

# MEMORANDUM

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## MUGABE WARMS TO WEST AS ZIMBABWEAN ECONOMY WOBBLES

Robert Mugabe's anti-Western rhetoric has been conspicuous by its absence of late, a sign the 91-year-old leader has mellowed or realised that Zimbabwe may need financial help.

A year ago, the veteran turned to "old friend" China, but behind the official warmth Beijing made clear the days of blank cheques were over, forcing Harare to make repayments on \$1bn of loans made over the previous five years.

Since then, the southern African nation's economic plight has worsened and Mr Mugabe said he may need the support of foreign creditors such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which he likened in 2006 to "the devil" and "a political monster".

"The economy is in such a dire state and Mugabe's rapprochement with Western donors is a realisation that he has very few options — even if he may have personal misgivings and it goes against his political beliefs," said John Robertson, a Harare-based economist.

The government is forecasting growth of 1.5% this year but many analysts say Zimbabwe is tilting towards recession — its first since 2008, when hyperinflation clocked 500-billion percent and Mr. Mugabe lost his first ever election.

Deflation has taken root as consumer demand shrinks and the economy struggles with a shortage of dollars. Once bustling factories in Harare are now rusty shells, devastated by the 1999-2008 recession that cut gross domestic product (GDP) by about half.

In addition, the mines are reeling from the fall in commodity prices and a drought has left 16% of the population needing food aid. Formal unemployment stands at more than 80% and power shortages are getting worse.

"This is the worst since 2008. The economy looks very bleak and there is a lot of negative sentiment," said Anthony Hawkins, economics professor at University of Zimbabwe's Graduate School of Management who predicts a 1% contraction this year.

The third-quarter Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries' latest purchasing managers index stood at 43.1, only a shade above the 42 level that indicates a recession.

### 'Devil and monster'

Against this backdrop, Mr. Mugabe told parliament in late August he was looking to boost ties with foreign creditors.

Finger jabbing and remonstrating, Mr. Mugabe has in the past been most critical of the US and Britain, accusing them of seeking to topple him from power.

That vitriol is now just a memory, while the European Union, looking beyond Mr. Mugabe's rule, has gradually lifted sanctions.

The bloc still maintains an arms embargo and what it calls a token travel ban and asset freeze on Mr. Mugabe and his wife.

"We invite other countries with which we may have differences of whatever nature to eschew threats, pressures and punitive actions, in favour of reconciliation, friendship and dialogue," Mr. Mugabe told the UN General Assembly last month.

Harare has also opened talks on fresh loans from the World Bank, IMF and African Development Bank for the first time since 2009, when it started defaulting on its foreign debt, which now stands at \$10.4bn or 74% of GDP.

In the past, Mr. Mugabe parcelled out land seized from white commercial farmers, raised wages for state workers and printed money to finance government spending to shore up his support.

Now he has little room to manoeuvre after the adoption of the US dollar in 2009. The government can no longer devalue the currency, print money to stimulate the economy or influence interest rates.

### Political suicide

But new international loans will require reforms, including selling some loss-making state firms, which are a constant drain on the public purse, analysts said.

Harare would need to plug leaks in its finances, increase transparency in mining revenue, redistribute idle farms to competent farmers and ease black economic empowerment laws requiring foreign-owned firms to sell majority shares to locals.

"By far the biggest reform is that of the civil service. The government needs to cut spending on salaries, which the authorities are conscious of," said a Western diplomat who has helped Harare in discussions with foreign creditors.

Wages take up 83% of Zimbabwe's \$4bn annual budget. Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa has said the bill should be cut in half, but there is no consensus within cabinet on how to do it.

The government is now the biggest employer with 550,000 workers of the total 800,000 formal jobs. Most Zimbabweans earn a living in the informal sector and on the streets.

In April, Mr. Chinamasa said cabinet had agreed to suspend bonus payments to public workers because of falling tax revenues, but days later Mr Mugabe publicly reversed the decision, conscious of the political fallout.

Christopher Mutsvangwa, a strong Mugabe backer and outspoken minister for veterans of Zimbabwe's independence war against white minority rule, accused Mr. Chinamasa of cosying up to the IMF and criticised any plans to cut civil servants' wages or jobs.

"Now that is patently immoral as it is political suicide for Zanu (PF), the people-centred party," Mr. Mutsvangwa wrote in a state-owned weekly newspaper on October 11. (Reuters 22-10-2015)

## **TWELVE BANKS FROM ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE IN THE LIST OF 100 LARGEST IN AFRICA**

Nine banks from Angola and three from Mozambique are on the list of 100 largest banks in Africa by capital, according to the 2015 list drawn up by the African Business magazine.

The first of the 12 banks from Portuguese-speaking countries to appear on the list is Banco Económico de Angola, formerly Banco Espírito Santo Angola, in 16th place with capital of US\$1.583 billion, rising 12 places compared to the 2014 list.

In 25th place (29th in 2014) was Banco Angolano de Investimento, with US\$980 million, in 29th (32nd in 2014) was Banco de Poupança e Crédito with US\$880 million, in 34th (42nd in 2014) was Banco de Fomento Angola with US\$707 million and in 37th place (41st in 2014) was Banco BIC, with US\$686 million.

The first bank from Mozambique to appear on the list – Millennium bim – was in 55th place (57th in 2014), with US\$422 million, followed by Banco Privado Atlântico in 57th place (77th in 2014) with US\$397 million and Banco Millennium Angola in 67th (74th in 2014) with US\$315 million.

Banco de Desenvolvimento de Angola, in 65th place with capital of US\$318 million, Angola's Banco de Negócios Internacional, in 94th place and US\$188 million, Standard Bank Mozambique in 95th place and US\$188 million and Banco Comercial de Investimentos in 98th place and capital of US\$180 million all appeared on this list for the first time.

Apart from the banks that are on the African Business list for the first time this year this year appear, all of the others from Portuguese-speaking countries rose in the table, notably Banco Económico de Angola, which jumped 12 places and Banco Privado Atlântico, which rose 20 places.

Banco Millennium Angola recently merged with Banco Privado Atlântico, so the resulting bank will rise significantly in the 2016 list.

The first five places on this list are taken up by four banks from South Africa – Standard Bank Group with US\$12.405 billion, FirstRand with US\$4.825 billion (3rd in 2014), Absa Bank with US\$4.294 billion (2nd in 2014) and Nedbank Group with US\$4.152 billion (4th in 2014).

In the midst of these top five, comes the Attijariwafa Bank of Morocco in third place, with US\$4.41 billion, which moved up two positions from its position in the 2014 list. (22-10-2015)

## **BOTSWANA PLANS STEEL EXPORT**

Vice President Mokgweetsi Masisi on Wednesday officially opened the first ever steel manufacturing plant in Botswana which will see the country start exporting the commodity.

Speaking at the official opening of Pula Steel in Selibe Phikwe, a town in northern Botswana, Masisi said it is the first company in the country that processes scrap metal into intermediate product called billet.

The plant will further process billet into different types of steel products such as rebar and other

products.

Today we officially open the first phase of this production process which will produce the billet that will be 100 percent for export. I am reliably informed that in eight (8) months the production process will add a second phase which will produce re-bar and other products; a considerable part of which will be for the local market and some for export, he said.

He said steel is a basic commodity which is required by any developing economy, for infrastructural developments, mines and construction.

According to international trade statistics countries in the regional grouping SADC imported \$3.3 million worth of steel in 2014.

The local demand was met primarily by South Africa and China which supplied 50% and 40% respectively. Pula Steel is strategically located to serve both markets said Masisi. (APA 21-10-2015)

## **AFRICAN MUSICIANS TUNE INTO CONTINENTS MARKET**

The mansion, the pool, the Bentley, the life-size portrait and the gold medallions are the spoils of a revolution in Nigeria and music superstar D'banj is enjoying them.

The 35-year-old used to have to bargain with street-market traders to sell his CDs because there were no formal distribution outlets.

Today, MTN Group, Africa's biggest cellphone operator, and Emirates Telecommunications Corporation sell songs by D'banj and other stars such as Davido and 2Face as ringtones and downloads. And now the Tidal music streaming service owned by US rapper Jay-Z is interested in the Nigerian market.

"Our consumers can't get enough of it; you only need to give them a way to get the music," D'banj, whose real name is Oladapo Daniel Oyebanjo, said at his home in an up-market neighbourhood of Lagos.

"The telecommunications companies are bridging the gap and they're raking in billions and billions of naira every year, just from content."

Thanks to Nigeria's answer to Spotify and Apple Music, the music industry has seen sales triple in the past five years as cellphone downloads surged, despite rampant piracy.

With at least 550 albums each year, revenue to artists from sales is now worth more than \$150m annually, according to Sam Onyemelukwe, CEO of Lagos-based Entertainment Management Company, partner of Paris-based Trace TV.

Outside of his revenue from Apple's iTunes, D'banj said in the past 18 months he'd earned more than \$200,000 from sales in Nigeria. "It's close to buying me a Ferrari," he said.

More than two-thirds of MTN's 63-million subscribers in Nigeria were using its ringtones service, for as little as 50 naira (\$0.25) a song, with downloads on its Music Plus platform growing by 25% a year, said Richard Iweanoge, MTN Nigeria's general manager for consumer marketing.

"We have become the largest distributor of music in Nigeria," Mr Iweanoge said. "It turned out that Nigerians actually wanted to buy music, they just didn't have a legal way to acquire it."

The boom has drawn the attention of Jay-Z, the rapper whose real name is Shawn Carter. "My cousin just moved to Nigeria to discover new talent," he said on April 26 on his Twitter account. It was part of his move to make his Tidal music-streaming business "a global company", Mr. Iweanoge said.

Boosted by satellite television outlets such as Trace TV and MTV Base Africa, many Nigerian musicians have won international acclaim.

"Trace and MTV Base have played a very good part in bringing the artists to the rest of the world," Mr. Onyemelukwe said. "We pay royalties and it brings the viewers to whom we can advertise to gain revenue."

At the 2015 MTV Base Africa Awards held in SA in July, Nigerian musicians swept the most prestigious awards, with Davido winning best male artist and Yemi Alade best female artist.

D'banj, ambassador for brands from Apple's Beats Music to Diageo's Ciroc Vodka, clinched an award for popularising African music.

"We're operating in a music industry that doesn't have clearcut structure," D'banj said. "It's a global thing. Everyone is trying to come up with new formulas."

In the 1960s and '70s Nigeria had a robust music industry, with EMI Group, Philips Records and Polydor publishing the works of musicians including the late Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, King Sunny Ade and Osita Osadebe who went on to achieve global appeal.

Most of the companies pulled out in the 1980s as an economic crisis led to currency devaluations and lower disposable income. "When the big recording companies left Nigeria and the local ones took over, things went south," said Tola Ogunsola, co-founder of Nigerian music-download website My Music. "There was no formal distribution anymore."

That left musicians resorting to selling their rights to distributors for a one-time fee, or heading over to the open-air Alaba market in Lagos to get traders to distribute their recordings.

Then, in 2001, MTN led the introduction of cellphones in Nigeria, and today there are almost 149-million lines. That has given local artists an unparalleled avenue to distribute their songs. (Bloomberg 21-10-2015)

### **MOZAMBIQUE: MAPUTO-CATEMBE BRIDGE NEARS COMPLETION**

Thirty-seven percent of the work on the Maputo-Catembe Bridge and the road between Catembe and Ponta D'Ouro in Mozambique has been completed, APA learnt on Monday.

The structural engineer in the Maputo-South Company, Basil Zunga is quoted in the local media as saying that work to the finish was now in full swing.

He was addressing government officials, tour operators and potential investors in Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland and Seychelles, participating in the fifth edition of the tourist expedition aimed at tourism development in the Southern African Development Community.

The completion of the \$750 million Maputo-Catembe network, establish the road connection of the country, from Maputo to Rovuma, in Cabo Delgado.

Zunga said that the project, as a whole, will be completed by the end of 2017. (APA 19-10-2015)

### **ANGOLAN GOVERNMENT PROJECT ECONOMY WILL GROW 3.3 PCT IN 2016**

The assumptions for preparing the Angolan 2016 State Budget (OGE) project a GDP growth rate of 3.3 percent, the Angolan Finance Minister said Wednesday in Luanda.

Minister Armando Manuel, who spoke after a cabinet meeting, said the government was drafting the state budget based on the price of oil at US\$45 per barrel, "taking into account the price volatility in international markets."

The minister said that US\$47 per barrel was the reference for drafting a budget that includes costs estimated at 6.3 billion kwanza (US\$4.6 billion).

Cited by Angolan state news agency Angop, Manuel said the government would need to contract debt to cover the estimated expenditure and that the budget deficit would be close to 5.5 percent of gross domestic product.

The Finance Minister also said that the Budget for 2016 was intended to meet the basic needs of the State, such as payment of salaries, operating costs of the institutions, adjustment of expense of the social sector, which will account for 43 percent of the total and repositioning of spending in the Health sector. (22-10-2015)

## CREDIT CARD FRAUD STATISTICS FOR SOUTH AFRICA REMAIN A CONCERN

Card fraud statistics show a significant reduction in fraud likely due to the introduction of richer technology and payment solutions.

Credit card fraud statistics for South Africa in the banking sector remain a cause for concern according to figures released by the South African Banking Risk Information Centre ([SABRIC](#)).

Credit card fraud losses in 2014 increased by 23% and false application fraud rose from R6.2m in 2013 to R78.3m in 2014. Fraud continues to present a threat to the banking sector, the business and the consumer.

However, it is not all bad news. In an interview with [Fin24](#), Mastercard revealed that the fraud levels around their bank cards had hit a record low based on the company's Gross Dollar Volume (GDV) data. Mastercard believes that Chip and PIN or EMV technology have been key to this shift as these payment systems have been devised specifically to provide consumers and institutions with additional layers of protection.

"The decline in fraud levels is also being impacted by the implementation of 3D Secure authentication processes as these have raised the barrier to entry for fraudsters," says Johan Dekker, COO at PayU. "The high numbers around fraud have also played a significant role in the sector's shift to more robust payment solutions. At PayU, we are seeing an uptake in fraud management solutions as more and more merchants come to the realisation that 3D Secure is not a silver bullet and there is still a need for a comprehensive fraud management strategy."

This strategy needs to incorporate rich technology and capability alongside ease of use and functionality. From the start of a transaction to the completion of payment, every element must be part of a process that can identify potential fraudulent behaviour and protect against it. Online payment solutions must be up to date, aware of shifts in technique and technology and comprehensive enough to cope with the demands of the business.

Mastercard's announcement is a beacon of light in a sea of fraud statistics and is, according to Dekker, a trend that will likely continue from a card perspective. It will also potentially ignite further efforts to move to areas that remain vulnerable and to focus on implementing solutions that are capable of handling the challenges they represent.

"The sector has not sat idly by and continues to invest in fraud management solutions designed to protect both themselves and their clients and consumers," concludes Dekker. "This downward trend is as a result of significant investment into reliable and secure payment solutions and will remain on track if organisations continue to implement comprehensive payment security strategies going forward."

PayU has the most payment solutions on offer in South Africa, offering 25 different products that are designed to support the business and the banking sectors. These include the recently released EFT Pro payment product that allows customers to pay through electronic fund transfers that are instantaneous and secure. It has been designed to reduce admin and fraud risk while being easy to use and convenient. The company also offers the PayU Call2Assist product that lets the call centre agent support the customer throughout the payment process without them seeing sensitive card data or hearing the DTMF tones. Dial tones have historically been an achilles heel for centre payment collection. .

"Combatting fraud is at the top of our agenda and has seen us forge alliances with organisations such as ReD Shield, the leading fraud management company in the world," says Dekker. "It has also played a role in our developing so many different platforms and payment types." (BD 20-10-2015)

## RUSSIAN FIRM BEGINS ETHIOPIA OIL EXPLORATION

GPB Global Resources, a Russian oil and gas company, is embarking on an oil exploration project in the Afar Regional State of Ethiopia.

The country's Ministry of Mines, Petroleum and Natural Gas, and GPB Global Resources signed petroleum production sharing agreement whereby the company would prospect for oil in the Gewane-EI Wiha block, in the Afar Regional State.

The exploration area is located in the Afar region in the north-eastern part of the country covering 42,000sqkms.

An official at GPB Global resources told APA on Monday that Geo Services has started collecting seismic data from the concession.

GPB Global Resources is an international group of companies engaged in petroleum and mineral resources exploration in various parts of the world including Africa, South America and the Middle East.

In Africa the company is active in Eritrea, Mali, Ivory Cost, Niger and Mali.

Officials of the Ministry of Mines, Petroleum and Natural Gas have expressed confidence in GPB's swift move to launch the oil exploration project.

They started the oil exploration project according to schedule, a senior official at the ministry told APA.

We are optimistic that GPB will fulfill all its commitments, the official said.

The company committed itself to undertaking seismic survey and drilling at least two exploration wells in the initial exploration period.

According to the agreement, the company may invest up to \$60 million on the exploration project.

GPB Global Resources is an affiliate of Gazprom, a Russian gas giant.(APA 19-10-2015)

## **COMPANIES SET UP PARTNERSHIP FOR GOLD MINING IN MOZAMBIQUE**

Xtract Resources has formed a partnership with Mineral Technologies International Ltd to explore an alluvial gold concession in the province of Manica, Mozambique, the company listed on the London Stock Exchange said in a statement released Tuesday.

Xtract Resources added that it hoped the 50/50 partnership would annually extract 32,000 ounces of gold, in addition to gold from an open pit mine.

This partnership covers only a part of the Xtract Resources concession and will be developed separately from the open pit mine, on which a feasibility study is about to be completed.

Xtract Resources estimated production costs at around US\$203 per ounce, compared to a price of US\$1,200 per ounce on the international market, which is why it believes it can recover the investment in less than six months.

Earlier this month the company acquired a gold mining license in Manica from Auroch Minerals, an Australian mining company, for US\$10 million. (22-10-2015)

## **SUSTAINABLE TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EURO-MED REGION IN FOCUS AS ARLEM COMMISSION MEETS**

The Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) is holding the first meeting of its Commission for sustainable territorial development on 26 October in Brussels.

The aim of this first meeting is to discuss two thematic reports, on [employment and territorial development](#) in the Mediterranean and on a [sustainable urban agenda](#) in the Mediterranean region.

As a follow up of the ARLEM report on "The role of local and regional authorities in managing migration in the Mediterranean", a discussion on the latest developments linked to migration in the Mediterranean region is also on the agenda.

The European Neighbourhood Instrument CBC Med Programme 2014-2020 will be presented to introduce the point on cross-border cooperation. (EU Neighbourhood 21-10-2015)

### **WORLD BANK GRANTS US\$54M TO AGRIC MINISTRY TO REDUCE POVERTY, FOOD INSECURITY**

An official of the Smallholder Agriculture Productivity Enhancement and Commercialization (SAPEC) project at Liberia's Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), Mr. Emmanuel G. Wah, says that the World Bank has provided a grant of US\$54 million to enable the ministry reduce rural poverty and household food insecurity in the country.

Wah disclosed that the African Development Fund has provided a loan of US\$6.4 million to finance civil works relating to feeder roads, while the Liberian Government is contributing US\$1.5 million to finance cost associated with office accommodation and taxes on contracts, among others

Speaking at the Ministry's Programme Management Unit (PMU) at the start of a week-long workshop on Monday to educate the staff of the Project about the structure and functions of the Ministry of Agriculture, Wah said that the project had contracted 12 focal persons, 41 extension technicians and 12 drivers for the implementation of the project.

He noted that the project is intended to increase on a sustainable basis, the income of smallholder farmers and rural entrepreneurs, particularly women, youth and the physically challenged.

According to him, the project is to be implemented in 12 of the 15 counties designed to transform Liberia's agriculture sector by moving 25,000 food insecure and low income farming households to commercially-oriented agriculture to foster economic growth.

Wah said this would be accomplished through four components - Sustainable Crop Production Intensification, Value Addition and Marketing, Capacity Building and Institutional Strengthening as well as Project Management.(APA 19-10-2015)

### **EFACEC BUILDS POWER STATION IN SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE**

Portuguese company Efacec will build a power station in São Tomé and Príncipe with an installed capacity of 6 megawatts, costing 5.2 million euros that will be paid by Portugal, an official from the archipelago's water and electricity company said Tuesday.

The official told Portuguese news agency Lusa that work to build the Santo Amaro 2 power station began this week and should take about nine months.

In 2016 São Tomé and Príncipe will have a power production capacity of 26 megawatts, from 16 megawatts at the moment, with the ongoing installation of two new generator groups in the Bobo Forro plant, 3 kilometres from the capital, which will produce an additional 3.4 megawatts of power.

The installation of these two production units come just over two weeks after the archipelago faced yet another serious power shortage as a result of a fault at the country's main power plant.

The Efacec Group's major shareholder is Winterfell Industries, a company owned by Angolan businesswoman Isabel dos Santos, who bought a 65 percent stake in Efacec Power Solutions from Portuguese groups José de Mello and Têxtil Manuel Gonçalves, the main shareholders at the time, for 200 million euros.

Later on the Angolan State took a 26 percent stake in Efacec Power Solutions after the President authorised the national power distribution company ENDE to buy 40 percent of Winterfell Industries. (22-10-2015)

## **EU SUPPORTS YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS IN EGYPT, LEBANON AND PALESTINE**

The EU-funded Youth Entrepreneurship Project (YEP) is presenting its results at its final conference held today in Egypt in the framework of the SANABEL conference, a regional annual conference bringing together a large number of major public and private stakeholders working in the microfinance sector in the MENA region.

The YEP initiative is a regional project implemented in three countries (Egypt, Lebanon and Palestine) to support young entrepreneurs' access to financial and non-financial services and allow them to develop their entrepreneurial and management skill, thus, expand and/or establish new businesses. The YEP project further sought to reinforce the capacity of non-governmental microfinance institutions enabling them to better assist youth through the provision of tailored, quality-driven, and sustainable services.

The conference will reflect on the results of the project and allow the participants to discuss its challenges, and prepare for the next steps. (EU Neighbourhood 21-10-2015)

## **EGYPT NEEDS PRIVATE SECTOR ROLE IN PROJECTS**

Egypt has proved successful in implementing public projects with the participation of the private sector, said Minister of Investment Ashraf Salman.

He added in a speech at the Public Private Partnership Summit on in Cairo on Monday that his country was ranked in the top four by the World Bank in terms of the number of PPP projects in the MENA region.

Salman noted that his country's ranking follows South Africa, Morocco and Kenya, adding that Egypt could reach this position through a proper regulatory framework, infrastructure and operational maturity and a proper investment climate.

The Egyptian minister said that Egypt spent \$22bn in public private participation in infrastructure (PPI) from 1990 to 2014, in the MENA region, while around \$105bn was spent in PPI during the same period.

For his part Egypt's Minister of Housing Mostafa Madbouly said that his ministry will launch projects related to water and sanitation for private sector investments.

He added "We aim to establish the Abu Rawash station and develop the West Cairo water station".

Madbouly noted that the ministry is also launching water refining stations in El-Alamein, Sinai, the North Coast and the Red Sea, expected to be fully operational within three to five years. (APA 19-10-2015)

## **GUINEA-BISSAU AND WORLD BANK ANALYSE RESUMPTION OF PROGRAMMES SUSPENDED IN AUGUST**

The Guinea-Bissau government analysed with the World Bank mechanisms to resume projects suspended two months ago, following the dismissal of the government of Domingo Simoes Pereira, the Minister of Economy and Finance of Guinea-Bissau said Wednesday in Bissau.

Minister Geraldo Martins also said the two sides had reviewed the projects supported by the World Bank in the energy sector, especially related to the purchase of fuel for electricity and water company Empresa de Electricidade e Águas da Guiné-Bissau.

Martins added that the second item on the agenda was confirmation of the commitments made to cooperation partners during the round table in Brussels, where the World Bank pledged to provide approximately US\$150 million.

The third point of the agenda was related to innovative financing created recently by the World Bank and of which Guinea-Bissau is expected to be the first beneficiary, said the Minister of Economy and Finance giving no further details of this “innovative financing.”

The government also analysed with the World Bank three-year financing for pre-selected sectors such as energy, education, transport, investment in the port of Bissau and other infrastructure in an amount ranging from US\$45 million to US\$50 million.

The Minister of Economy and Finance said funding for construction of the power transmission line of the Kaleta dam in neighbouring Guinea-Conakry, as part of the Gambia River Basin Development Organisation (OMVG, its acronym in French), is part of the package of round table commitments that has already been approved.

The meeting was attended by the World Bank’s director for operations in Guinea-Bissau Louise Cord, the Minister of Education, Odete Costa Semedo, Minister for Energy, Wasna Santa Danfa, the Minister for Health, Cadi Seidi and the Secretary of State for Transport and Communications, João Bernardo Vieira. (22-10-2015)

#### **NIGERIA FREEZES MONETARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO ECOWAS**

Nigeria says it was putting on hold its regular monetary contributions to the running of the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) which is headquartered in Abuja.

Nigerian officials were on Monday quoted by several sources as saying that West Africa's most populous nation was temporarily putting a freeze on its payment to the 15-member grouping until other member nations act on their arrears to the organization which celebrated 40 years of existence recently.

Nigeria, Ghana and Ivory Coast have been the three main contributors to the Ecowas treasury but recent financial and political quagmires witnessed in those countries have driven the organization on a tight shoestring.

Nigeria and Ghana have been caught up in the general fall in oil prices and economic crisis while Ivory Coast is still battling the lingering aftermath of a bloody long drawn out civil war which ended in 2011.(APA 19-10-2015)

#### **PROMOTING MEDITERRANEAN DAIRY INDUSTRY: REWARDS FOR TEN INNOVATIVE PROJECTS**

The EU-funded project LACTIMED, implemented under the CBCMed programme, has rewarded ten innovative projects in a contest organised in the project’s pilot territories (Egypt, Greece, Italy, Lebanon and Tunisia) to give a new impetus to the dairy industry, while demonstrating that innovation and entrepreneurship can go hand in hand with traditional skills.

The winners will receive a €10,000 grant each as well as technical and commercial assistance for six months. Of the 50 projects submitted, 38 shortlisted candidates benefited from a two-month coaching phase to develop a business plan and present their projects to an international jury.

Among the winners are a green Kecheh produced by a women's cooperative, or a flavored bio Labneh in Lebanon, a bio-detergent derived from milk microflora in Tunisia, and the development of farm lactic ferments in Sicily and Tunisia.

The aim of the contest was to encourage innovation but also to strengthen the capacity of project developers and support their development. Those who have not been selected will carry a stronger project thanks to the support of specialised coaches on technical aspects, innovation, trade and finance.

The **LACTIMED project** aims to strengthen the production and distribution of typical dairy products in the Mediterranean region through the coordination of local industries, the support to dairy producers and the promotion of their products on local and international markets. In order to reach these goals, a Mediterranean network will be created to increase the commercial value of these products, to foster the integration of local value chains as well as to strengthen the production and promotion on national and international markets.

The **ENPI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme 2007/2013** is a multilateral cross-border cooperation programme funded by the European Union under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument. It aims at reinforcing cooperation between the EU and partner countries' regions located along the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. (EU Neighbourhood 22-10-2015)

#### **LIBERIA: UNDP, JAPAN ENHANCE BORDER CONTROL, SURVEILLANCE**

In continuation of its support to post-Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) border control and surveillance, a joint UNDP/GOL mission has conducted a reconnaissance field trip to the border counties of Bong, Nimba and Lofa as part of efforts to enhance border control and surveillance.

According to a statement by the UNDP on Monday in Monrovia, the 3 counties are among eight counties benefitting from the Japanese funded Emergency Support to National Response to Ebola Viral Hemorrhagic Fever Epidemic (Enhanced Border Surveillance Project) and the proliferation of small arms.

It is being managed by the UNDP in close collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms.

The statement added that the Mission visited a number of border posts and other facilities to assess prevailing working conditions, triage facilities and surveillance activities.

There were also community and local leadership engagement meetings held to provide and share information about the project activities, and make Community members more responsive to the needs on the ground.

The team includes key stakeholders like the UNDP, Small Arms Commission, Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization (BIN), Liberia National Police (LNP) and Ministry of Justice (MOJ).

The major challenges identified during the Field Mission include: weak surveillance due to the lack of logistics; increase in the use of single barrel guns and other small arms, due to weak record keeping system; deplorable roads; poor accommodation and limited food supply for officers, among others.

It was agreed that there was a need to set up local project co-ordination teams in the counties to facilitate organization of project programmes/events and reporting on incidents; strengthen links between Community Policing with the early warning and response system as part of the broader peace building initiative.

It was also agreed that Community engagement should involve all relevant stakeholders such as clan

chiefs, town chiefs, Zone chiefs, women and youth groups; increase sensitization to enhance community involvement and collaboration with security personnel to maintain border surveillance etc.

“Similar consultations are expected to take place in the five remaining border counties of Grand Gedeh, Maryland, River Gee, Grand Cape Mount, and Gbarpolu,” the statement added.(APA 19-10-2015)

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