

MEMORANDUM

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HONG KONG CONTRACTOR JOINS FORCES WITH VINCI TO BUILD \$2.5BN PREFAB TOWN IN SOUTH AFRICA



Spectators at the opening ceremony take their first look at the housing planned for John Dede

A joint venture between a Hong Kong-based contractor and France's Vinci has begun a \$2.5bn project to build a new town in South Africa's Gauteng province.

The company, China Minsheng Drawin Technology Group, or CMIG Drawin for short, intends to make this scheme, its first in Africa, into a showpiece for its brand of sustainable offsite construction.

The project, which broke ground on Tuesday, 10 October, is called the John Dede New City. It will include 18,000 affordable homes for sale or lease, together with schools, shopping malls and a hospital.

[Jun Yin](#), the chief executive of CMIG Drawin, said that the move would further the company's mission of building partnerships in BRICS countries (that is, Brazil, Russia, India China and South Africa). He added that 95% of the workers who carry out the scheme would be hired locally.

Yin said: "We feel extremely honoured to be able to participate in South Africa's project to build more affordable housing. This feeds into our mission to build partnerships with BRICS countries, and is an affirmation of CMIG Drawin's leading technology, which will be adopted in more projects in South Africa and in other overseas markets."

Work on the scheme is expected to be complete in 10 years.

South Africa's Gauteng province in the former Transvaal contains the country's largest city, [Johannesburg](#), its administrative capital, [Pretoria](#), and other large industrial areas such as [Midrand](#) and [Vanderbijlpark](#). It has a population of nearly 13.2 million, making it the most populous province in South Africa.(GCR 13-10-2017)

CHINA BACK IN 'NEW CAIRO' MEGA-SCHEME WITH \$3BN DEAL



State-owned giant China State Construction Engineering Corporation (CSCEC) has re-entered Egypt's huge project to build a brand new capital after signing a \$3bn deal this week to build a central business district there featuring Africa's tallest building.

The deal signed on 11 October and witnessed by Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi sees CSCEC building a 345m-high skyscraper, 12 business complexes, five residential buildings and two hotels over half a square kilometre, [Xinhua reports](#).

The district will sit in Egypt's planned new administrative capital, a mega project planned for an area 50km east of Cairo.

In February CSCEC [was reported](#) to have pulled out of a \$3bn deal to build offices in the new capital over disagreements over costs. Construction costs soared in Egypt after its pound lost nearly half its value against the dollar when the government agreed to float the currency in return for a \$12bn bail-out from the IMF in November 2016.

But the deal is important to China diplomatically.

China's Ambassador to Egypt, Song Aiguo, was present at the signing this week and told Xinhua that it is part of cooperation between the two countries within the framework of China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Egypt in January 2016, and signed a memorandum of understanding on the project.(GCR

Photograph: In March 2015, US architecture giant Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) produced an "initial framework and core principles" for Egypt's new capital project, rendered here (SOM). (CRO 13-10-2017)

EMNES PUBLISHES POLICY PAPER ON REGIONAL INTEGRATION FOR JOB CREATION



The Euro-Mediterranean Network For Economic Studies (EMNES) published today its policy paper regarding youth employment in the Mediterranean region under the title "Is further regional integration the way forward for job creation?"

The employment and social impact of the global financial and sovereign European crises has been particularly severe in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Southern, Eastern and Northern Mediterranean countries have all been experiencing a prolonged employment crisis, whereas the improving employment trend in Northern European countries and related attractiveness for unemployed individuals across the region underpins unprecedented migratory pressures.

The EMNES policy paper first delves into the challenge of youth unemployment in the Mediterranean region, explains the underlying reasons from a labour supply and demand and provides recommendations on how further regional integration can tackle this challenge.(EEAS 16-10-2010)

[Euro-Mediterranean Network For Economic Studies \(EMNES\)](#)

PRESS ZOOMS ON COURT ORDER ON EX-PRESIDENT JONATHAN, REMITTANCES TO GOVERNMENT

The court order on ex-President Goodluck Jonathan to appear on corruption case and the non-remittance of revenue to the Federal Government are some of the leading stories in Nigerian newspapers on Tuesday.



The Punch newspaper reported that the Federal High Court in Abuja on Monday ordered former President Goodluck Jonathan to appear before it to testify as a witness in defence of a former National Publicity Secretary of the Peoples Democratic Party, Chief Olisa Metuh.

The Sun newspaper said that shocking revelations have emerged at the Senate that almost all various federal revenue-generating agencies have short-changed the Federal Government to the tune of N1.7 trillion.

The Leadership newspaper said President Muhammadu Buhari will on Tuesday leave the country for Niamey in Republic of Niger to participate in a meeting on common currency for the West African sub-region.

According to a statement by the special adviser on media and publicity to the President, Mr. Femi Adesina, member countries of the ECOWAS Task Force on Common Currency are Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Niger.

The Vanguard newspaper said that Buhari on Monday angrily ordered the immediate dismissal from the civil service of the federation of Abdulrasheed Maina, the erstwhile boss of the Presidential Task Force on Pension Reforms.

The Guardian said that three suspected Boko Haram suicide bombers have killed themselves and 13 other people as they attacked Muna Garage and Dalti community on the outskirts of Maiduguri, the Borno State capital, with strapped Improvised Explosive Devices (IFDs).

The Daily Trust reported that the Minister of State for Health, Dr. Osagie Ehanire, said that Nigeria loses more than \$1 billion annually to medical tourism.

This Day newspaper said the governors of the 17 states of southern Nigeria have asked the Federal Government to devolve powers to states. (APA 24-10-2017)

RISING AUTHORITARIANISM THREATENS DEMOCRACY IN EAST AFRICA

The focus on regular elections may be misguided. What matters is what happens between elections, says an analyst — and what happens is cause for concern

Ugandan legislators brawl over a bill that could create a president-for-life. Tanzania arrests legislators and shuts newspapers. And as Kenya tries to rerun a botched election, a ruling party leader says what the country really needs is a benevolent dictator.

East African democracy is not in the best of health.

As unrest and crackdowns plague some of the region's largest economies, home to various levels of political freedom, the situation is adding to uncertainty in a part of the world already rocked by Burundi's

two-year crisis over presidential term limits and conflict in South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

"It is a tough time in the region," said Nic Cheeseman, professor of democracy at the University of Birmingham in England. "Democracy is under threat."

Rising authoritarianism conflicts with the official attitude of the six-nation East African Community (EAC) to which Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda belong and that touts democracy as a guarantee of regional stability. It comes as West Africa, parts of which have long been bedeviled by dictatorship and military rule, has seen peaceful transitions in Nigeria and Ghana and a president ousted after popular protests in Burkina Faso.

Such a shift would be most striking in Kenya, where political expression has been freest and whose Supreme Court's annulment of August's mismanaged presidential vote, a first in Africa, was hailed as a sign of institutional maturity. As the opposition National Super Alliance plays hardball to shape the handling of a rerun, however, President Uhuru Kenyatta's party has criticised the nation's tolerance for dissent.

'Gone rogue'

"What this country needs now is a benevolent dictator," David Murathe, vice-chairman of the Jubilee Party, said in an interview on KTN News last month. "People have been too soft so that things have gone rogue. That is why you find places like Rwanda are very stable, Uganda is very stable."

Odinga has since said he was withdrawing from a new election scheduled for October 26 and called on supporters to stage nationwide street protests until the country's electoral body is restructured.

Rwanda, which along with Burundi and South Sudan completes the EAC, has become a beacon for some East African politicians craving order. The country ruled by President Paul Kagame has rebuilt following a 1994 genocide, recording annual economic growth of more than 7% this decade while enacting what rights groups say is a crackdown on political opponents and the media that's earned limited censure from Western governments.

"Autocracy is being given as the economic solution to African problems — their case is strengthening if you look at Rwanda and Ethiopia," which have authoritarian systems and the broader region's fastest-growing economies, Anzette Were, a Nairobi-based development economist, said by phone.

Anti-corruption ticket

Tanzanian President John Magufuli, elected in 2015 on an anti-corruption ticket, has moved to cut perceived government waste and challenged foreign mining companies for greater revenue, finding support among people weary of graft. However, detentions of opposition politicians and temporary closures of newspapers accused of inaccuracies are stoking fears that room for dissent is narrowing.

"Our current leadership does not like criticism," Zitto Kabwe, a lawmaker arrested last month for criticizing parliament, said in an interview. "We have never been democratic in the way the West thinks is democratic, but during previous administrations we could criticise even the president on social media without fear."

Raia Mwema, a weekly newspaper, in late September became the third publication to be banned since June. More than 50 members of the Chama Cha Demokrasia Na Maendeleo party were in July charged in court for unlawful assembly. The ruling party has urged parliamentarians to follow the law. Last week one of its lawmakers briefly suggested extending presidential terms to seven years from five, only to shelve the idea, telling Radio France Internationale that Magufuli preferred the current system.

Many Tanzanians may be "happy to see a leader in place who is seen to be fighting corruption and championing the national interest," while "the political class" is "wary of speaking out for fear or being seen to oppose this same agenda," said Roddy Barclay, director at Africa Practice, a risk advisory firm.

'Life presidency'

Least free is Uganda, where President Yoweri Museveni seized power as a rebel leader in 1986 and has won elections disputed by a diminished opposition. His National Resistance Movement backs the removal of an age limit for presidential candidates, which would allow the 73-year-old to run for re-election in 2021.

Protests against a so-called "life presidency" were quashed and live broadcasts of parliamentary sessions banned, while opposition lawmakers trying to block the legislation were involved in fist-fights with ruling party representatives and security personnel in the chamber and ejected.

Museveni recently told lawmakers he has a mission to accomplish that should not be stymied by technicalities, the local Observer newspaper reported Monday, citing an unidentified member of parliament. A legislative committee is scrutinising the proposal before it's debated.

The focus on regular elections as a benchmark for East African democracy may be misguided, according to Yolande Bouka, a political analyst and postdoctoral fellow at the Sie Cheou-Kang Center for International Security and Diplomacy at the University of Denver.

"What matters is what happens between elections," she said by phone from Toronto. "What kind of laws does the legislature pass and under whose directive. We have seen laws that curb the freedom of the civil society, laws to curtail freedoms. Leaders may use institutions and tools according to the rule of law but for autocratic purposes," she said.

Cheeseman said there was "reasonable" concern over a regional "authoritarian club" where leaders "meet and share strategies." Kenya and Tanzania, which have stronger institutions and no history of large-scale civil war, were in "a far better place" to withstand the challenge than Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, he said by phone. (Bloomberg 16-10-2017)

US OFFICIALS IN EGYPT TO DISCUSS INCREASED INVESTMENT

Egypt's Investment and International Cooperation minister Dr. Sahar Nast met earlier on Monday a US delegation led by Deputy Assistant Secretary for Assistance Coordination Richard Albright to discuss the prospect of more investment in the North African country.

Index	Value	Change	Index	Value	Change
مؤشر البورصة المصرية	1.01	4,827,775	4,790,741	1.01	1.00
مؤشر سبائك	41.37	4,723,762	113,253	41.71	40.56
مؤشر البورصة للأسواق والقسم	26.20	4,580,552	167,617	26.13	25.59
مؤشر الشركات المالية - إ	6.36	4,224,713	676,817	6.24	6.07
مؤشر م. التأمين	5.33	3,796,690	731,624	5.34	5.26
مؤشر شركة التأمينات	1.10	3,487,522	3,162,842	1.10	1.07
مؤشر شركات التأمين	7.80	111,365,705	15,065,164	7.37	6.86

During the meeting, Nasr reviewed Egypt's progress in economic reforms, pointing out to the measures and procedures taken by the government to improve investment environment and attract investors.

On the other hand Richard stressed on US support for Egypt to achieve its desired economic growth with more foreign investments.

He pointed out several positive aspects of Egypt-US relations, including bilateral cooperation in different fields, in addition to the signing of eight agreements in September.

Richard praised Egypt's economic reforms and its efforts to improve the country's investment environment.

He said this has prompted a large number of American companies and investors to strengthen their presence in the Egyptian market. (APA 23-10-2017)

TRANSFORMING AGRICULTURE IN AFRICA

The African rural world is one I know well. I grew out of rural poverty myself and went to a rural school without electricity and lived in a village where we had to walk for kilometers to find water. We had to study after dark with candles or kerosene lanterns. By God's grace, I made it out of poverty to where I am today. But for tens of millions of those in similar situations, especially in rural Africa, the outcomes are not like mine. For most, the potential has simply been wasted.



Farmer in a field on the outskirts of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Some 60% of Africans live in rural areas. Such areas are dependent overwhelmingly on agriculture for livelihoods. The key to improving the quality of life in rural areas is therefore to transform agriculture. But the low productivity of farming, the poor state of rural infrastructure, digital exclusion and poor access to modern tools and agronomic information make the quality of life very low in these areas.

Unfortunately not much has changed since I was at my rural school. Economic opportunities are even shrinking for many, with high poverty levels, leading to the repeated inheritance of poverty. As a result, rural youths are discouraged, disempowered and vulnerable to recruitment by terrorists who find decimated rural areas ideal for their activities.

We must pay particular attention to three factors: extreme rural poverty, high rates of unemployment among youths and environmental degradation – what I refer to as the “triangle of disaster”. Wherever these three factors are found, civil conflicts and terrorism take root, destroying people’s ability to work farms and access food markets.



Akinwumi Adesina

We must invest urgently and heavily in Africa’s rural areas and turn them from zones of economic misery to zones of economic prosperity. In particular, we must create jobs and stable societies in order to disrupt terrorist recruitment campaigns that are taking root in these rural areas. So, we must connect economic, food, and climate security together to have a chance of economic prosperity.

We need to jumpstart the transformation of the agricultural sector. The African Development Bank is leading the way by investing \$24 billion in agriculture in the next ten years.

In doing so, the Bank wants to encourage agriculture to move away from giving the appearance of a development sector for managing poverty and subsistence to an industrialised food planting and processing business for creating wealth for the owners and decent jobs for the workforce.

Africa imports \$35 billion of food net annually, expected to rise to \$110 billion by 2025, if current trends continue. Meanwhile, by growing what we do not consume and consuming what we do not grow, Africa is decimating its rural areas, exporting its jobs, eroding the incomes of its farmers, and losing its youth through voluntary migration to Europe and elsewhere.

Imagine what \$35 billion per year will do if Africa feeds itself: It is enough to provide 100% electricity in Africa. And \$110 billion savings per year in food imports is enough to close all infrastructure deficits in Africa.

We must pay particular attention to three factors: extreme rural poverty, high rates of unemployment among youths and environmental degradation - what I refer to as the "triangle of disaster". Wherever these three factors are found, civil conflicts and terrorism take root, destroying people's ability to work farms and access food markets.

So we must think differently. Africa produces 75% of cocoa but receives only 2% of the \$100 billion a year chocolate markets. The price of cocoa may decline, but never the price of chocolates. The price of cotton may fall, but never the price of garments and apparels. In 2014 Africa earned just £1.5 billion from exports of coffee. Yet Germany, a leading processor, earned nearly double that from re-exports.

This is also because the EU imposes a 7.5% tariff charge on roasted coffee but exempts non-decaffeinated green coffee. As a result, most of Africa's coffee exports to the EU are unroasted green coffee beans sold as an unimproved commodity, but European manufacturers reap the rewards.

To transform its rural economies Africa must embark on agricultural industrialization and add value to all its agricultural commodities. Governments, while persuading developed countries to change their import priorities for agricultural products, should provide incentives to food and agribusiness companies to locate in rural areas.

We must get youths into agriculture and see it as a profitable business venture not a sign of lacking ambition. That's why the Bank has rolled out its ENABLE youth program to develop a new generation of young commercial farmers and agribusiness entrepreneurs. Our goal is to develop 10,000 such young agricultural entrepreneurs per country in the next ten years. In 2016, the bank provided \$700 million to support this program in 8 countries and we've got requests now from 33 countries.

This is part of the African Development Bank's larger programme: Jobs for Youth in Africa, with the goal of creating 25 million jobs within 10 years, and a focus on agriculture and ICT. We are investing in skills development in computer sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics to prepare the youths for the jobs of the future.

We know the technologies exist to transform African agriculture. But they remain, for the most part, on the shelves. I have always remembered what Norman Borlaug said: "take it to the farmers". To achieve this, the African Development Bank and the CGIAR has developed the Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) – a new initiative to scale up appropriate agricultural technologies from the CGIAR and national systems, all across Africa. The Bank and its partners plan to invest \$800 million in the initiative.

The food and agribusiness sector is projected to grow from \$330 billion today to \$1 trillion by 2030, and there will also be 2 billion people looking for food and clothing. African enterprises and investors need to convert this opportunity and unlock this potential for Africa and Africans.

This is the transformation formula: agriculture allied with industry, manufacturing and processing capability equals strong and sustainable economic development, which creates wealth throughout the economy.

Africa can feed itself – and Africa must feed itself. And when it does, it will be able to feed the world. In this way today's African farmers will contribute to feeding the world tomorrow. That is why the African Development Bank set "Feeding Africa" as one of its most important High 5 priorities.

It's the Bank's recipe for agricultural transformation of Africa, and we will not stop until we achieve it. (IPS 12-10-2017)

AFRICA JOINS RADICAL REVIEW OF GLOBAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Two former education ministers from Africa were among a group of 16 stakeholders who gathered in the UK capital London over the weekend to take part in a radical assessment of systems of education that continue to be blighted by serious challenges.

According to a statement seen by APA on Monday, Rwandan ex minister of Education Silas Lwakabamba and Mozambique's Jorge Ferrao joined the biggest ever education stakeholders from October 20 to 22 for what organizers called a root and branch review of the global education.



Its organizers said the gathering was convened at a time when global education has never been more vulnerable, apparently grappling with multiple crises involving remarkable drops in teacher recruitment figures globally, and those of children out of school particularly in the developing world.

“Six out of ten children and teenagers in the world fail to reach basic levels of proficiency in learning. On top of this, there has been a decade-long decline in education aid at a time when the rise of automation demands an education system that can teach the skills needed for the next generation of jobs” the statement said.

The event explored a range of leadership areas including the political and technological domains which can be used to improve the state of education in both the developed and developing worlds.

The experts were tasked with bringing their personal experience as ministers of education to bear on outlining successful approaches to introducing key reforms in the sector at national and international levels.

The exercise was spearheaded by the Atlantis Group which was established during the Global Education and Skills Forum (GESF) 2017 in Dubai in March.

It is under the global education charity The Varkey Foundation.

The group’s founding principle is harnessing the skills and experiences of former Ministers of Education and other influential leaders in government across the world to help address challenges in global education.

Recommendations made during the London conference for the way forward will be submitted to governments and education authorities around the world to strengthen education policy and delivery.

Reacting to his invitation Prof. Silas Lwakabamba of Rwanda warned that education stakeholders should get the formula right to improve the performance of the sector given that “the future is at stake”.

He added: “In my view revamped ICT-led practices in education are expected to make all the difference in Rwanda. This is expected to transform education into a digital system which includes access to devices, access to digital content, access to connectivity, and of course access to power”.

It was his concern that while teachers are under-qualified, they are still overworked while their salaries remain poor. (APA 23-10-2017)

FITCH ABAISSE LA NOTE DU GABON PLUS BAS DANS LA CATEGORIE SPECULATIVE

L'agence de notation Fitch a abaissé vendredi la note de la dette du Gabon avec perspective négative, à cause de la détérioration de l'endettement et de la situation budgétaire du pays.

La note de la dette gabonaise passe de « B+ » à « B » tombant plus bas dans la catégorie spéculative et l'agence pourrait encore l'abaisser dans les prochains mois.



Une rue de Libreville, le 24 septembre 2016, au Gabon.

Fitch affirme que cette dégradation reflète « la vive détérioration des comptes budgétaire et extérieur du pays, l'accumulation d'importants arriérés intérieurs comme extérieurs ainsi que le gonflement de la dette publique » à la suite de la baisse des prix pétroliers à partir de 2014.

Un crédit de 642 millions de dollars accordé en juin dernier sur trois ans par le Fonds monétaire international (FMI) « va probablement faciliter la situation de la trésorerie, soutenir les réformes » et peut-être entraîner la contribution d'autres créanciers multilatéraux comme bilatéraux, espère Fitch.

La perspective d'une dégradation supplémentaire de la note reflète en outre « les risques de non-application des conditions du programme du FMI qui pourraient entraîner un retard dans le versement de son aide ».

Les arriérés du pays se montent à 2% du Produit intérieur brut (PIB) pour les créanciers extérieurs et à pas moins de 7,7% du PIB pour les retards de paiements intérieurs, comme les remboursements de TVA ou le paiement de fournisseurs.

Le déficit budgétaire a gonflé à 6,6% du PIB après 4% en 2015.

La croissance de l'économie, elle, ne devrait pas dépasser 0,8% cette année dans le sillage d'un vif déclin de la production pétrolière et d'un affaiblissement du secteur privé, affirme encore Fitch. L'activité pourrait reprendre en 2018 pour progresser de 2,7% puis de 3,6% en 2019, selon les prévisions de cette agence de notation. (JA 14-10-2017)

BUHARI ORDERS DISMISSAL OF CORRUPT CIVIL SERVANT

President Muhammadu Buhari on Monday directed the immediate dismissal of Mr. Abdulrasheed Maina, a former chairman of the Presidential Task Force on Pension Reforms, who fled to Dubai in 2013, when he was accused of stealing US\$278 million pension money.



Maina, who was then the Deputy Director in the Federal Civil Service, fled Nigeria and abandoned his duty when he was being sought by the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC).

The announcement of his reinstatement by the government attracted public outcry.

The nation was awoken on Saturday when news broke that Maina had been reinstated as a Director and had resumed at the interior ministry.

The Minister of Interior, retired Lt.-Gen. Abdulrahman Dambazau, on October 22, had confirmed the resumption of duty by Abdulrasheed Maina, as an Acting Director in his ministry.

The confirmation came in a statement issued by the Press Secretary to the minister, Mr. Ehisienmen Osaigbovo.

In a swift reaction, Buhari ordered his dismissal and an investigation to determine those, who reinstated the fugitive, who slipped into the country.

Mr. Femi Adesina, the President's Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, said in Abuja on Monday, that the President's directive was contained in a memo to the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, Mrs. Winifred Oyo-Ita

The President equally demanded a full report of the circumstances of Maina's recall and posting to the Ministry of Interior.

According to the presidential aide, the report is to be submitted to the office of the Chief of Staff to the President, Mallam Abba Kyari, before the end of work today.

Maina was appointed by former President Goodluck Jonathan as Chairman of the task force in 2010 to check the corruption in the country's pension system.

In 2012, the Nigeria Police accused him of misappropriating the pension funds in connivance with others.

The Civil Service Commission reportedly dismissed him for "absconding from duty".

Maina was arraigned in absentia by EFCC, which declared him wanted in 2015.

Mr. Wilson Uwujaren, the spokesman of the anti-graft agency in a statement at the weekend, said Maina remains on the commission's wanted list.

Sunday's confirmation by the minister followed reports in the online media that Maina had been secretly re-instated and promoted to the rank of director in the ministry.

The reinstatement had been roundly condemned by Nigerians, including Professor Itse Sagay, the Chairman of the Presidential Advisory Committee Against Corruption.

On Monday, a newspaper report claimed that Maina in 2012 bought a mansion in highbrow Jabi Abuja for \$2 million. (APA 23-10-2017)

FITCH RATINGS MAINTIENT LA NOTE DU MAROC A BBB-, AVEC PERSPECTIVE STABLE

L'agence de notation Fitch Ratings a annoncé, dans un communiqué publié mardi 10 octobre, avoir attribué au Maroc la note BBB- avec perspective stable. Elle estime que la croissance du PIB atteindra 4,6% en 2017.



Le siège de Fitch Ratings, à New York

L'agence justifie sa notation par la bonne stabilité macro-économique du pays, des politiques économiques historiquement prudentes et un déficit budgétaire en dessous de la médiane des déficits des pays de catégorie BBB. Des bons indicateurs contrebalancés par des indices de gouvernance et de développement qui restent faibles, ainsi que par une dette publique et des déficits courants élevés. Fitch note que la croissance du PIB s'est relevée, [après la chute de 2016 due à la sécheresse](#), et qu'elle attendra une moyenne annuelle de 3,8% sur la période 2017-2019, soit mieux que la croissance médiane de 2,9% des pays notés BBB.

Rebond de la production agricole

« L'activité économique sera majoritairement tirée par le rebond de la production agricole », prévoit l'agence de notation, qui précise que la production de céréale, qui s'était contractée de 63,4% l'année dernière, à cause de la sécheresse, va exploser de 187% cette année.

La croissance non agricole va également reprendre des couleurs, grâce, notamment, à la reprise de l'emploi agricole, la baisse des prix alimentaires et l'affermissement de l'activité dans la zone euro. En conséquence, Fitch estime que la croissance du PIB va s'accélérer, de 1,2% en 2016 à 4,6% en 2017 avant de redescendre à 3% en 2018.

Les réformes pour la relance économique pourraient, selon Fitch, être ralenties par des défis politiques. « Les tensions sociales ont été exacerbées par [la vague de protestation dans la région du Rif](#), née en octobre 2016 et qui s'est poursuivie pendant le premier semestre 2017 », note l'agence, qui pointe également des tensions au sein des partis au pouvoir, [dont le parti de la justice et du développement](#). (JA 11-10-2017)

OFFICIALS PROPOSE CREATING COMMISSION OF AFRICAN REGISTRARS GENERAL

A meeting attended by African Registrars General to deliberate on how to improve civil registration, as part of implementing the civil registration and vital statistics process on the continent, has proposed setting up the Commission of African Registrars General.

A press release issued by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) announced that it ended over the weekend at Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, where Zimbabwe's Home Affairs Minister Obert Mpofu, said it is a welcome development that will ensure the advancement of Africa's civil registration agenda. Mpofu also said the proposed establishment of a bureau of the conference of African Ministers responsible for civil registration, would enhance the effectiveness of decision-making for the ministers and ensure the continuity of advancing the continent's civil registration agenda.

"This is a momentous event where African member states are putting their minds together to chart for themselves, a way forward to improve the visibility and viability of civil registration," he said.

Mpofu added that the Commission would be handy in providing advisory services to the council of Ministers responsible for vital civil registrations.



“Vital civil registration is emerging as an essential underpinning of the 2030 Development Agenda. It is our responsibility as member states to assist and support each other so that we all have sound vital civil registration systems in place,” he continued.

The proposed recommendation for a Commission of African Registrars General will be presented to the 4th conference of ministers responsible for civil registration and vital statistics, that will be held December 6-8, 2017 in Mauritania.(BD 23-10-2017)

FAIBLE COUVERTURE DES TELECOMS AU NIGER : ORANGE, CELTEL, MOOV ET SAHEL-COM CONDAMNES A PAYER 3,5 MILLIARDS DE FRANCS CFA



Les quatre opérateurs nigériens devront s'acquitter d'amendes allant jusqu'à 2,8 % de leur chiffre d'affaires

Les quatre opérateurs télécoms qui officient au Niger se sont vu infliger des amendes pour un total de 3,5 milliards de francs CFA (environ 5,3 millions d'euros). C'est ce qu'a annoncé à la télévision nationale la directrice de l'Autorité de régulation, qui leur reproche ne de pas avoir amélioré la qualité de leur service.

L'Autorité de régulation des télécommunications et de la poste du Niger (ARTP, publique), a infligé plus de 3,5 milliards de francs CFA (5,3 millions d'euros) d'amendes aux quatre compagnies de télécoms actives dans le pays, pour ne pas avoir amélioré la couverture et la qualité de leurs services. La patronne de l'ARTP, Béty Aichatou, a égrené à la télévision publique les griefs retenus depuis 2016 contre les quatre compagnies, dont une nationale et trois étrangères, et les montants des amendes.

[Celtel-Niger](#), une filiale de l'indien Bharti, a ainsi été condamnée à la plus lourde amende – 1,576 milliard de F CFA (1,5 % de son chiffre d'affaires) – pour n'avoir pas « réduit les coupures des communications en dessous de 2 % et pour défaut d'amélioration de la qualité vocale dans la quasi-totalité des grandes villes du pays dont Niamey, Agadez (nord), Zinder, et Maradi, la capitale économique ».

Un précédent en 2014

[Le français Orange-Niger](#) doit verser 925,474 millions de F CFA (1,6 % de son chiffre d'affaire) pour n'avoir pas augmenté la couverture de son réseau à l'intérieur des bâtiments afin d'atteindre 70 % dans la ville de Birnin'Konni (centre-sud).

La compagnie nigérienne Sahel-Com est condamnée à verser 620,505 millions de F CFA (2,8 % du chiffre d'affaires) pour n'avoir pas porté à 70 % la couverture de son réseau à l'intérieur des bâtiments dans plusieurs villes, dont Niamey, Maradi, Tahoua, Zinder.

[Moov-Niger \(filiale d'Atlantique Telecom\)](#) se voit infliger une amende de 423,463 millions de F CFA (1,6 % du chiffre d'affaires), pour n'avoir pas porté à 70 % la couverture de son réseau à l'intérieur des bâtiments à Niamey et à Birnin'Konni.

Ce n'est pas la première fois que les quatre opérateurs se voient ainsi condamnées à verser des sommes conséquentes au Trésor public : [en 2014, l'ARTP les avait déjà condamnés](#) à des amendes pour un montant total de 5,287 milliards de F CFA. À l'époque, c'était un manque de transparence quant à leur tarification et au mécanisme de contrôle du coût des communications qui leur était reproché (JA 10-10-2017)

IVORIAN-BELGIAN ECONOMIC FORUM OPENS IN ABIDJAN

The Vice President of Cote d'Ivoire, Daniel Kablan Duncan, on Monday opened a Belgian Economic Forum in Cote d'Ivoire in the presence of Princess Astrid of Belgium, who is leading 135 companies and political representatives of the country to explore the Ivorian market, APA observed in the Ivorian economic capital.



Princess Astrid is leading a delegation of 214 people, including the Walloon and Flemish Ministers of the Economy, Pierre-Yves Jeholet and Philippe Muyters, Brussels Secretary of State for Trade Cécile Jodogne, and State Secretary for Foreign Trade Pieter De Crem.

According to Didier Reynders, deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, this mission brings together "the three regions of the country with 135 companies, representing 11 sectors of activity. The choice of Cote d'Ivoire is not a coincidence. It is one of the most dynamic, most open economies in the world," the Belgian Minister added.

Ivorian Vice-President Daniel Kablan Duncan reassured the Belgian economic operators on "the real investment opportunities in Cote d'Ivoire, as it offers an open door to the regional market with the

Economic Union West African Monetary Union (UEMOA) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Cote d'Ivoire wants to enhance its potential," he added.

Welcoming the cooperation between the two countries, Duncan announced that "in terms of trade, the overall volume of trade has increased from 298 billion CFA in 2012 to 514 billion CFA in 2016, an overall increase of 72 percent in four years."

Diplomatic relations between Cote d'Ivoire and Belgium were established on March 15th, 1961. (APA 23-10-2017)

ECOBANK LAUNCHES MVisa IN 33 COUNTRIES ACROSS AFRICA

Ecobank Scan+Pay with mVisa delivers instant, secure cashless payment for goods and services by allowing customers to scan a QR code on a Smartphone or enter a unique merchant identifying code into either a feature phone or Smartphone



How to make payments with mVisa

The strategic tie-up signals interoperability on a cross-border level, and potentially huge gains, as it affords consumers with the ability to use their mobile phone to directly access the funds in their bank accounts to pay person-to-merchant (P2M) or person-to-person (P2P).

Ecobank Scan+Pay with mVisa delivers instant, secure cashless payment for goods and services by allowing customers to scan a QR code on a smartphone or enter a unique merchant identifying code into either a feature phone or smartphone. The payment . (Image source: Visa) goes straight from the consumer's bank account into the merchant's account and provides real-time notification to both parties. This serves to accelerate digital commerce and combat some of the challenges merchants have faced using traditional point of sale systems, including the cost of installation coupled with the requirement of electricity and internet connectivity.

Ecobank mVisa solutions also enable customers to send money instantly to any Visa cardholders worldwide. This is a major innovation that serves the needs of Africans in the diaspora by enabling them to simply link their Visa card to the Ecobank unified mobile app to send money home to another Visa cardholder quickly and securely.

"We are fulfilling our commitment to give every African the right to participate effectively in the global economy at an affordable price and in a convenient manner. Ecobank Scan+Pay with mVisa helps merchants – particularly small and micro merchants – to grow their sales without the risks of carrying cash whilst also giving consumers the ability to pay for goods and services in a cashless manner from their phones. Consumers can also conduct person-to-person payments and instantly transfer money to their friends and family via their phones at very low cost," said Ecobank Chief Executive Officer Ade Ayeyemi.

The partnership demonstrates both Ecobank and Visa's continued commitment to provide financial services to the banked and unbanked in Africa by leveraging digital platforms to offer convenient and affordable payment mechanisms.

Andrew Torre, President for Visa Sub-Saharan Africa said, “We are glad to partner with Ecobank to bring mVisa into the market, a mobile payment solution with real benefits to drive digital transformation backed by advantages of Visa’s global network - security, reliability and global acceptance, allowing consumers to make payments both domestically and internationally.” (CA 03-10-2017)

AU, UN CLOSELY MONITORING KENYA AHEAD OF THURSDAY’S REPEAT POLLS

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, have said they are closely monitoring developments in Kenya, ahead of the forthcoming presidential election.



Recalling the ruling of the Supreme Court of Kenya of 1 September which ordered the holding of a new presidential election, Guterres and Mahamat expressed the UN’s and AU’s commitment to assist Kenya in ensuring a credible and transparent process and upholding the constitutional requirements.

“In this respect, they call on all stakeholders to cooperate with the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), as the constitutionally-mandated body to conduct the election,” they said in a joint statement on Monday.

They urged all political actors, parties and their supporters to create conditions for a peaceful election and refrain from any act of violence. It is critical that all concerned work toward the preservation of calm and peace in the country, added the statement.

They also reiterated the need for the Kenyan security services to exercise restraint and use minimal force in performing their duties, and to respect the freedom and political liberties of all Kenyans.

Kenyans head to the October 26 polls in a cloud of uncertainty, after opposition leader Raila Odinga pulled out of the race saying he does not trust the IEBC to hold free and fair polls.

Odinga has demanded the removal of secretariat staff that bungled the August 8 vote; removal of French-based information technology provider OT Morpho, as well as Al Ghurair the Dubai-based ballot papers printer.

Last week, Odinga insisted that the opposition will stage countrywide protests on October 26, and vowed they will not allow any voting to take place in their strongholds.

Meanwhile, Odinga has promised to deliver a “special announcement” on the eve of the elections, saying that the current political stalemate in the country will be solved soon, without elaborating further.

(APA 23-10-2017)

DE BEERS HAS A ROUGH TIME AT EIGHTH DIAMOND SALE

De Beers reported sharply lower revenue in its eighth sales event of the year, cutting back the size of its offering because of reduced demand as a result of religious holidays in India and Israel, two major rough diamond buying countries.

De Beers reported revenue of \$370m for the eighth of ten annual sales, down from the \$494m it realised at the same period a year earlier and well below the \$507m recorded in its seventh sale this year.

"De Beers offered fewer rough diamonds for sale in Cycle 8, reflecting the concurrent timing this year of the sight sale with the closure of polishing factories in India and Israel for the observance of religious holidays," said De Beers CEO Bruce Cleaver.

"Sales were in line with expectations, at what is a seasonally slower time for rough diamond demand," he said.

De Beers collects all the diamonds it mines in Botswana, SA, Namibia and Canada in Gaborone, Botswana, where it sorts and aggregates rough diamonds and makes up parcels of diamonds for 80 handpicked clients called sight holders.

De Beers also auctions rough diamonds.

De Beers has realised \$4.384bn in rough diamond sales so far this year, compared with \$4.689bn for the same period a year earlier.

De Beers is 85% owned by Anglo American and 15% by the Botswana government. It is the largest producer of rough diamonds by value.(BD 17-10-2017)

NAMIBIA LOOKS TO THE SEA FOR DIAMONDS

Namibia's land-based diamonds are expected to run out within a decade, with mining activities likely to cease as soon as by 2022, according to Namibia Press Agency (Nampa) on Monday.



Mine Workers Union chairperson in Oranjemund region Shavuka Mbidhi told the news agency that diamond producer Namdeb notified the union a few months ago about the impending cessation of operations at four land-based diamond mines over the next few years.

"Elizabeth Bay will be shut down at the end of 2018, Daberas at the end of 2019, Sendelingsdrift in 2020 and the main one, Southern Coastal in 2022," Shavuka said, ending that the company has embarked on a drive to notify employees about the future closures.

"The news of land mining winding down created some unhappiness, but we also understand that it is the nature of the resource; diamonds are finite," Mbidhi emphasised.

He said the union, which represent diamond mining workers, plans to engage Namdeb about how to retain as many jobs as possible for Namibians.

Main land-based diamond mining activities have been concentrated around the town of Oranjemund, and outpost mines near the port of Lüderitz as well along the Orange River in south-west of Namibia in the Karas region. Diamond was first discovered in the region in 1908.

However, land diamonds of been dwindling over the years, with Namdeb, which is equally owned by Namibian Government and De Beers, turning its focus on marine diamonds along the Atlantic Ocean.

In the next few years, about 95 percent of diamond production in Namibia will come from the sea.

Namdeb, through its seabed diamond mining subsidiary Debmarine Namibia, has made substantial investment in this new frontier.

As a result, marine diamond production has already outstripped land based mining. Official statistics indicate that in 2016, Namibia produced 1.17 million carats of marine diamond compared to 403 000 carats produced on land. (APA 23-10-2017)

The Memorandum is supported by the ACP-African, Caribbean, Pacific Secretariat, Chamber of Commerce Tenerife, Corporate Council on Africa, CIP-Confederation of Portuguese Enterprises, Hellenic-African Chamber of Commerce and Development, HTTC - Hungarian Trade & Cultural Centre, NABC- Netherlands-African Business Council, SwissCham-Africa and other organisations. The Memorandum is also made available by AHEAD-GLOBAL, BCA, Chamber of Tenerife (by posting it at the Africa Info Market), CCA - Canadian Council on Africa, CCA - Corporate Council on Africa (USA), CIP,HTTC,NABC (by posting selected news) and SwissCham-Africa to their Members.



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