

MEMORANDUM

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15TH FEMIP CONFERENCE: EIB REINFORCES INNOVATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND JOBS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LUXEMBOURGISH PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU AND THE UFM

On 26 October 2015 in Luxembourg, the European Investment Bank (EIB) hosted the 15th FEMIP Conference in partnership with the Luxembourgish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). The conference was inaugurated by Nicolas Schmit, Luxembourg Minister of Labour, Ramon Escolano, Vice President of the EIB and Fathallah Sijilmassi Secretary General of the UfM and was concluded by Werner Hoyer the President of the EIB and Jean Asselborn, Luxembourg Minister of Foreign Affairs. The meeting explored the links between private sector finance, entrepreneurship and job creation, with a focus on the tools for financing pioneering investments in the Mediterranean region.

The Mediterranean region will see a large number of new entrants into the labour market by 2025. Creating employment opportunities, in particular for young people, is thus a key priority for the Mediterranean countries. A strong public private partnership is needed to drive growth. Whilst the role of the public sector is essential to further strengthen the enabling infrastructure and regulatory environment to underpin the growth potential, the private sector will be critical to drive employment and job creation.

As one of the main lenders in support of economic and social development of the EU's Mediterranean partners, the EIB has provided EUR 1,322 million since 2011 to support the private sector in the region through direct loans, bank-intermediated SME facilities, micro finance and equity risk capital.

As part of its private sector operations, the Bank's commitment to support and develop the SME sector is evident. Recently signed credit lines totalling EUR 70 million, provided to "Banque Tuniso-Koweitienne" (BTK) and to AMEN bank in Tunisia, demonstrate this commitment. The two operations were developed in close cooperation with *Réseau Entreprendre*, an SME support association. The lines of credit will *enable BTK and AMEN Bank to offer micro enterprises and SMEs funding on favourable terms, for investment projects and working capital needs in a wide range of sectors such as manufacturing, and tourism, and is also expected to also contribute to the transition of the informal into the formal economy in Tunisia. Thanks to the cooperation with Réseau Entreprendre, technical assistance is also being provided to micro enterprises and SMEs with the aim of fostering the good governance, sustainability and viability of these firms.*

The Seed Accelerators programme is an example of a project that supports entrepreneurship in the whole of the South Mediterranean region. This EUR 2 million programme provides seed capital and technical advice to entrepreneurs to help them speed up the creation of companies. The programme aims to support five accelerators in the region by financing training via a EUR 0.8 million TA component, to complement seed funding of up to EUR 1.2 million through the creation of a platform.

"As the most successful entrepreneurs themselves know: "It's not just about ideas. It's about making ideas happen. Now then, we must move to implementation", said Werner Hoyer the President of the EIB in the closing of the conference.

The EIB is already moving in this direction. With over half a billion euros of financing for SMEs over the last 18 months, the Bank's commitment and presence is clear. The EIB is developing financial instruments to promote market access and regional exchanges, in support of future Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas with the EU. New solutions are being considered to support MSMEs, and corporates, through a value chain approach designed to identify gaps in the market for finance and develop tailored instruments aiming to fill those gaps. The Bank will continue combining technical advisory services with financing for companies which need to make investments in order to benefit from trading opportunities. The EIB is also preparing for the extension of the European Finance for Innovators (InnovFin) tools to the Mediterranean, in partnership with the EU's Horizon 2020 programme. InnovFin consists of a series of products, which will facilitate access to finance for innovative business. In addition, the Bank is devising new equity offerings to help an even broader range of businesses get off the ground.

On the sidelines of the conference, the Luxembourgish Presidency of the Council of the EU launched an initiative to support youth employment in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia through vocational training. The initiative seeks to bring together public institutions in the three countries and private sector developers to provide capacity building that triggers entrepreneurship in the three North African countries as a pilot that will be replicated at a later stage to include Mashrek countries.

A longstanding partner of the EIB, the UfM is carrying out important work on policies to reinforce ecosystems friendly to innovation, entrepreneurship and employment opportunities notably in the framework of its Med4Jobs programme. The UfM is currently working on 13 projects to promote youth employability and inclusive growth. More than 200,000 young people are expected to benefit from these projects. The UfM launched last year a strategy for private sector development, designed to engage private sector players in addressing the region's challenges.

The FEMIP conference underlined the fact that there are ways in which successful projects and mechanisms to boost innovation and entrepreneurship, including those already applied successfully in other regions, can be adapted, replicated and scaled to meet needs in the Mediterranean region. In the closing remarks to the conference, the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Luxembourg, Jean Asselborn, stressed that "the partnership between the EU and countries in the South of the Mediterranean has to be reinforced in the future so that our mutual interests can be successfully addressed" while giving an overview of the challenges and opportunities that currently present themselves in the Mediterranean region. (EIB 26-10-2015)

CHINA'S NEW CREDIT FACILITIES INCREASE TOTAL RECEIVED BY ANGOLA TO US\$20 BILLION

The new credit lines granted by China to Angola, which is facing financial troubles, increased the total granted to nearly US\$20 billion, according to the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).

Negotiated following the recent visit of the Angolan President to Beijing, the new credit lines total US\$6 billion and will be channeled into public investments in infrastructure, announced Angola's vice president Manuel Vicente.

"The announcement of this figure ends months of speculation after the president's visit to China and brings the total value of Chinese loans taken on by Angola to nearly US\$20 billion," said the EIU in its latest report on the Angolan economy.

Despite the funding, the EIU predicts economic growth of 2.7 percent in 2015, a more modest increase than the 4 percent projected by the government, given the "environmental impact of lower oil prices on public consumption."

China has become more important for Angola following the fall in oil revenues and Beijing's credit line are seen as an alternative to a bailout request to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Figures for 2014 from the World Trade Organization indicate that China will take first place in the ranking of the largest suppliers to Angola, and is now Angola's main trading partner, with trade of about US\$30.5 billion last year.

In August, Angola and China signed an official agreement allowing reciprocal use of the currencies of both countries, which the EIU says is the result of Angola's "hope" that using the Chinese currency will "reduce the need for dollars."

"But the use of the US dollar is expected to remain widespread, and it is still unclear whether the renminbi's exchange rate will be fixed," the report said.

According to Portuguese bank BPI, the agreement has the potential to guarantee Chinese oil purchases from Angola and solidify its role as a supplier of Angolan imports.

"For Angola, this agreement could on the one hand, allow it to bridge in part the lack of dollars in the Angolan economy, which are needed to pay for imports, but in terms of foreign exchange flows there would be potentially zero effect," said the BPI analysts in the latest report on Angola.

Consolidating relations with key partners – such as China, Portugal and the United States – is considered by analysts as one of the bases of the Angolan diplomatic strategy, with a view to securing access to funding sources.

According to Africa Monitor Intelligence a high level visit by the Angolan president to Moscow is being prepared with a view to "getting Russian support to alleviate the growing financial to which the persistent oil price crisis has subjected Angola." (26-10-2015)

CHINESE GROUPS INTERESTED IN INCREASING INVESTMENTS IN ANGOLA

Chinese groups in Beijing, told the Consortium of Banco Poupança e Crédito and Angola Business Corporation (BPC-ABC) they were interested in investing in Angola in agriculture, industry and construction, according to Angolan daily newspaper Jornal de Angola.

The newspaper cited statements of the president of the BPC-ABC, João Paulo Tomás, after a visit to the Chinese capital and having met with officials from China Hasan International Holdings and Beijing Construction Engineering Group (BCEG).

The two Chinese groups, which have already been operating in Angola for over 10 years, announced their intentions to the BPC-ABC which travelled to China to meet with Chinese entrepreneurs and banks to secure financing for the projects of public-private partnerships of Angolan companies linked to agriculture, construction and fisheries.

The president of China Hasan International, Shao Quiang, said his group would invest US\$500 million in the agricultural sector while Ma Tieshan, president of BCEG indicated the group's readiness to build 40,000 social houses over the next few years.

China Hasan International has also revealed it is interested in investing in the Angolan oil sector. Jornal de Angola also reported that the Forever Green company was now available to invest in agriculture and food processing in Angola.

Tomás told the newspaper that the investment by the three companies in Angola could exceed US\$650 million. (26-10-2015)

TANZANIAN RULING PARTY FACES CRUCIAL TEST

Tanzanians voted in presidential and general elections on Sunday — one of three polls on the continent — in what is expected to be the tightest race in the history of East Africa's most populous country.

Long lines of voters began gathering hours before dawn in Dar es Salaam, with centres there opening on time at 7am and queues moving quickly.

The presidential race pits John Magufuli of the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), seen as the narrow favourite, against former prime minister Edward Lowassa, a CCM stalwart who recently defected to the opposition Chadema, heading a coalition of parties.

The unusually tight race could spark tensions, analysts warned, with the opposition providing the first credible challenge to the CCM since the introduction of multiparty democracy in 1995.

Côte d'Ivoire began voting on Sunday in a presidential election that will probably extend the term of Alassane Ouattara. The 73-year-old former economist has overseen an economy that has expanded 9% annually since 2012. He faces six opposition candidates, including Pascal Affi N'Guessan, who heads the former ruling Front Populaire Ivoirien.

Voting in most polling stations in the commercial capital, Abidjan, began at least an hour after the scheduled 7am opening time.

"There have been some serious delays," said Mariam Dao Gabala, spokeswoman for civil society observer group Peace-CI. Several polling stations had not opened by noon.

In the Republic of Congo people voted on Sunday on whether to amend the constitution to enable one of the continent's longest-serving leaders, President Denis Sassou Nguesso, to seek a third term, extending his 31-year grip on power.

Opposition groups called for a boycott of the referendum, which they described as "a constitutional coup d'état".

Voter turnout appeared to be low in the capital, Brazzaville.

The country was rocked by protests in the run-up to the referendum, including clashes last Tuesday between opposition demonstrators and security forces that authorities said had left four people dead. Opposition leader Paul-Marie Mpouele claimed that at least 20 people had died and urged opposition supporters to boycott the referendum but to "avoid all violent acts". (AFP 26-10-2015)

IMF AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT GUINEA-BISSAU

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is available to support the new Government of Guinea-Bissau, said Thursday in Bissau the representative of the IMF in the country, Oscar Edgardo Melhado Orellana.

Following an audience with the president of the National Assembly (parliament) of Guinea-Bissau, Cipriano Cassamá, the IMF representative highlighted the important role the parliament could play in the economic development of the country, by creating mechanisms to ensure that public revenues in particular from fisheries and cashews, are forwarded to the Treasury.

The IMF representative referred to the “potential” of Guinea-Bissau and reiterated that this was the right time to redirect the country towards economic development.

To this end, he urged the Guinean authorities to focus on development of infrastructure and apply more resources in education and health and to make room for the private sector to carry out its activities.

In conclusion, Oscar Orellana called on the Guinean authorities to gain more control of government revenue and expenditure and expressed the readiness of the IMF to send a support mission as soon as requested by the Guinea-Bissau authorities. (23-10-2015)

MADAGASCAR SIGNS NEW FINANCING AGREEMENT TO BOOST FOOD SECURITY, NUTRITION AND INCOMES OF SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

The Republic of Madagascar and the United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) signed an agreement today to finance the Project to Support Development in the Menabe and Melaky Regions – Phase II (AD2M-II). The total cost of the project is US\$56.7 million. The funding is comprised of a \$34.4 million IFAD loan, a grant of \$6.0 million from the IFAD Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme (ASAP) Trust Fund, a contribution of \$7.7 million from the government of Madagascar and \$1.2 million from the beneficiaries.

The agreement was signed in Rome by François Maurice Gervais Rakotoarimanana, the Malagasy Minister of Finance and Budget, and by Kanayo F. Nwanze, President of IFAD.

AD2M-II aims to improve the incomes and the food security of smallholders and will build on the achievements of the first phase of the project. The ASAP funding will be used to strengthen and build smallholder resilience to the effects of climate change by improving and further developing irrigated agriculture, including spate-irrigation and natural resource management approaches.

“Based on the positive results of the first phase, the AD2M-II will be expanded from 19 to 44 communes in seven districts and will help smallholder family farmers improve their production and marketing,” said Sana F.K. Jatta, IFAD Regional Director for the East and Southern Africa Division.

“It will also address land tenure security and safeguarding the land rights of smallholders so that they can investment more in their land and increase their incomes,” Jatta added.

The project will also help smallholder producers organize into groups so they can negotiate better prices for their products. Eight new credit unions will be established to provide financial services and credit to producers, thanks to the new project.

The AD2M-II will be implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture. It will reach 57,000 households, among which 22,000 households are already benefiting from the first phase of the project. There will be particular emphasis on women and young people from vulnerable groups.

During his visit to IFAD, Minister Rakotoarimanana also signed the loan amendment agreement for an additional amount of US\$17 million for the Support Programme for the Rural Microenterprise Poles and Regional Economies (PROSPERER). The new funding will help to consolidate the gains made in the previous phase of PROSPERER. It will also promote access of rural microenterprises to financial services, strengthen training for smallholder producers and young people, and protect the environment. Since 1979, IFAD has invested a total of \$265.5 million in 15 programmes and projects in Madagascar. This has generated a total investment of \$624.4 million, benefiting 694,600 households.(IFAD 21-10-2015)

NIGERIA'S ANAMBRA STATE SEALS DEAL FOR OVER \$400M HOUSING PROJECT

The Anambra State government in south-eastern Nigeria has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Affordable Building Concepts International Ltd for the construction of 10,000 housing units in the state at the cost of \$476 million.

The Anambra State Governor, Chief Willie Obiano, who signed the Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) Tuesday in Awka, the state capital, said that the project would be executed on 200 hectares of land spread across five different locations in the state.

Obiano expressed optimism that the project would bring relief to some citizens, who come to work from Enugu and Asaba.

He noted that the state government was partnering with Affordable Building Concepts International Ltd. for the project.

“This is the third MoU we are signing on housing. We hope that all these will go a long way in ameliorating the challenges we are having in the housing sector, especially for civil servants.

“Now that we have provided security, people who are living in Asaba or Enugu will begin to relocate to Anambra State,” he said.

Earlier, Igwe Cyril Enweze, the Chairman, Anambra State Investment Promotion and Protection Agency, said the project would promote urban development and modernisation.

“Our aim is to provide relatively affordable housing for the people as well as attract revenue through the state’s share of the profit,” he added. (APA 21-10-2015)

GOVERNMENT OF ANGOLA PLANS TO REORGANISE THE OIL SECTOR

The President of the Republic of Angola on Friday set up a commission to study the readjustment of the organisation of the oil sector to develop an integrated and effective strategy to improve efficiency of the Angolan oil sector.

According to Angolan news agency Angop the commission includes the ministers of State and Chief of Staff, Planning and Regional Development, Finance, Economy, Oil, the Governor of the National Bank of Angola, Sonangol EP and the Secretary of the President of the Republic for Economic Affairs.

The commission is entrusted with preparing a diagnostic study on the situation of the oil sector, identifying operational opportunities, quantifying the potential improvement of Sonangol EP and the best organisational model for the National Oil and Gas Industry.

Alongside the creation of the commission public company Sonangol will be restructured, as announced on 15 October by the government.

Crude oil export revenues of Angolan oil company Sonangol fell 44 percent in September over the same month of 2014.

According to a report from the Ministry of Finance Sonangol’s revenue from the sale of oil abroad was 82.2 billion kwanzas in September while in the same month of 2014 revenues totalled 147.1 billion kwanzas.

In the first nine months of 2015 Sonangol’s revenues totalled 717.2 billion kwanzas.

In the whole of 2014 Sonangol’s revenues reached 1.87 trillion kwanzas. (26-10-2015)

TANZANIA'S \$10 BILLION PORT PROJECT THREATENS MOMBASA HUB STATUS

Kenya faces renewed pressure to expand at the port of Mombasa and boost efficiency after Tanzania started construction work on a new \$10 billion port and a special economic zone, that aims to transform the country into the regional trade and transport hub.

The new port in Bagamoyo, which will be Tanzania's biggest, directly threatens Mombasa's present status as the preferred trade and logistics hub in the region.

The project, backed by China and Oman, will dwarf Kenya's port at Mombasa as Tanzania aims to capitalise on growth in a region seeking to exploit new oil and gas finds.

"The construction of the Bagamoyo port and a special economic zone is aimed at realising the government's goal of bringing about an industrial revolution in Tanzania," Tanzania President Jakaya Kikwete said last Friday during the ground breaking ceremony for the project.

The Bagamoyo port will be able to handle mega-ships - with a container vessel size of 8,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) - after the first phase was completed, with room for expansion.

The whole project including roads, railways and the economic zone is expected to take 10 years to complete, but it was unclear in how many phases it will be carried out.

Bagamoyo will have the capacity to handle 20 million containers a year when completed, compared with Mombasa's 600,000 and Dar es Salaam's 500,000 containers.

"The sheer capacity of the Bagamoyo port should be a concern to Mombasa port managers because capacity is key in port efficiency which many traders look up to," James Kinyua a cargo dealer in Nairobi said.

The Mombasa port handled a record one million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) of cargo last year, signifying rising trade volumes in the region.

Kenya is also building a second container terminal valued at \$274 million in Mombasa to handle increased trade within the region driven by a boom in the construction industry, vast infrastructure development and an emerging middle class.

By 2016, the new terminal is projected to have a capacity of 450,000 TEU and this is expected to rise to 1.2 million by 2019.

Kenya and Tanzania are presently caught in a head-to-head race to become the preferred regional transport hub amid massive expansion projects in sea ports, connecting railway and road networks.

Tanzania earlier this year said it plans to spend \$14.2 billion to construct a new rail network in the next five years, financed with commercial loans.

Tanzania, like its neighbour Kenya, wants to capitalise on a long coastline and upgrade existing rickety railways and roads to serve growing economies in the land-locked heart of Africa. Oil and gas discoveries in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania have turned the East African region into an exploration hotspot, but transport infrastructure in these countries has suffered from decades of under-investment.

"This will be the single biggest project ever to be implemented by the Tanzanian government since our country's independence," Reuters quoted Transport Minister Samuel Sitta as having said in a statement, referring to 1961.

The projects include constructing a 2,561 km standard gauge railway connecting the port at the commercial capital of Dar es Salaam to Tanzania's land-locked neighbours, Rwanda and Burundi at a cost of \$7.6 billion, Mr Sitta said.

Two additional lines, to be built at a combined cost of \$6.6 billion, will connect Dar es Salaam to the coal, iron ore and soda ash mining areas in the south and northern parts of the country, he said.

Tanzania targets to increase the capacity of its main port to 28 million tonnes a year by 2020 from the 14.6 million tonnes it handled in the financial year 2013/14.

The grand infrastructure expansion plans by Tanzania could help revamp the status of the port of Dar es Salaam which eyes to outwit the rival Kenyan port of Mombasa. (East African 21-10-2015)

MOZAMBIQUE OIL AND GAS DEALS HIT \$31B

The chairperson of Mozambique's National Hydrocarbon Company, Omar Mitha has said total projected investment in natural gas operations in the Rovuma Basin, in the northern province of Cabo Delgado, now stands at \$31 billion, APA can report on Thursday.

Mitha said most of this will be consumed in Rovuma Basin Offshore Area One, where the operator is the American company Anadarko.

Addressing a Maputo media conference launching the celebrations of the 35th anniversary of ENH on Thursday, Mitha said that about \$4 billion has already been invested and the figure for Area One could reach \$24 billion in the coming years.

He broke this sum down as \$5.6 billion for the preliminary exploration, \$10 billion for building two gas liquefaction plants - known as trains -, \$3.3 billion for later development studies, \$4.4 billion in interest and bank fees, and \$2.6 billion as contingency funds.

Mitha expected Anadarko and its partners to make the final investment decision in the first quarter of 2016, which will then be followed by financial closure with banks financing the project.

He estimated that building the gas liquefaction facilities will take five years as from 2016. (APA 22-10-2015)

WINTERFELL FINALISES PURCHASE OF PORTUGUESE COMPANY EFACEC POWER SOLUTIONS

Winterfell, owned by Angolan businesswoman Isabel dos Santos, since Friday has owned a majority stake (66.1 percent) of Portuguese company Efacec Power Solutions (EPS) belonging to the José de Mello and Têxtil Manuel Gonçalves groups.

A statement issued by the Portuguese companies said the sale "is a solution that favours the future of Efacec and maximises its value, strengthening the continuity of business development and the preservation of a skills centre in the country."

Winterfell said, meanwhile, that the majority ownership implies a "strategic and long-term investment vision that allows financial strengthening of Efacec, increasing its investment capacity and boosting Efacec as a centre of expertise with great capacity for internationalisation."

Efacec Power Solutions brings together the core activities of the Efacec Group, which include energy, with transformers, switchgear, automation and electric mobility, and engineering, recording a turnover of about 500 million euros a year. It has around 2,500 employees and operations in 80 countries.

The José de Mello and Têxtil Manuel Gonçalves groups will remain minority shareholders of EPS through the MGI Capital company. (26-10-2015)

AU SENEGAL, LA CROISSANCE EST DANS LES CHAMPS

En 2009, en voyant ses oignons doux bio vendus à 1 livre (1,1 euro) l'unité dans un supermarché Waitrose, en Grande-Bretagne, Jean-Marie Goudiaby songeait que son rêve venait de se concrétiser : celui de devenir exportateur de légumes de niche de haute qualité depuis son Sénégal natal. « 1 livre, c'est le prix d'un kilo de ces mêmes oignons dans mon pays », affirme-t-il. « Lorsque vous exportez vers l'Union européenne, le produit doit être innovant et avoir une valeur ajoutée. Ici, ils l'ont vraiment aimé, dit-il, faisant référence à la société qui distribue ses oignons. C'était nouveau et original. »

Jean-Marie Goudiaby, qui a lancé sa ferme en 2009, fait alors partie d'un mouvement qui grandit au Sénégal. Les entreprises se positionnent afin de devenir fournisseurs de fruits et légumes pour les

marchés européens. Terres fertiles, climat favorable, réserves d'eau abondantes, proximité avec l'Europe...

Pour les petites fermes d'une cinquantaine d'hectares comme pour les grosses sociétés telles que le français Grands Domaines du Sénégal, qui exploite plus de 300 hectares, la Teranga représente une alternative économique plus attractive que d'autres pays exportateurs comme l'Égypte, le Kenya ou encore l'Afrique du Sud. Sa stabilité politique est également un élément important pour les investisseurs, explique Juan Carlos Leon, directeur de l'approvisionnement et du développement chez Barfoots of Botley, compagnie basée au Royaume-Uni et active au Sénégal.

La ferme de Jean-Marie Goudiaby est installée dans la vallée du fleuve Sénégal, près de la ville de Saint-Louis. Si le nord du pays est sableux et aride, son climat est favorable à l'agriculture, explique-t-il. Sa famille est originaire de la Casamance, au sud, mais investir au sein de cette zone tropicale plongée dans une longue guerre civile n'aurait pas eu de sens. Avec ses frères et sœurs, il souhaiterait aujourd'hui étendre ses cultures sur la totalité des 50 hectares dont ils sont propriétaires. Sous un soleil de plomb, alors que les vents chauds soulèvent le sable, Yolande, la sœur de Jean-Marie, travaille sur une partie de leur parcelle. Elle tente de creuser des tranchées afin que l'eau pompée dans un affluent du fleuve Sénégal vienne nourrir les lits de culture.

Plus abordables

La ferme produit principalement des oignons rouges, aliment de base de la cuisine sénégalaise, très apprécié sur le marché local, mais aussi des oignons doux, des courges delicata, de la laitue, des herbes et des piments rouges. Pour ses haricots noirs frais, Jean-Marie Goudiaby a un acheteur en Italie. Et il expérimente actuellement la culture du raisin, dans l'espoir de pouvoir approvisionner le marché local, qui importe ce fruit d'Afrique du Sud. « Nos raisins seront plus abordables, affirme le producteur, qui ambitionne de concurrencer les négociants de fruits libanais et guinéens. Nous, les Sénégalais, nous sommes nouveaux sur ce terrain. »

Jean-Marie Goudiaby souhaiterait surtout que les petits exploitants agricoles du nord du Sénégal puissent s'organiser. Ils pourraient créer un collectif pour approvisionner le marché européen et gagner des parts de marché dans un secteur actuellement dominé par des entreprises à capitaux étrangers. « Notre idée, c'est de stimuler les affaires des petits exploitants », explique-t-il.

Dans la vallée du fleuve Sénégal sont disséminées d'énormes fermes appartenant à des sociétés telles que Barfoots of Botley. En partenariat avec l'entreprise sénégalaise Société de cultures légumières, celui-ci produit du maïs doux, de la patate douce, des asperges, des piments et des haricots sur 2 000 hectares. « Le climat chaud et sec du Sénégal, indique Juan Carlos Leon, de Barfoots of Botley, nous permet de produire à des moments clé de l'année. Lorsque la récolte de l'hémisphère Nord touche à sa fin, quand la nouvelle récolte de l'hémisphère Sud n'est pas tout à fait prête, et vice versa. » Grâce à cet avantage, les exportations de légumes du Sénégal ont augmenté en valeur de 24,9 millions de dollars (18,8 millions d'euros) en 2010 à 59,1 millions de dollars en 2014, selon les chiffres de la base de données de Comtrade (ONU).

Une région clé pour l'autosuffisance

Cette nouvelle vague de producteurs n'est pas seulement composée d'investisseurs privés. À quelques dizaines de kilomètres de la ferme Goudiaby, les champs vert vif de petits exploitants de riz s'étendent à perte de vue, les canaux d'irrigation partent de la rivière et de ses affluents pour alimenter les 60 612 hectares que le gouvernement a réservés à la production de cette céréale. Grâce à une subvention du programme américain Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), il a développé des routes et des infrastructures d'irrigation dans la vallée. Une région clé pour atteindre son but : l'autosuffisance dans la production de riz d'ici à 2017. « À cet horizon, notre objectif est de produire 1,08 million de tonnes de riz blanc par an, déclare Seyni Ndao, le directeur général adjoint de la Société nationale d'aménagement et d'exploitation des terres du delta du fleuve Sénégal (SAED). De Saint-Louis à Bakel, nous développons les infrastructures, des machines, des unités de stockage, l'irrigation et le drainage. »

Le pays importe actuellement du riz asiatique, de moindre qualité et à bas coût, mais qui a généralement la préférence des consommateurs

Les autorités du pays veulent également réduire les importations de riz, qui sont très coûteuses. Elles soutiennent donc les producteurs locaux en subventionnant les engrais à 40 % et les machines à 60 %. Les importateurs de riz cultivé à l'étranger sont contractuellement tenus d'acheter également des céréales locales, même si pour le moment le Sénégal n'en produit pas assez pour répondre à la demande de ces distributeurs. Le pays importe actuellement du riz asiatique, de moindre qualité et à bas coût, mais qui a généralement la préférence des consommateurs.

La SAED a donc lancé la construction de 25 centres de transformation pour produire une céréale de meilleure qualité. Il devrait être possible de la vendre à un prix inférieur à celui du riz importé, affirme la société nationale. Reste qu'aujourd'hui les deux se vendent au même prix : 300 F CFA (0,45 euro) le kilo. Dans ces conditions, on ne sait pas encore comment le gouvernement et les autres producteurs vont convaincre le consommateur d'acheter du riz local... À moins qu'ils n'aient les moyens de baisser son prix.

Superproduction

Si cette relance de l'agriculture au Sénégal a ses gagnants, elle a aussi ses perdants. En route vers le sud depuis Saint-Louis avec son sac poussiéreux sur le dos, Assane Sow, un producteur d'oignons, montre une poignée de paquets de semences de tomate. Il espère qu'elles pourront subvenir aux besoins de sa famille. « J'ai décidé d'arrêter de produire des oignons parce qu'ils sont en surproduction sur le marché local », explique-t-il.

En 2014, il pouvait en vendre un kilo pour 300 F CFA. Mais aujourd'hui, avec le gel des importations d'oignons pour encourager la production locale, le prix est descendu à seulement 100 F CFA. « Le plan du gouvernement nous fait souffrir, dit-il. On voit des gens qui n'ont pas d'expérience dans l'agriculture ou qui étaient spécialisés dans les pommes de terre se mettre aux oignons. L'an dernier, le prix était tellement élevé que, désormais, tout le monde en produit. »

Mais Jean-Marie Goudiaby, qui alimente également le marché local avec ses oignons, soutient que cette baisse du prix n'est que temporaire. Malgré les difficultés, il garde en mémoire le moment où ses distributeurs au Royaume-Uni ont reçu leur premier envoi d'oignons doux bio sénégalais. « Ils ont cherché notre pays sur une carte, se souvient-il en souriant. Ils étaient ravis : six jours de Dakar à Douvres et une production à faible coût. « Nous devons faire des affaires ici », disaient-ils. Plus il y en aura, mieux ce sera pour nous. »

L'arachide, une filière dépassée ?

Autrefois l'une des principales filières d'exportation du Sénégal (10 % des recettes), l'arachide a beaucoup reculé depuis quelques années, jusqu'à se faire dépasser par le secteur de l'horticulture. Selon les données officielles, elle a généré en 2014 un chiffre d'affaires de 49,7 milliards de F CFA (environ 75,8 millions d'euros) quand les fruits et légumes ont affiché des revenus supérieurs – environ 2 milliards de F CFA de plus.

« Il faut réorganiser la filière arachide et réfléchir par exemple à une intégration verticale [présence sur toute la chaîne] de certains acteurs comme Suneor », suggérait il y a quelques mois Philip English, économiste de la Banque mondiale basé à Dakar. Depuis le début de cette année, l'huilier français Avril, ex-Sofiprotéol, tente de se rapprocher d'Advens, l'actionnaire majoritaire de Suneor, pour tenter de redonner une nouvelle vie à l'arachide. En travaillant de l'amont vers l'aval. (JA 23-10-2015)

MALIAN TO HEAD RWANDA-BASED SMART AFRICA

Mali's Hamadoun Touré has been appointed to head the Kigali-based SMART Africa, a statement from the organization confirmed on Thursday.

At the second sitting of the SMART Africa Board meeting on 21 October 2015, Dr. Hamadoun Touré, the former Secretary General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), was appointed the founding Executive Director of SMART Africa.

Chaired by President Paul Kagame of Rwanda, the board consists of the Presidents of Burkina Faso, Gabon, Mali, Kenya, Uganda, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, South Sudan, Tchad, the Commissioner of Infrastructure and Energy, African Union Commission and the Secretary General of ITU.

SMART Africa is an innovative commitment by African leaders to accelerate sustainable socio-economic development on the continent, ushering Africa into a knowledge economy through affordable access to broadband and usage of Information and Communications Technologies.

In a statement after the meeting, the summit organizers noted the Board met at the margins of Transform Africa Summit 2015, where Mali's Toure was unanimously appointed to head Smart Africa.

A national of Mali, Dr. Hamadoun Touré was the Secretary General of ITU until December 2014.

A Satellite Engineer by background Dr Toure is also a Non-Executive Board member of Inmarsat since March 2015.

With a term of three years, his appointment as the Executive Director of SMART Africa takes effect from January 1, 2016 and will be based at the Secretariat in Kigali, Rwanda.

The next Board meeting is scheduled to take place in January 2016 during the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Founded in 2013, Smart Africa is made of all African countries adhering to the Smart Africa Manifesto to jointly accelerate socio-economic development through ICTs nationally and on the continent level.

Its founding members include the African Union (AU Commission, NEPAD Agency, specialized institutions and Regional Economic Communities), International Telecommunications Union (ITU), World Bank, African Development Bank (AfDB), UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), GSM Alliance (GSMA), ICANN, African Telecommunications Union (ATU) and the Private Sector.(APA 22-10-2015)

GOVERNMENT WANTS TO ENCOURAGE COTTON PRODUCTION IN MALANGE, ANGOLA

The Minister of Industry of Angola, Bernarda Martins, called for investment in cotton production in Malange to support the three large textile factories that were refurbished by the government in the provinces of Kwanza Norte, Luanda and Benguela.

According to Angolan news agency Angop the minister, who was speaking at the International Conference on Investment Promotion for the province, recalled that during the Portuguese colonial administration, Malanje, was one of the largest cotton producers in Angola.

Angola currently imports cotton for textile mills “África Têtil” (Benguela), “Textang 2” (Luanda) and “Satec” in Dondo (Kwanza Norte).

Minister Bernarda Martins said the government was working to create land for the industry with the necessary infrastructure, including water, energy, roads and access, in order to support entrepreneurs who wish to invest.

The minister also said that Malange produces agricultural commodities such as corn, soy, beans, cassava and sugarcane which are important raw materials for investments in manufacturing. (26-10-2015)

NEW GAS POWER PLANT FOR TANZANIA

Tanzania has launched a 150MW gas powered electricity plant to help reduce blackouts in the country. The development comes hardly a week after the government announced that it would switch off all hydropower plant because of falling water levels.

According to Felichesmi Mramba, Tanzania Electric Supply Company (Tanesco) managing director, Kinyerezi I Gas Power Plant has started producing 70MW, which will be fed into the national grid.

“As we are shifting from the hydro-generated power supply to other sources, the transition may be faced with the challenges. We thus request our customers to bear with us. This will be a lasting solution to the power problem,” Mr. Mramba.

Hydropower

TanESCO relies on hydropower to generate 57 per cent of its power requirements. The remaining amount is generated from gas and diesel plants commissioned to independent power producers (IPPs).

Inaugurating Kinyerezi I, President Jakaya Kikwete said his government is seeking to reach a 2,780MW target by 2016, up from the current 1,490MW.(The East African 17-10-2015)

GHANA: VARSITY TEACHERS THREATEN TO RESUME STRIKE OVER UNPAID ALLOWANCES

The President of the University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG), Dr. Samuel Ofori Bekoe, has threatened that the association would resume a suspended strike if the government failed to pay their book and research development allowance by Friday, APA learns here Thursday. According to Bekoe, several assurances had been given by the government to pay the allowances, but all have not yielded any positive results.

He explained in an interview on radio that more than three weeks after the government promised to settle them, they still have not been paid, and he said they have no option but to resume their strike if the government fails to pay them by Friday.

"The issue is that, by Friday if we dont receive the Book and Research allowances, earliest next week, we are going to call for an emergency national committee meeting and we are going to review our actions.

Dr. Bekoe said the last time we suspended our strike, we gave the government up to 30th September for the them to pay the allowances. Three clear weeks have gone beyond the deadline since we suspended the strike action for the government to pay, and they have not paid up till now.

The university teachers said they had to suspend their strike action to allow the government to work out a payment modality but they were yet to receive their salaries and this compelled them to state their position.(APA 22-10-2015)

BORDER BETWEEN MOZAMBIQUE AND SOUTH AFRICA OPEN 24 HOURS A DAY FROM MID 2016

The governments of Mozambique and South Africa are working to allow the Ressano Garcia border to be open 24 hours per day to further facilitate the movement of people and goods in what is the main and busiest border crossing between the two countries, Mozambican daily newspaper Notícias reported.

The decision was made by the Presidents of the two countries during a State visit by the President of Mozambique, Filipe Nyusi last week to South Africa at the invitation of his counterpart, Jacob Zuma. At the first meeting of the Binational Commission held in Pretoria, it was agreed that following conclusion of the bureaucratic part of changing the validity of the entry visa exemption for citizens of both countries, in force since the 2005 agreement, from 30 to 90 days.

The new measures, announced at a meeting of President Nyusi with the Mozambican community in South Africa, should come into force from June next year.

About 400,000 Mozambicans live in South Africa, of which about 40,000 work in the country's mines and the remainder in other sectors such as agriculture. (26-10-2015)

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