

MEMORANDUM

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The Memorandum is issued daily, with the sole purpose to provide updated basic business and economic information on Africa, to more than 4,000 European Companies, as well as their business parties in Africa.

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MTN RETAINS SPOT AS AFRICA'S MOST ADMIRED BRAND

MTN has emerged as the Most Admired and the Most Valuable African brand, valued at US\$ 4,672m, its second award in two years.

Brand Africa announced last night at the *4th Annual Brand Africa 100: Africa's Best Brands* gala event, that MTN is the overall best brand on the continent and reclaims the #1 spot as the Most Admired Brand in Africa.

"We are humbled by the recognition, and dedicate this award to our employees and customers, who continue to make MTN the best brand in our markets. For us, this award is recognition of our unwavering commitment to make a positive change and brighten the lives of our customers and many others in the communities where we operate," says Albert Fernandez, MTN Group Chief Consumer Officer.

The Brand Africa 100 shows that established brands in Africa have held their ground. Non-African brands are a dominant 77% of the Top 100 brands. While African brands have remained relatively stable at 24%, 25% and 23% in 2013, 2014 and 2015 respectively. The number of non-African countries of origin has steadily diversified from 17 in 2013 to 19 in 2014 to 21 in 2015.

Two thirds (64%) of the Brand Africa 100 list is evenly spread between electronics (16%), apparel (14%), auto manufacturers (13%), telecommunications (11%) and alcoholic beverages (10%).

"Once again MTN has proven to be the standard by which to measure how to build a pan-African brand. They have established a rapport with the African consumer that is the foundation for long-term success built on a quality brand, great campaigns and a singular promise delivered. They are authentically the Grand Prix of world-class African brands – Africa's Best Brand," says Thebe Ikalafeng, Founder and Chairman of Brand Africa and Chairman of Brand Finance Africa.

"These rankings are increasingly significant as they are an important metric of the progress Africa is making in creating brands and services that respond to African conditions, needs and ambitions. Simultaneously, they are a reflection and celebration of both non-African and African brands that meet the African consumer standard," he adds.

MTN is the most pan-African brand among the Top 100 Most Admired Brands in Africa, operating in 17 countries and among the Top 10 admired in 7 African countries.

Top 10 Most Admired Brands in Africa

- #1 MTN (South Africa) (+1)
- #2 Samsung (+1)
- #3 Coca Cola (-2)
- #4 Nike (+6)
- #5 Adidas (+2)
- #6 Nokia (-2)
- #7 Airtel (+4)
- #8 Toyota (-3)
- #9 LG (0)
- #10 Mercedes Benz (+7)

Top 10 Most Valuable Brands – African

- #1 MTN (-13%)
- #2 DSTV/GoTV/Multichoice (2%)
- #3 Safaricom/Mpesa (4%)
- #4 Dangote (22%)
- #5 Tusker (14%)
- #6 Glo/Globacom (-3%)
- #7 Zenith Bank (35%)
- #8 Golden Penny Foods (-)

#9 Orijin (-)

#10 Star Beer (-).

() Represents numerical change in rank between 2014 and 2015.

In recent years, MTN has won a number of brand awards. These include being named the only African brand in the 2014 BrandZ Top 100 Most Valuable Global Brand ranking, the only South African company on the World Champions list and the Most Admired and Most Valuable Brand in Africa, in the 2014 Brand Africa 100 ranking of the most admired and most valuable brands in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Brand Africa 100 was developed by pan-African branding and reputation advisory firm, Brand Leadership Group in partnership with Geopoll, the leading mobile survey platform with a database of nearly 200m users in emerging markets, TNS, the globally respected consumer knowledge and information company and Brand Finance, the world's leading independent valuation consultancy. (IT News Africa 23-10-2015)

LESOTHO INVITES SOUTH AFRICAN EXPERT TO ADVISE ON ELECTRICITY VANDALISM

The Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) has invited a South African technical advisor from the Southern African Revenue Protection Association, Rens Bindeman to help Lesotho solve challenges of electricity vandalism which includes copper theft which is said to be on the rise in the country, APA learns here Thursday.

Speaking in Maseru on Thursday, LEC General Manager Masechaba Mantsoe pointed out that the country has lost millions of dollars to electricity vandalism and copper theft between August 2014 and March 2015.

Meanwhile, Bindeman has appealed to the government of Lesotho to ensure that it introduces a toll-free number and also a suggestion box for LEC in order to get information from both workers and the clients of the company.

Bindeman also made a passionate plea to the Members of Parliament to enact harsh laws that would deter people from stealing copper and impose harsh sentences on those who are found guilty of the crime. (APA 22-10-2015)

CONDOR NUTS OF MOZAMBIQUE IS CERTIFIED TO EXPORT CASHEW NUTS TO THE UNITED STATES, EUROPE AND AFRICA

Cashew processing company, Condor Nuts, based in Nampula, Mozambique, has just received an international certificate allowing it to export cashew nuts to the USA, Europe and Africa, according to Mozambican daily newspaper Notícias.

The certification was provided by the African Cashew Alliance (ACA), an organisation that coordinates the cashew industry's actions.

Recently, a Norwegian company announced it would start importing two containers of raw cashews per month processed by Condor Nut.

Jaime Roberto Chissico, the provincial delegate of the Cashew Promotion Institute (Incaju) in Nampula, told Notícias that the international cashew nut quality certification honours the Mozambican cashew industry.

Condor Nuts is mostly Portuguese-owned and operates in Anchilo on the outskirts of the city of Nampula, in northern Mozambique. (26-10-2015)

NIGERIA'S ICT INDUSTRY SET TO EXPLODE

The leadership of the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) have called on local and foreign investors to key in to its economy as the telecoms sector prepares for another quarter of growth.

According to NCC, the sector has recorded an 11 percent gain in the total number of active internet subscriptions on the domestic mobile communications network.

While GSM operators exhibit higher growth rates than CDMA companies, stakeholders attribute the increase in market share to the flourishing investments in technology carried out by major telecoms operators.

"This a good trajectory for the ICT sector," says Paul Midy, chief executive officer of Jovago.com. "It shows that the market is ready for strategic foreign direct investments. With the greater adoption of internet services, businesses can now make direct contact with consumers through e-commerce, generate high revenue and accelerate the growth of the Nigerian eco-system as a whole and these are key metrics investors are looking for."

The NCC further stated that with Nigeria's teledensity at 107.67 percent and counting based on a calculated national population of 140 million, the prospects for expansion are immense.

Speaking at a recent symposium, the ably represented Prof. Umar Garba Danbatta, the chairman of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation said, "If you are an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) company, Nigeria is a place to be. We currently have over 30,000km of inter-city fibre optic cables laid...and this presents a huge investment opportunity."

Of the total data released in its report, the number of internet users in the country rose to 93 million (93,403,147) in Q2 of 2015.

With the nation possessing a burgeoning market size, experts predict high returns on investments for venture capitalist who driving the revolution of the industry.(IT News Africa 23-10-2015)

ETHIOPIA TO HIRE FOREIGN CONTRACTORS TO BUILD 80, 000 HOUSING UNITS

Ethiopia's Ministry of Urban Development and Housing is to hire foreign contractors capable of building 80, 000 housing units within 18 months, APA learns here Thursday.

According to Minister Mekuria Haile, the ministry is in the process of identifying winning foreign contractors who will commence construction within this year's budget.

"The move would help to promote technology transfer, efficiently use inputs and above all, to expedite the housing development program in the country," he said.

The Ministry is waiting for a decision from the government for the amendment of the law on procurement of construction materials, besides identifying which contractors will enter to the housing program, he added.

The contenders were identified during the pre-evaluation process conducted by various professionals, including the Ethiopian Construction Project Management Institute and the Addis Ababa Housing Development Administration Agency, he said.

Haile said the contractors were mainly identified based on their speed in building houses, financial capability, technology and use of input.

Some 14 contractors that met the selection criteria have reached the final stage, according to the minister.

He however said his ministry has already finalized the construction of another 40,000 housing units and they will be soon transferred to public.(APA 22-10-2015)

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)

NIGERIA: NNPC OPENS BIDS OF 91 COMPANIES FOR BUNKERING

The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has commenced the public opening of technical bids submitted by 91 companies to secure contract for the provision of coastal and bunkering vessel services.

According to a statement by the NNPC's Group General Manager, Group Public Affairs Division, Mr. Ohi Alegbe, on Friday in Abuja, the exercise was for the operations of the Pipelines and Products Marketing Company (PPMC), a subsidiary of the NNPC.

It explained that the exercise was conducted under the watch of representatives of the bidding companies, officials of Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) and the Nigerian Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (NEITI) as independent assessors.

The statement added that the Group Managing Director of the NNPC, Dr. Ibe Kachikwu, expressed delight on the massive turn out of indigenous Nigerian companies and vessel owners in the bid process.

According to the statement, Kachikwu said the entire bidding process was going to be transparent.

It said that the NNPC was determined to get the best yield in terms of value addition and best services while also promoting the Nigerian local content.(APA 23-10-2015)

IS GRACE MUGABE PLANNING TO SUCCEED HER HUSBAND?

As a Zimbabwean military helicopter usually reserved for President Robert Mugabe arrived at a ruling party rally, out stepped his wife Grace into an election-campaign atmosphere.

While Zimbabwe is not due to hold its next vote for three years, Ms Mugabe's appearance at the October 14 rally in the northeastern town of Rushinga and others around the country is building her brand as a serious contender to replace her husband when he eventually leaves office, after ruling since 1980.

"Grace Mugabe is certainly manoeuvring to succeed her husband," Robert Besseling, principal Africa analyst at IHS Country Risk, said by e-mail from Johannesburg on October 19. "She is likely to be one of the very few people to be aware of her husband's intentions and his health situation. Once Mugabe steps down or dies in office, Grace Mugabe will have the advantage of being able to act quickly to secure her succession."

The state-controlled Herald newspaper described Ms Mugabe as a unifying force within the country, which is grappling with its worst economic crisis since 2008, when inflation soared to 500-billion percent. City residents experience power cuts on a near-daily basis, and 10 consecutive months of deflation have driven scores of manufacturers out of business. Industries ranging from platinum to tobacco are stagnating, while the United Nations (UN) is providing food aid to about 1.5-million people.

She was "connecting with the people and bringing a new approach that politicians don't have to wait for elections", the Harare-based newspaper said in an October 16 editorial.

Known by her critics as the "First Shopper" and "Gucci Grace" for what they say is her extravagant lifestyle, Ms Mugabe has built support among a group of senior ruling party officials known as Generation-40 because most of them are in their 40s and played no role in Zimbabwe's war for independence. They include Local Government Minister Saviour Kasukuwere and Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Minister Patrick Zhuwao.

Mr. Mugabe's trips to Singapore for medical treatment have fuelled speculation that he will not serve out his term. In September, he read the wrong speech in parliament without realising he had delivered the same address a few weeks earlier.

President's secretary

Ms Mugabe worked as the president's secretary before marrying him in 1996 and bearing him three children. She formally entered politics in December, when the ruling Zanu (PF) elected her leader of its women's league.

"Some say I want to be president," she said at a rally last year. "Why not? Am I not Zimbabwean, too?" Ms Mugabe has so far stood by her husband.

"I know that President Robert Mugabe is 91 years old, but he is the best leader we have," she told the rally in Rushinga. "I am going to be learning from him."

Her main adversary in a run for the top job is the vice-president and deputy ruling party leader, Emmerson Mnangagwa, who previously served as state security and defence minister. Mr. Mnangagwa was appointed to his current post at the December congress, following the ousting of former vice-president Joice Mujuru, who Ms Mugabe accused of plotting to assassinate the president.

Succession race

"Grace Mugabe cannot be ignored as a contender in the succession race," said Anne Fruhauf, an Africa analyst at New York-based Teneo Intelligence. "Mnangagwa has not enjoyed universal backing in the past, even though the marginalisation of the Mujuru circle has probably strengthened him."

It was "pretty clear" Ms Mugabe had begun her presidential bid, with or without her husband's blessing, said Temba Mliswa, Zanu (PF)'s former chairman in the Mashonaland West province who was fired from the ruling party after being accused of supporting Ms Mujuru.

"She's openly using government infrastructure and equipment to campaign," Mr. Mliswa told reporters in Bulawayo on October 17.

In an February interview with the state broadcaster ZBC, Mr. Mugabe denied grooming his wife for a career in politics.

Mr. Mugabe probably would not name a successor because doing so would weaken his credibility and turn him into a "lame duck president", said Mr. Besseling.

"By not revealing his candidate of preference he remains completely in charge of Zanu (PF)," Mr. Besseling said. "That said, he is most likely to favour a succession in which his wife Grace Mugabe will retain a position of influence." (Bloomberg 24-10-2015)

NIGERIA SIGNS SOLAR ENERGY DEAL WITH UK

Nigeria has signed an agreement with the United Kingdom on the use of solar energy to provide electricity to rural people.

Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, who led Nigeria's delegation to the event at the Facebook Headquarters, signed on behalf of the Federal Government, while the UK Minister of State for International Development (DFID), Mr. Grant Shapps, signed on behalf of the UK government.

The event was performed shortly after the launch of the Africa Energy Campaign initiated by the DFID.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Osinbajo said his presence at the launch was to underscore Nigeria's commitment to the national and regional effort to improve accessibility to power, especially solar power for our peoples.

According to him, Nigeria will do its best to ensure that the campaign to boost supply and consumption of solar energy is invigorated and gave an assurance that the Federal Government would work closely with the DFID.

He said that the programme was an opportunity for Africa and that the advantage of the launch was that the partners could bring universal access to energy.

``With the cost of solar power 20 years ago that would have been impossible; the combination of innovation in technology, the low cost of solar power has made this all the more possible.

``This is an incredible opportunity in Africa, especially Nigeria with over 96 million people who do not have access to power," he said.

In his speech, Shapps said that the Africa Energy was a campaign to bring justice to more than 600 million people around the continent without access to electricity.

According to him, many Africans do not have light in their homes and their children unable to do their homework, while others die of household pollution from the use of kerosene and charcoal.(APA 23-10-2015)

ZIMBABWE'S ROBERT MUGABE WINS CONFUCIUS PEACE PRIZE

The founder of the Confucius Peace Prize, a would-be Chinese rival to the Nobel, on Thursday defended this year's award to Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, who has often been accused of rights abuses.

Qiao Damo, founder of the little-known China International Peace Studies Centre, which runs the accolade, told AFP that Mugabe had been recognised for his "outstanding contributions" to world peace.

The nonagenarian African leader beat nine other finalists, including Bill Gates, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, and South Korean President Park Geun-Hye, he added.

"If he hadn't come to power in 1980, if he hadn't played a role, how much talent would have been wasted!" said Qiao.

The Confucius prize emerged in 2010 as a Chinese response to jailed dissident Liu Xiaobo's Nobel award, which infuriated Beijing. Mr. Mugabe — who has had a close relationship with Beijing for decades — joins an eclectic roster of past winners, which includes Vladimir Putin and Fidel Castro as well as more mainstream figures such as Kofi Annan.

In a statement announcing the award in September, the committee praised Mugabe for being "committed to building the country's political and economic order, for the benefit of the Zimbabwean people", and for his "strong support of Pan-Africanism and African independence".

Human rights groups and opposition politicians accuse Mugabe of overseeing the crippling of his country's economy and brutal crackdowns, but the prize organisers dismissed their concerns.

Mr. Qiao cited Mr. Mugabe's "ability to stabilise Zimbabwe and at the same time promote peace in Africa" as chairman of the African Union.

"Unrest is quite normal," he said. "When America was first founded, it was also very chaotic, and Zimbabwe was only founded 30 years ago." Writing on Zimbabwe's Bulawayo24 news site, Gorden Moyo, secretary-general of the People's Democratic Party, a Zimbabwean opposition party led by former finance minister Tendai Biti, described the award as "insanity".

"Mugabe as we know him and as the people of Zimbabwe have experienced his reign is a war-monger, a bellicosist and a sadist who delights in the misery of the people," he said.

The prize organisers, he added, "should hang their heads in shame for rewarding murderers who masquerade as peace makers".

An award ceremony — the honour is worth 500,000 yuan (\$80,000) this year — will be held in December, Qiao said, adding the payment was funded by Chinese businessmen he declined to name.

Foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told AFP the Confucius prize was "not affiliated with the government".

Mr. Qiao said the award was intended to balance the Nobel "from the perspective of Confucian culture", as the Norwegian peace prize was "too extreme and not consistent with facts". "The Nobel Peace Prize is built on the foundations of Western civilisation, but our peace prize is built on the foundation of Eastern civilisation," he said.

The Zimbabwean embassy in Beijing declined to comment immediately to AFP. (AFP 22-10-2015)

GLOBAL FUND GRANTS \$378MN TO MALAWI TO FIGHT HIV, TUBERCULOSIS AND MALARIA

Malawi and the Global Fund have signed a grant agreement of US\$378 million to help in the fight against HIV and Aids, malaria and tuberculosis in the country.

President Peter Mutharika said Thursday after the signing ceremony in the capital Lilongwe that Malawi has received the largest allocation in the world compared to other countries.

"This will go down as the greatest gift to the people of Malawi from the Global Fund. We are grateful for this," he said.

Global Fund Executive Director Mark Dybul commended Malawi for leading in the fight against HIV and Aids by reducing infections among pregnant women and putting in place good health systems.

However, US\$346 million of the funds will be used in HIV and Aids mainly to procure anti-retroviral drugs and fight tuberculosis while US\$42 million will be for malaria. (APA 23-10-2015)

LOCAL FIRMS LOOK TO GROW BEYOND AFRICA

Global banking group JP Morgan expects South African companies to continue acquisitions in the developed world in the next 12 to 18 months.

This was a sign many domestic companies had now matured and were looking for growth outside Africa, said Marc Hussey, JP Morgan's senior country officer for SA.

There was also a recognition by South African companies that a failure to expand globally could lead to them being swallowed up by corporates from the developed markets.

There has been an uptick in the number of South African companies making acquisitions in the developed world.

This year, investment company Brait bought British retailer New Look for about R14bn.

South African hospital group Mediclinic bought a 29.9% stake in UK firm Spire Healthcare for R8.3bn, and is looking to merge with London-listed healthcare group Al Noor, which has operations in the Gulf states, SA, the UK and Switzerland.

Last year, South African retailer Woolworths took over Australian department store chain David Jones in a R23.3bn transaction.

Retailer Steinhoff also announced plans last year to list in Frankfurt.

The deals are reminiscent of the late 1990s and early 2000s, when a handful of companies including Old

GLOBAL APPETITE

WORLDWIDE TOP DEALS

Largest mergers and acquisitions transactions*

RANK	YEAR	ACQUIROR**	TARGET**	TRANSACTION VALUE \$bn	TRANSACTION VALUE €bn
1	1999	Vodafone AirTouch	Mannesmann	202.8	204.8
2	2000	America Online	Time Warner	164.7	160.7
3	2007	Shareholders	Philip Morris International	107.6	68.1
4	2007	RFS Holdings	ABN-AMRO Holding	98.2	71.3
5	1999	Pfizer	Warner-Lambert	89.2	84.9
6	1998	Exxon Corporation	Mobil Corporation	78.9	68.4
7	2000	Glaxo Wellcome	SmithKline Beecham	76	74.9
8	2004	Royal Dutch Petroleum	Shell Transport & Trading	74.6	58.5
9	2000	AT&T	BellSouth Corporation	72.7	60.2
10	1998	Travelers Group	Citicorp	72.6	67.2

* Since January 01 1985 and as of June 24 2014

** Or merger partner

Graphic: DOROTHY TSHWAEDI Source: INSTITUTE OF MERGERS, ACQUISITIONS AND ALLIANCES

Mutual, BHP Billiton, South African Breweries, Anglo American and Dimension Data — sought permission from South African regulators to list and expand offshore.

But there have been some tough lessons as some South African companies, especially those in financial services, had to pull back after struggling to compete in some of the developed markets. With this experience, SA's major banks have now made Africa their main focus for growth.

Vis Raghavan, the head of banking for Europe, the Middle East and Africa and deputy CEO for the region at JP Morgan, said there was an abundance of liquidity in global markets and South African companies also had access to capital to grow.

"Companies have access to financing and low interest rates, corporate balance sheets are in good shape and sentiment towards mergers and acquisitions has been strong."

"On top of that, investors have been rewarding deals and companies that have an industrial logic and a well-thought-out strategy to become bigger," he said.

With the US and some European countries showing signs of economic recovery and emerging markets hit by a decline in commodity prices, there has been concern that capital will flow out of emerging markets and into developed markets.

"There has been some repatriation, where investors have been to other regions for growth opportunities," Mr Raghavan said. However, he added that there were some investors who, after having invested in emerging markets at high valuations, were going to be careful of selling in a relatively down market and realising losses.

Raghavan said he did not expect aggressive exits from emerging markets because the markets were going to trade sideways by rallying and then correcting. "I don't anticipate a kind of a seismic crash (in emerging markets)," he said.(BD 26-10-2015)

CHINA TO FUND NEW ROUND OF PROJECTS IN MALAWI

Malawi President Peter Mutharika announced Thursday that China will fund a new round of different projects for Malawi amounting to US\$1.7billion.

The Malawi government submitted seven priority projects to the Chinese government for approval which include the Kamwamba Coal Fired Power, National Identity Project, the Chileka International Airport, upgrading of the Phombeya, Makanjira-Nkhotakota road, the Chatoloma 220kv Power, the Lilongwe Dual Carriage Way, the Cancer Centre and procurement of vehicles for the Malawi Police Service, among others.

President Mutharika told a press conference in the capital Lilongwe that following his recent trip to China where he attended the World Economic Forum, he had side meetings with Prime Minister Li Keqian on a number of issues including funding of the projects.

"I would like to inform the nation that the outcome of the discussions we had in China is positive and the Chinese government has approved for immediate implementation of several projects," he said.

Mutharika added that a team of experts from China will be visiting Malawi before the end of this year to discuss technical aspects with their counterparts.

He said the development was a sign of strength of bilateral relations that exist between Malawi and China.

Malawi and China established diplomatic ties in 2007 after Malawi ditched out its long time friend, Taiwan.(APA 23-10-2015)

NAMIBIAN LEADER URGES PURCHASE OF LOCAL PRODUCTS

President Hage Geingob on Monday implored Namibian enterprises to start buying local products and services as a way of ensuring wealth redistribution.

He noted that the Public Procurement Bill, which is currently under debate in parliament, would enable the government to set aside purchases from Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as a way of empower them.

This access to markets is what impedes most business start-ups and sustainability. We must also allow small producers to pool their products and sell to local Government entities, he said.

Although the Public Procurement Bill sought to give preference to the local products and services, Geingob said small producers also needed to build up capacity to supply to public entities.

He was speaking during the opening of the National Conference on Wealth Redistribution and Poverty Eradication in Windhoek.

The two-day conference came after nationwide consultations by the Ministry of Poverty Eradication and

Social Welfare to identify social and economic issues affecting Namibians.(APA 26-10-2015)

ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES WALKS THE TALK WITH CHINESE CREWS

Flourishing Ethiopian Airlines is clear: the future lies with China. It plans to hit home that point by putting Chinese crew on all flights to China from next month.

"Asia and particularly China is our focus. This is our biggest market," said airline CEO Tewolde Gebremariam.

The Addis Ababa-based airline has flights to Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Guangzhou.

It was training Chinese crews for flights bound for China, because "90% of passengers flying to China don't speak English". Mr. Gebremariam said the airline needed teams that spoke their language and understood their culture.

About 30 Chinese recruits are completing their training at the Ethiopian Airlines academy.

China has invested heavily in major construction projects in Africa, one of the latest being the \$475m tramway that opened last month in the Ethiopian capital.

Because of China's expanding investments across the continent, the Chinese community has grown steadily in Africa, as has the market for flights to and from Asia.

At the Ethiopian Airlines training centre, the only centre in Africa to have a Boeing 787 simulator, there are pilots, technicians and flight crew from 49 nationalities. The airline boasts the largest fleet in Africa, with 77 aircraft. It has grown rapidly, acquiring 32 new planes since 2010.

With 6-million passengers last year, it aims to surpass other major African airlines such as EgyptAir and South African Airways, which count 7-million passengers each.

Mr. Gebremariam wants to make Ethiopian Airlines the main carrier between Africa and Asia.

"We're the best point of entry for the continent," Mr. Gebremariam said. "Addis is situated at the junction between the emerging economies of Africa and Asia."

In addition to its 91 international destinations, the company hoped to add Jakarta and Ho Chi Minh City in the next year. "Today, 80% of air traffic in Africa is controlled by nonAfrican companies.

"The market is unbalanced. We want to change that." (AFP 26-10-2015)

MOZAMBIQUE OPTIMISTIC TO REPAY TUNA FISHING BOND LOAN

Mozambican Finance Minister, Adriano Maleiane, has expressed optimism that the terms of repaying the controversial \$850 million bond loan which the state Tuna Company (EMATUM) took on the European bond market in 2013 can be improved, APA learns here on Thursday.

Maleiane is quoted in the local media as saying that EMATUM has contracted the National Investment Bank (BNI) to negotiate a restructuring of the debt and the government was seeing how it can lower the interest rate and extend the repayment period.

Maleiane, a respected economist and former central bank governor, said the negotiations with the creditors were going well, and he thought that, by the end of November, they will have some results, but the process is still under way.

The purpose of the EMATUM loan was to purchase 24 fishing vessels, plus six patrol boats to defend Mozambican waters from such threats as illegal fishing and piracy. The boats were built at a shipyard in the French port of Cherbourg.

According to the French financial press of the time, the 30 boats would cost about US\$230 million but never explained what the other US\$620 million was being spent on.

Banking sources said Mozambique made its first bond repayment of around US\$100 million last month,

prompting the local metical currency to weaken against the dollar.

The opposition Renamo party has called for a parliamentary investigation into the bond, saying the issue and the sovereign guarantee were not debated in parliament, as required by law.(APA 23-10-2015)

LOCAL BRANDS FLAGGED AS FOREIGN DOMINANCE PERSISTS IN AFRICA

The strains of former president Thabo Mbeki's "I am an African" speech introduced the Brand Africa awards ceremony in Sandton last week. The event was a celebration of Africa's own initiatives, culture and excellence, but the results of a cellphone survey of 6,000 African consumers across the continent released that very night showed that consumers still prefer foreign brands by a wide margin.

Of the top 100 brands chosen by respondents as being either their most admired or most valued, just 23 were African. Admittedly, MTN did top the 2015 Top 100 list, toppling Coca-Cola from last year's top place to third, after Samsung. But most of the top-ranked companies were from the US, the UK, Japan, France and other places.

In the "most admired" stakes, top choices were global brands Guinness, Dolce & Gabbana, Toyota, Nestle, L'Oreal and Samsung. The most valuable brands included Heineken, Zara, Toyota, Nestle, L'Oreal, Apple, Cadbury, Google, Coca-Cola, Nike and Vodafone.

The weighting of local to foreign brands has not grown significantly since Brand Africa introduced the awards in 2011, even though the number of countries covered has grown from eight to 22.

The foreign dominance is unsurprising. Many multinationals have had a presence in African markets for decades, with little competition from local players. They enjoy economies of scale, large marketing budgets and global recognition.

Greater interconnectedness through technology means these brands are ever closer to African consumers' lives and aspirations.

Foreign multinationals have also been smart about winning hearts and minds with domestic marketing campaigns and developing local product lines and packaging.

This can make geographical brand identification difficult.

Kenya's Tusker beer, one of the top African brands in the survey, is actually owned by British company Diageo. Others ranked as top African brands include Safaricom, in which the UK's Vodafone has a significant stake, and Peak Milk, a quintessentially Nigerian brand made by a Dutch multinational.

Historically, African brands have suffered from a lack of trust. Although the quality of goods and services is improving, many consumers, reliant on foreign brands for decades, tend to see them as being of lower quality than imported goods. This is changing as African companies gear up to take on foreign competitors by creating high-quality goods and services with particular relevance to African consumers.

Changes in the African corporate landscape are starting to be reflected in the awards. For example, SA no longer dominates the list of African brands. This position is now occupied by Nigeria, which had the second-highest number of "most admired" brands after the US. Nigeria's telecommunications company, Glo, and manufacturing conglomerate Dangote Group were second and third among Africa's most admired brands. Nigerian banks Zenith and First Bank of Nigeria also did well.

Lesser-known companies are making themselves felt. For example, Marsavco, a Congolese consumer goods company, was voted Central Africa's top regional brand last year. This year, African online companies such as Kisua and Konga were recognised.

Flagging Africa's brands by giving consumers a chance to benchmark them against the best in the world not only improves the image of Africa as a region of rising corporate success and creativity, it also gets Africans to focus more on home-grown brands.

The continent is in a new era, driven by technology and greater continental connectedness but also a growing pride in homegrown products and role models. This is forcing African companies to up their game.

Getting it right is not only about increasing the number of African companies on future Brand Africa lists, it is about driving a positive image of a developing continent.(BD 26-10-2015)

ZIMBABWE MINISTER WARNS OF MORE POWER CUTS

Zimbabwe is set to experience further rolling power outages over the next few months amid revelations that output at one of the country's major generation plants could further decline to about a third of installed capacity by January 2016.

Energy Minister Samuel Undenge told businesspeople in Harare on Thursday that electricity shortages are likely to worsen in coming months amid indications that there would be low rains during the forthcoming 2015/16 agricultural season.

He revealed that Kariba Power Station on the border with Zambia currently generates 475 megawatts (MW) of electricity against installed capacity of 750MW.

Generation capacity is expected to have "gone down to 285MW on the back of reports from the Meteorological Department that we are likely to experience low rainfall," the minister is quoted as saying.

Zimbabwe has been experiencing excessive load-shedding since August, which has seen many areas going for more than 18 hours a day without electricity.(APA 23-10-2015)

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