container. The classroom's computer server is loaded with educational content that covers the entire basic education syllabus, allowing facilitators to teach any subject or grade. Energy efficient LED lighting and an IP camera, which is designed to use 3G connectivity, allows for remote classroom monitoring. (IT News Africa 25-09-2015)

EGYPT: COURT RELEASES MUBARAK'S SONS IN "PRESIDENTIAL PALACE" CASE

A Cairo court on Monday ordered the release of Alaa and Gamal Mubarak, stating that they have already completed their three-year prison sentence in the "presidential palaces" case.

The court had sentenced the two brothers and Mubarak to three years in prison and a EGP 125 million (1\$=7.80EGP) fine in a case known in the media as the presidential palaces case, when they were found guilty of seizing public funds allocated to the renovation of presidential palaces. (APA 12-10-2015)

ANGOLA CREATES CONDITIONS TO ATTRACT MORE PRIVATE INVESTMENT

The conditions for the revitalisation and intensification of actions to attract private investment and funding were established with the recent approval and publication of the legislation, the Secretary of state for the Economy said Tuesday in Luanda.

Laura Monteiro, who at the time was speaking at a seminar on private investment aimed at managers and staff of state central and local administration and public sector institutions, stressed that these conditions were aimed at both national and foreign investment.

“This investment is intended to support the growth of domestic production, replacing imports and increasing exports of higher value added products,” added the Secretary of State cited by Angolan news agency Angop.

Monteiro said the main features of the new private investment law and its regulations were the minimum required value for domestic investors of US\$500,000 and US\$1 million for foreign investors to gain access to incentives stipulated in the law, which favoured national investors. (14-10-2015)

LA FRANCE STOPPE IN EXTREMIS LA CHUTE DE SON AIDE AU DEVELOPPEMENT

Depuis 2012, le budget de la solidarité internationale a été progressivement réduit de 700 millions d'euros.

Après 4 ans de baisse, le gouvernement va stabiliser le budget d'aide au développement en 2016. Un premier pas qui renvoie la hausse de 4 milliards d'euros promise par François Hollande à la fin de son quinquennat, en 2017.

[Les 4 milliards d'euros](#) promis par François Hollande en faveur du climat et de l'aide au développement à la tribune de l'ONU, en septembre dernier, ne sont pas pour tout de suite.

Après la présentation d'un budget d'aide au développement [en baisse](#), le gouvernement français a fait volte-face et déposé un [amendement](#) visant à rectifier le tir : le budget dédié à la solidarité internationale ne reculera pas en 2016. Une première depuis 2012.

Cet amendement déposé le 13 octobre propose de porter le plafond de la Taxe française sur les transactions financières (TTF) affectée au Fonds de solidarité pour le développement (FSD) à 260 millions d'euros en 2016, contre le 160 millions initialement prévus.

Autre mesure, qui devrait également faire l'objet d'un amendement, l'ajout de 50 millions affectés à l'aide aux réfugiés dans les pays limitrophes de la Syrie (Liban, Turquie, etc.). « Cette contribution va être intégralement financée par des économies sur le fonctionnement de l'État » précise-t-on dans l'entourage de la secrétaire d'État au développement. Et viendra abonder le programme alimentaire mondial (PAM) et le Haut commissariat aux réfugiés.

Au total, ces deux mesures ainsi qu'une enveloppe de 20 millions d'euros supplémentaire affectée au FSD, compensent tout juste la baisse initialement prévue par le gouvernement.

« Dans ce contexte budgétaire, la stabilisation du budget de l'aide publique au développement est un effort substantiel et non en sommes satisfait » se félicite-on du côté du gouvernement. Ce statu quo met fin à une hémorragie de 4 ans.

Baisse chronique

Depuis 2012, le budget de la solidarité internationale a progressivement fondu de 700 millions d'euros. Eloignant d'autant la France de l'objectif international de consacrer 0,7% de son revenu national brut au développement. Une diète générale à laquelle n'ont pas échappées d'autres dépenses publiques.

Mais cette année, les promesses présidentielles faites à l'occasion de l'adoption des nouveaux objectifs de développement durable et la tenue prochaine de la COP 21 à Paris faisaient espérer un effort supplémentaire.

« Nous avons enrayé la baisse de l'aide au développement pour 2016. Ensuite nous avons 4 ans, soit jusqu'à 2020 pour repartir à la hausse » détaille une source au gouvernement. Encore faudrait-il que la gauche reste au pouvoir en 2017 pour cela.

François Hollande s'est engagé à consacrer 2 milliards d'euros supplémentaires d'ici 2020 à l'aide publique au développement ainsi que 2 milliards spécifiquement dédiés à l'aide climatique. Au total, les 4 milliards devraient compter « un minimum de 350 millions de dons » à l'horizon 2020.

Mais la concrétisation de ces annonces ne commencera pas en 2016, et aucune garantie n'a été donnée pour 2017. La montée en puissance des financements annoncés dépend beaucoup [du rapprochement annoncé](#) de l'Agence française de développement (AFD) et de la Caisse des Dépôts et des consignations (CDC). Cette union doit théoriquement permettre une augmentation des capacités de financement de la banque de développement publique, en allégeant ses contraintes prudentielles.

Du côté des députés, qui ont commencé l'examen du projet de loi de Finances, l'impatience se fait sentir face aux décisions budgétaires.

« Il faudrait au moins 5 fois plus de dons de la part de la France » affirme le député PS Pouria Amirshahi. « La France n'est pas la pire, mais il y a une véritable interrogation sur la vision stratégique et les moyens donnés à l'aide au développement » poursuit-il. (EuroActiv)

BOTSWANA'S MOBILE PHONE OPERATOR CONNECTS RURAL FARMERS

A new mobile application m-Agric, designed for farmers in underserved communities in Botswana has reached over 10 000 registered users at the end of September, APA learnt here Monday.

A press release from mobile operators in the country, Orange Botswana states that the agricultural mobile application which is supported by Orange Botswana registers about 260 new users on a daily basis.

It says the application is the idea of a young entrepreneur, a certain Martin Setimela, under his company Brastorne Group.

The release states that the system was primarily developed to offer affordable connectivity for all local farmers, including the most under served in remote villages by creating a comprehensive mobile ecosystem for the agricultural community.

It says through the application, farmers can enjoy the convenience of easily marketing their products, learning farming tips from the Ministry of Agriculture and accessing financial services through the use of basic mobile phones.

Furthermore, the release states that the application is a trading platform that also comes with news and announcement sections on prices, subsidies, events and weather forecasts.(APA 12-10-2015)

PIG IRON PRODUCTION PROJECT IN ANGOLA IS "WELL ADVANCED"

The Cutato and Cuchi mining project, in the Angolan province of Kuando Kubango, is at a "well advanced" stage, said Wednesday in Luanda the minister of Geology and Mining, Francisco Queiroz.

At the end of the joint meeting of the Economic Committee and the Committee for the Real Economy of the Cabinet, the minister also said the mining project in those two regions had an estimated cost of about US\$200 million and in the initial phase of exploration, would employ at least 300 people.

Queiroz said the project would involve clearing the land and planting 60,000 hectares of eucalyptus trees that will be converted into charcoal to feed furnaces that smelt iron ore into pig iron, a precursor to steel. This project the minister said, will start in 2016 and the area for planting the eucalyptus used for charcoal production has already been selected.

In terms of timing, Queiroz said the charcoal production unit should start being built in 2016 and start operating later that year or early 2017. (15-10-2015)

PETIT PAS EN AVANT POUR LA PROTECTION DE LA FORET CONGOLAISE

Six pays africains ont mis en place, avec des donateurs, un projet pour protéger la forêt tropicale du bassin congolais. Il s'agit de la deuxième plus grande au monde, après la forêt amazonienne.

La Norvège, premier donateur à annoncer sa contribution, a déclaré qu'elle donnerait 400 millions de couronnes (42 millions d'euros) par an, de 2016 à 2020, pour protéger l'immense forêt congolaise, qui est aussi le second poumon de la planète, après celle du Brésil. Cette somme provient de fonds que le pays avait déjà dédié aux forêts tropicales.

« Faire face à des problèmes tels que l'agriculture non durable, la consommation d'énergie provenant du bois, l'exploitation des forêts et le développement d'infrastructure seront les principaux objectifs », indique le programme de l'ONU pour le développement.

Le projet a pour but de freiner l'abattage et la combustion des forêts qui sont vitales pour des millions de personnes et abritent des espèces menacées, comme les gorilles ou les bonobos. Il s'intègre aux préparations du sommet de l'ONU sur le changement climatique qui aura lieu à Paris en décembre.

« Nous ne parviendrons à rien [à Paris] sans des actions à grande échelle pour protéger les forêts dans le monde », a déclaré la ministre française du Développement, Annick Girardin. Les arbres absorbent le dioxyde de carbone pour leur croissance et le rejettent quand ils brûlent ou pourrissent.

Le projet, appelé [Initiative forêts en Afrique centrale](#) et adopté durant les discussions onusiennes à New York, couvre la République centrafricaine, la République démocratique du Congo (RDC), le Cameroun, la République du Congo, la Guinée équatoriale et le Gabon.

Les donateurs sont l'Allemagne, la France, la Grande-Bretagne, la Norvège et l'Union européenne. Le Brésil, pays situé au cœur du bassin amazonien, est conseiller du projet, qui implique aussi des agences des Nations unies et la Banque mondiale. Jusqu'à présent, la région du Congo n'a jamais attiré beaucoup de fonds alloués à la sauvegarde des forêts.

« La RDC a deux grands objectifs : la réduction des émissions et des bénéfices accessoires en termes de développement durable et de réduction de la pauvreté », a déclaré le ministre des Finances congolais, Henri Yav Mulang.

Les forêts de la région s'étendent sur environ 2 millions de kilomètres carrés - soit la taille du Mexique - mais rétrécissent chaque année de 5 600 km carrés.

Ces dernières années, les conflits ont cependant limité l'accès aux forêts. Des conditions plus stables pourraient toutefois accélérer le [processus de déforestation](#) destiné à l'agriculture.

« La plus grande menace à laquelle fait face l'Afrique centrale est l'huile de palme », a affirmé Per Pharo, responsable de l'Initiative internationale pour les forêts et le climat en Norvège. (EuroActiv 02-10-2015)

ETHIOPIAN RAILWAY CORPORATION TAKES DELIVERY OF 315 TRAINS

The Ethiopian Railway Corporation has taken delivery of 315 locomotives that carry passengers and freight along the Ethio-Djibouti railway, APA can report on Monday .

A total of 1,171 trains are required to start full service on the Ethio-Djibouti railway line, said Dereje Tefera, Corporate Communication Affairs Head with the corporation.

Metals and Engineering Corporation manufactured 130 of those already delivered while Chinese Company named NORINCO manufactured the remaining 185.

The project, which is being built in two directions Sebeta-Measo, Measo-Diredawa-Daweale- is expected to be finalized in the end of October.

Two Chinese companies, China Railway Group (CREC) and China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) are handling the project.

With the completion of track laying, project progress stands at 92 percent, according to Dereje. Remaining tasks include installation of power lines and signal reception and communications equipments.

The Ethio-Djibouti railway line stretches 656 kilometers inside the Ethiopian boarder while it spans only 100 kilometers inside the Djibouti boarder. (APA 12-10-2015)

GERMAN BUSINESSMEN SEEK OPPORTUNITIES IN CABO VERDE AND ANGOLA

German entrepreneurs Tuesday in Cabo Verde (Cape Verde) presented the potential of their companies in energy efficiency and renewable energy, during a symposium held Wednesday in Praia, Angolan news agency Angop reported.

During the first Germany-Cabo Verde Energy Symposium, entitled “Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy for development in Cabo Verde,” German businessmen expressed interest in partnering with local businesses for distribution and marketing of their products.

The German entrepreneurs said they expect this mission to lead to major partnerships between the two countries and that Cabo Verde would be a platform for entry into the market of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The mission, which takes place from 12 to 16 October, in addition to the symposium, has scheduled a series of individual meetings between German participants and potential Cape Verdean partners at their company premises.

Another mission of German entrepreneurs travelled to Angola but in this country the focus was diamonds, and on Tuesday the delegation met with the chairman of Angolan state diamond company Endiama, Carlos Sumbula.

The chairman of Endiama explained how the diamond industry and diamond sector projects operated, as well as the opportunities that Angola had to offer, particularly in the supply of mining equipment.

According to Angolan news agency Angop, the German businesspeople who are part of this mission are interested, besides the diamond industry, in projects related to construction of hydroelectric power plants. (15-10-2015)

GREAT LAKES PROJECT TO HELP AFRICAN TRADERS GET THEIR GOODS AND SERVICES TO MARKET

Consider the fate of a small-scale trader in the Great Lakes region of Africa.

She—for it is likely to be a she—works a small-scale farm in a border region with her family. On her back, balanced on her head, or perhaps with the aid of a cart or a small vehicle, she transports produce to a border crossing in the hopes of selling her produce on the other side. She is all too familiar with what awaits her there.

Officials from a dozen or more local, regional, and national government agencies on both sides of the border will insist on inspecting her goods and, in some instances, inspecting her. Either overtly or by strong implication, she will understand that she must bribe one or more of these officers if she wants to get her goods to market.

A bribe might only consist of a few eggs or a bunch of bananas. (A few eggs from every trader who crosses the border adds up to a lot.) But if she resists in any way, or perhaps even if she doesn't, she may be subject to verbal or physical harassment, including humiliating body searches conducted by men.

All the while the trader's produce, the main source of her family's meager income, is at risk of spoiling in the equatorial heat before ever getting to market. The dusty border crossing lacks warehouse facilities where traders can store goods while awaiting customs clearance. Even once they get across the border, assuming their goods are still marketable, they may face a long trek just to reach a market.

Those lucky enough to have only short distances to cover can cross and re-cross borders multiple times in a day, but in each crossing, they must navigate the financial and physical hazards that are part of life for traders in the region.

New project to streamline cross-border trading

Addressing these daily hazards and at the same time boosting a vital part of the region's growing economy form the core idea behind an initiative launched by the World Bank and the governments of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda. Implemented in cooperation with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project aims to clear logistical and administrative logjams at busy border crossings, reduce corruption and the harassment of traders—particularly women—boost local and regional economies, and alleviate poverty.

The project will unfold in two phases, beginning with grants and credits totaling \$79 million for the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda, and a second phase totaling \$61 million for the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Tanzania, and Zambia.

“The economic impact, particularly from the 20,000 to 30,000 small-scale traders that cross the border between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda each day, is crucial for the Great Lakes region,” said Paul Brenton, one of the World Bank’s Task Team Leaders for the project.

“Trade generates solidarity between communities and improves livelihoods, which in turn reduces the likelihood of conflict” added Shiho Nagaki, a fellow Team Leader.

The project will fuse both physical and logistical improvements in customs and border facilities with policy and procedural reforms and capacity building. For example, the project will fund construction of shelters for traders waiting at the border; automated turnstiles to facilitate more speedy passage through the border and less physical contact with, and therefore potential harassment from, border officials; gender sensitivity training for border officials; and the enshrinement of policies such as a requirement that inspections of female traders be conducted by female officials.

The goal is to improve the efficiency, capacity, and security of border operations at a number of key border crossings connecting the economies of these countries, thus improving the economic health of the region.

Trade is key as Great Lakes countries emerge from conflict

The Great Lakes Region of Africa, encompassing countries bordering on Lakes Albert, Edward, Kivu, Victoria, Tanganyika, and Nyasa, is emerging from years of conflict that aggravated extreme poverty and displaced millions of people.

Robust economic growth has followed the winding down of conflict and underscored the enormous economic potential of a region rich in mineral wealth, arable land, and breathtaking natural wonders. Rwanda’s economy, for example, grew at an annual rate of 8.2 percent between 2001 and 2011, with the percentage of people living in poverty declining from 59 to 45 percent. The districts with the strongest economic performance have been those bordering Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Burundi. In Uganda, the proportion of the population living below the official poverty line fell from 56 percent in the early 1990s to 19 percent last year.

But inefficiency and corruption persist at border crossings, imposing a significant drag on the regional economy, particularly for small traders, 8 out of 10 of whom are women, according to one recent survey. At teeming border crossings such as Kasindi and Mpondwe, between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda, or Goma and Rubavu, between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda, border officials are themselves seeking to survive on low monthly salaries.

“There is a lot of rudeness and harassment at the border,” said Maman Bahati, a Congolese trader. “The border agents only want money. You always have to discuss and negotiate. To cope with this, some women have no other choice but to cross illegally and sneak through the process.”

Not all of the corruption at the border is official. Mama Chantal, a Rwandan green bean trader, reflected on the brutality of unofficial agents, who routinely rough up traders.

“They walk the streets near the border and as soon as they see you trying to transport goods, they quickly grab you by your bag or your clothes and demand payment of the taxes,” Chantal said. “If you refuse to pay then they take you to the neighborhood and intimidate you.”

Most of the trade at these border crossings is small scale, usually involving individual traders on foot, and most of them trading in agricultural products. Most is “informal” trading—legal but not recorded in customs records. Thus the project, to be implemented over seven years, seeks to benefit some of the poorest and most vulnerable groups in the Great Lakes Region.

The means of improving circumstances for these traders can be as simple as ensuring that women inspectors handle the job of conducting searches of female traders; providing written receipts when customs dues are paid; and affording traders with a reliable organization that can receive and respond to complaints about harassment and corruption.

Success will be measured by collecting data on the average time it takes for a trader to get goods across a border, the value and volume of goods crossing borders, the incidence of harassment of small traders, particularly women, and the views of traders as to the quality of services provided by border agencies.

Collaboration with COMESA

The project will help COMESA implement regulations and procedures for the treatment of small-scale border traders, including a toll-free complaint hotline, simplified immigration- and health-related procedures, streamlined access to air freight, and duty-free entry for eligible goods. Implementation of

these improvements, along with modernized facilities at borders and changes as simple as providing separate lines for pedestrians, will not only benefit traders; it will also benefit government by generating more revenue.

“The Great Lakes Trade Facilitation initiative is about unlocking the economic potential of small traders who are a vital part of a growing regional economy,” said COMESA Secretary General Sindiso Ngwenya. “Research has shown that over 30 percent of the cross border trade taking place along the project target areas is from informal small scale traders, especially women and the youth. This intervention is therefore crucial in facilitating and streamlining cross border trade. COMESA is confident that its partnership with the World Bank will yield significant and positive economic impact.”

Part of the project will entail developing regional markets near to border crossings, so that small traders, particularly those on foot, can quickly sell their goods, making possible more round trips per day and increased income for poor families.

“We’ll be really looking to see if circumstances improve for these women and men and if they’re able to get their goods to markets across the border in a shorter time and with few to no negative incidents,” said Charles Kunaka, the World Bank’s co-Team Leader of the project. “Ultimately, we’d like to see an increase in the daily volume of trade, rising profits and revenues for traders, and better revenue generation and control for governments.” (WB 25-09-2015)

ETHIOPIA’S JIMMA AGARO COFFEE EARNS 95 PERCENT REVIEW

A well-known coffee review, Kenneth Davids and the Coffee Review, has given a 95/100 rating to Ethiopian Jimma Agaro coffee for an Ohio coffee roaster, Crimson Cup Coffee and Tea, APA has learnt on Monday.

Reviewers said that the handcrafted coffee suited those who value a coffee delicate and lush, pure yet musky and deep.

The fully washed coffee of Ethiopian Jimma Agaro Coffee includes heirloom and native varietal beans grown at elevation of 5,900 to 7,000 feet in the Jimma Zone of Ethiopia's Oromia State by members of the Biftu Gudina Cooperative.

The Cooperative was established in 2012 and, according to the buyer; it uses all the right methods to produce their coffee, including an eco-pulper, full immersion soak and raised-bed drying. The result is a super complex, sweet and juicy cup. •

The review also noted that Southern Ethiopia coffees like Jimma Agaro Coffee are produced from traditional Ethiopian varieties of Arabica, long grown in the region.

When processed by the wet or washed method (fruit skin and pulp are removed before drying) they typically express great aromatic complexity and intensity with a particular emphasis on floral notes. (APA 12-10-2015)

GRAPHITE DISCOVERY IN NORTHERN MOZAMBIQUE IS OF EXCELLENT QUALITY

The graphite discovery in the Balama Norte and Ancuabe concessions in northern Mozambique, has “unique commercial versatility,” Australia’s Triton Minerals said in a statement issued Wednesday. Metallurgical tests conducted recently have shown a substantial presence of large graphite particles in the deposit at Monte Nicanda in Balama Norte, wherein more than half of the mineral mass consisted of particles larger than 150 microns.

The samples subjected to testing also revealed that the graphite could be easily obtained through a single phase, with the company claiming that local processing would help the region’s economy and allow for the sale of the product at a higher price.

The Monte Nicanda concession contains the world's largest known graphite deposit and Triton Minerals recently announced the success of a graphene oxide production test carried out in a laboratory in Singapore using graphite from concessions in Mozambique. (15-10-2015)

STANLIB A 'PIONEER' WITH LAUNCH OF EAST AFRICA REAL ESTATE LISTING

Investment bank Stanlib is set to launch East Africa's first Income Real Estate Investment Trust (I-Reit). The Fahari I-Reit will be listed on the Nairobi Securities Exchange, allowing South African investors indirectly to own a slice of Kenya's property market. This is attractive given that SA's economy is struggling to grow, while Kenya's is performing well.

Property is heading for a boom as an asset class in Kenya, according to Stanlib. The country is benefiting from strong economic growth, with Kenya's gross domestic product climbing 5.3% last year. An I-Reit owns and manages income-generating real estate for the benefit of its investors. An I-Reit is legally obligated to distribute 80% of net income to investors.

The trust will invest in properties and pay clients returns at an agreed rate.

"The Stanlib I-Reit will be pioneering the Reit structure in Kenya by providing local and international investors with a safe and a regulated investment structure that also presents a diversification opportunity into a new asset class. This should bode well for the real estate market, with price discoveries and more listings in the region," Stanlib head of listed property Keillen Ndlovu said.

Stanlib head of direct property investments Amelia Beattie said the Reit was expected to have a market capitalisation of about 12.5-billion Kenyan shillings (R1.61bn). Stanlib would be asset manager for the fund, which would be unitised.

The unit holders were the "ultimate owners of the Stanlib Fahari I-Reit".

JHI Properties Kenya, a specialist property manager, will provide property management functions in respect of the Reit's properties.

But some analysts view African Reits as too risky.

"The Stanlib Kenyan I-Reit is not something that we are too positive about at the moment. Our house view is that we are not seeing returns in many African markets justifying the risk, and we believe that other international markets present far more attractive Reit investment opportunities," Alternative Real Estate Capital Management's Garreth Elston said.

"The main issue we have with many African markets outside of SA is that the investments can be quite illiquid; property valuations are often based on a shallow pool of comparable assets and you can't be sure that you are getting an accurate valuation or not; and quite often foreign investors entering these markets skew them to the point where they risk becoming the market, further obfuscating the valuations.

"We see much better Reit value in North America, Europe and the UK," Mr. Elston said.

Stanlib Kenya is the third-largest Kenyan asset manager. Stanlib has assets worth more than \$2.3bn under management in East Africa.(BD 15-10-2015)

ETHIOPIA'S HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT BEGINS POWER GENERATION

Ethiopia's Gilgel Gibe III hydroelectric power project began power generation, APA can report on Monday.

The Dam, highest Roller Compacted Concrete (RCC) dam in Africa, will have a total installed capacity of 1,870mw.

This will increase Ethiopia's power generation capacity by 234 percent, according to Alemayehu Tegenu, Cabinet Affairs Minister, and former Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy.

The power will provide an important contribution to Ethiopia's socio-economic development by feeding the country's grid as well as facilitating more power to the country's power-export program and assisting

regional integration among neighboring countries through the interconnected power links, the minister added. (APA 12-10-2015)

AGRIC BANK SOURCES \$150 MILLION FOR FARMERS

Nigeria's Bank of Agriculture (BOA) is to secure \$150 million from international financial institutions for on-lending to farmers for the development of agriculture in the country.

The BOA Managing Director, Prof. Danbala Danju, said in Abuja on Sunday that the financial institutions were the African Development Bank (ADB) and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB).

He said that the loans would be used by farmers to enhance their productivity and support other activities in the agriculture sector.

To develop agriculture, you need to inject a lot of resources and provide support in terms of supply of fertilizers, seeds, land clearance and extension services," Danju said.

He said that the funds would impact significantly toward boosting agricultural productivity, guarantee food security, create jobs and alleviate poverty among Nigerians.

Danju said the bank was being repositioned to provide the necessary services in developing the sector.

He said that the bank's management had commenced discussion with traditional leaders, state government officials and other stakeholders on the modalities for disbursing the loans.

Danju also said that the bank would bring credible foreign investors who would put in enough resources in the bank and invest in agriculture.

He said that the bank would collaborate with other private sector operators within the country to move the sector forward. (APA 18-10-2015)

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