MEMORANDUM

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SUMMARY

SOUTH AFRICA: UBER AND WESBANK INK MULTIMILLION-RAND PARTNERSHIP

The economic prospects of professional drivers in South Africa's passenger transport industry are set to be transformed due to a new multimillion-rand vehicle solutions programme.

This will offer, according to Uber, driver-partners unprecedented low monthly rates and access not based purely on credit ratings, but rather eligibility determined by their established earnings and quality record with Uber.

The programme is the result of a partnership between Uber, the technology company that connects riders with professional drivers, and WesBank, a vehicle and asset finance provider.

In terms of the partnership, Uber now offers existing driver-partners access to a specially designed full maintenance lease programme, enabling them to gain access to a vehicle at preferential rates, with a view to establishing their own passenger transport business in partnership and with the help of Uber's technology.

This programme is valued at more than R200 million. It was developed by WesBank in collaboration with FirstRand's Enterprise Development Fund, Vumela, which has pledged R20 million for the first 1 000 vehicles. Vumela will provide WesBank with financial risk mitigation and support measures, which will enable the provision of the full maintenance lease option to Uber driver-partners.

According to Alon Lits, Regional General Manager for Uber in Sub-Saharan Africa, this programme has the potential to change the lives of many Uber driver-partners. "Anyone who has been driving using the Uber app for a reasonable time and has a good earnings and quality record, now has the opportunity to acquire a brand new car and start their own business full time," he explains, "and because the programme developed with WesBank offers rates that are significantly more competitive than these drivers would otherwise have been able to obtain, their business ventures have a far better chance of succeeding in the long term."

Chris de Kock, CEO of WesBank, concurs, and points out that the Uber & WesBank full maintenance lease program is the result of a shared commitment to innovative business principles. "We have recognised Uber's ability to disrupt and transform the transport industry, while creating work opportunities for thousands of people across the world," says de Kock. "Just as Uber has changed the way people think about transport, WesBank has changed the way people think about finance, resulting in the development of this game-changing programme."

Heather Lowe, Head of Enterprise and Supplier Development at Vumela adds, "The need for the development of entrepreneurs in our economy has afforded us the unique opportunity to be part of the solution to this challenge. Uber, WesBank, and Vumela all recognise the need to collaborate within the private sector and support government in creating a sustainable future for our country."

Importantly, this opportunity is not limited to drivers with an existing record of income with Uber but open to all prospective professional transport providers as well. Hertz, Europcar, Pace and Fleet Data Technologies have launched a short-term rental programme, negotiated by Uber, that gives drivers of metered taxis or other passenger transport vehicles the option of renting an accepted vehicle at improved rates. They can then use these vehicles, in partnership with Uber, until they have built an earnings and quality record needed to qualify for the full maintenance lease programme.

"People using Uber to get around have come to expect a reliable, affordable ride in a high quality car. We've seen many great drivers, who want to use Uber to boost their earnings but struggle to afford a vehicle that meets these standards," Lits points out. "The option to rent a vehicle at more affordable rates removes this barrier for metered taxi drivers and other professional drivers who want to increase their chances for profit."

These two vehicle solution programmes form part of Uber's ongoing commitment to opening the technology platform to new operators and empowering existing drivers to establish themselves as small business owners.

Lits explains that the goal is to enable 15 000 new work opportunities for driver-partners across South Africa in the next two years. "Our partnership with WesBank and Vumela is helping us ensure everyone in the transport industry has the opportunity to become an entrepreneur and enjoy the flexibility and enhanced earnings potential, and better quality of life, of being their own boss," he emphasises. (IT News Africa 10-11-2015)

CHINA SET TO ESTABLISH TRANSFORMER MANUFACTURING PLANT IN NIGERIA

The Chinese Great Wall Corporation (CGWC) is to establish a local transformer manufacturing plant in Okene in Kogi State in line with the N4 billion (about $20.4m) Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed two years ago with the Nigerian government.
The project is being handled on behalf the government by the National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI), an agency of the Ministry of Science and Technology.

A statement by NASENI's spokesman Olusegun Ayeoyenikan said that Nigeria could not continue to assemble power modules but must upgrade to local production to provide efficient power supply services for the nation.

It said that the Executive Vice Chairman of NASENI, Prof. Mohammed Sani Haruna, expressed optimism that on completion, the project would not only assist in distributing steady power supply in the country, but also enlist Nigeria as one of the few countries in the world that has transformer manufacturing plant.

"The federal government and China Great Wall Corporation agreement was signed since 2013, while awaiting implementation, unfortunately, Ethiopia got the hint that Nigeria had an understanding with China to build Transformer manufacturing plant and went ahead of us to get the facilities offered by China in this regard," the NASENI boss said.

He admitted that Ethiopia now has a big transformer manufacturing plant ahead of Nigeria, adding that despite the delay on the part of Nigeria, the Chinese Government has been patient to assist in reviewing the facilities offered to Nigeria in respect of the project.

Haruna promised to conduct the delegation on an on-the-site visit to PEEMADI-site in Okene and NASENI Solar Energy outfit located in Karshi, Federal Capital Territory (FCT), to assess the activities on ground.

The Chinese delegation led by Mr. Ao Pei Yong assured that the project when completed would be the second largest transformer producing plant in Africa.

He explained that the visit was to achieve the process of setting up the transformer manufacturing plant and the initiation of China railway project manufacturing processes in the country, adding that the visit was also to ensure that the harmonisation of government regulations and policies on all related issues were cordially formalised. (APA 06-11-2015)

NIGERIA: TELECOM SECTOR ATTRACTS MORE INVESTORS

The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has said that the country's telecommunications sector was still investors' heaven, despite the global economic down turn.
The Acting Executive Vice Chairman Of NCC, Prof Umar Danbatta said this in Lagos during the 2015 Lagos International Trade Fair.

Represented by the Director, Licensing and Authorisation, NCC, Ms Funlola Akiode, Danbatta said that such was the situation, due to the robust regulations the commission offered.

He said that the prices of oil in the international market had continued to nose-dive and many economies, including Nigeria's have have had to re-strategise on how they survive in the face of the dwindling fortunes.

According to him, there are predictions that oil will fry up, but in economies with strong economic ties based on non-oil, these economies continues to grow.

''The telecommunications sector has been the oil that services every sector in the economy and it is on this that the hopes and aspirations of all other sectors are predicted.

"When the Nigerian Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was rebased early this year, telecommunications was noted to have contributed a little over 10 per cent.

"It is anticipated that when the National Broadband Plan (NBP) is implemented, the telecommunications will raise the contribution to over 25 per cent," he said.(APA 14-11-2015)

CLIMATE CHANGE BITES KENYAN TEA FARMERS

You wouldn't typically expect heavy rainfall and frost in East Africa. But the Earth's climate is changing – and this is affecting one of the world's largest tea-producing regions, in central Kenya.

For Joseph Mwangi and his wife, picking tea early in the morning has become more difficult lately. "We have been experiencing frost on the leaves," Mwangi says. "This makes it hard to work, because the frost stings our hands," he added.

Mwangi and his wife Alice Muthoni earn their living as tea-pickers in Makomboki, central Kenya. Due to the frost, they have had to start picking tea leaves two hours later. But this presents new problems to the couple.

"When I start working late, I only manage to pick 40 kilograms of tea leaves a day, as compared to 70 kilograms in the past," Muthoni says. "This reduces my pay for the day," she points out. To earn $1, she has to pick 10 kilograms (22 pounds) of tea leaves.

The tea that the couple picks is delivered to the Makomboki Tea Factory. Evans Muchiri, a production manager at the factory, says that due to weather changes, they have recorded a 16 percent drop in tea harvested so far in 2015, compared with 2014.

Local experience backed by international research

Kenya used to provide the ideal climate for tea cultivation: tropical, red volcanic soils and long, sunny days. In fact, central Kenya is the world's third-largest tea-producing region.

In 2013, tea farming contributed up to $1.3 billion (1.2 billion euros) to the national economy, while more than half a million smallholder farmers depend on the cash crop for income.

Tea grows best in mountainous regions, so Makomboki – at an altitude of just more than 2,000 meters (6,600 feet) – used to provide good conditions. But tea also requires temperatures of 16 to 29 degrees Celsius (60 to 84 degrees Fahrenheit), along with stable rainfall – and this has become increasingly unreliable in recent years.

A study by the Kenya's Tea Research Institute indicates that in 2012, the worst year recorded, almost one-third of the harvest was lost.

"Climate change is already having a negative impact on the lives of tea farmers in Africa," says Alexander Kasterine, who heads the Trade and Environment Unit at the International Trade Centre (ITC).

"Rising temperatures and extreme weather conditions are reducing tea productivity," Kasterine adds.

The Ethical Tea Partnership (ETP) – a not-for-profit organization that works toward making the tea industry more sustainable – says climate change is expected to reduce the land suitable for tea production in tea-growing areas 40 percent by 2050.

Planting trees for tea

To enhance the tea farmers' livelihoods, ETP created a partnership with ITC and other nongovernmental organizations, and founded a project to help farmers mitigate and adapt to climate change effects.

Among other things, the program trains farmers and tea factory managers in both carbon standards compliance and adaptation to climate change.

One of the partners is Makomboki Tea Factory. Farmers here are trained on conservation and management of water, including drip irrigation and soil conservation. They use biogas instead of wood, reducing carbon emissions.

“We are encouraging farmers to plant trees and mulch their crops,” says Joseph Gitau, an assistant at Makomboki Tea Factory. The Rainforest Alliance then issues certificates to participants upon completion.

Gitau explains that planting trees at tea farms helps in reducing the effects of frost on the tea leaves. It’s quite simple: The frosts falls on the tree leaves instead of the tea leaves. Meanwhile, mulching improves soil fertility, preventing soil erosion and frost at the roots.

Successful solutions

The Makomboki factory is not only trying to adapt to climate change, but also to mitigate it. Earlier on, the factory had been using 2,000 cubic meters (2,600 cubic yards) of wood per month as fuel for drying tea, contributing to regional deforestation.

But now, the factory has switched to alternative energy sources. “We use sawdust, rice husks, biomass, and macadamia and cashew nut shells, as well as briquettes made from sawdust and rice husk,” says Evans Muchiri.

The new initiative has saved more than 30,000 trees, while lowering operational costs of the factory by 20 percent.

Kenya’s Agriculture, Food and Fisheries Authority recently awarded the Makomboki factory for its best practices on climate change adaptation and mitigation.

And as the factory comes up other strategies to adjust to changing climatic conditions, this not only helps the environment and the agriculture sector at large: It also makes the lives of tea-pickers like Jospeh Mwangi and his wife Alice Muthoni a lot easier, right away.(IPS 11-11-2015)

NIGERIA HAS POTENTIAL TO BECOME HUB OF AFRICA’S AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

A new report on the automotive industry in Nigeria released by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) says that Nigeria has the potential to become the hub of Africa’s automotive industry.

The report titled “Africa’s Next Automotive Hub,” took an in-depth look at the Nigerian automotive industry from the 1960s to date and stated that the Nigerian government’s 2013 policy to revive the automotive industry through the National Automotive Industry Development Plan (NAIDP), contributed largely to the projection.

According to Nigeria's Leadership report, the policy, which seeks to discourage vehicle importation and encourage local production, has attracted a number of top automotive brands into Nigeria with three already commencing assembly in the country as at 2015.

It pointed out that 30 other brands have signed commitments with technical partners and have already obtained licenses to assemble passenger cars, sports utility vehicles (SUVs), buses, and trucks in the country.

A partner with the PwC Nigeria and co-author of the automotive report, Mr. Andrew S. Nevin, said during the presentation of the report that industry experts believe that Nigeria’s potential annual new car market could be as high as one million.

It currently sits at about 56,000 in a used vehicle dominated market. The National Automotive Design and Development Council (NADDC) estimates annual imports at about 400,000 vehicles (100,000 new and 300,000 used), valued at about US$3.45 billion.

He stated that local production capacity stands at 100,000, noting that utilisation has over the years dropped to less than 15 percent.

The NADDC believes the automotive industry, which currently employs around 2,600 workers, has the potential to generate 70,000 direct jobs and 210,000 indirect ones. (APA 06-11-2015)

AFDB PROVIDES $300M FOR AFRICAN WOMEN AGRICULTURE BUSINESS

African Development Bank (AfDB) has created $300 million financing facility to fund African women in agri-business to accelerate agriculture within the next 12 months, reports said on Saturday.
The October Newsletter Edition of the AfDB quoted the President, Dr Akinwumi Adesina, as announcing the decision during the bank's conference in Dakar with over 500 delegates, including top Government officials, Central Bank Governors and Ministers of Finance.

The president said that the essence of the conference was to create an avenue to discuss on African agricultural transformation in a move to re-direct useful resources to revitalise agriculture on the continent.

According to Adesina, the creation of 300-million US dollar financing facility is meant to channel more funds to African women in agri-business and provide bank guarantees.

This is a good thing, even if it is the only thing that we are taking home from this conference, it should accelerate agriculture within the next 12 months.

We hope to see new programmes being implemented and hear more about the metrics of how many acres of land are improved and women accessing finance,'' he said.

The president said that agricultural transformation was taking shape in some African countries which has launched initiatives to boost the provision of essential services linked to the agriculture sector.(AP 14-11-2015)

BURKINA FASO TO USE THE CLOUD TO CONNECT GOVERNMENT.

Alcatel-Lucent is to provide the government of Burkina Faso with cloud networking technology that will enable it to develop new digital public services, such as e-government, e-learning and e-health.

Alcatel-Lucent will supply the West African nation with its NFV (Network Functions Virtualisation), Cloudband and IP platforms, which will be integrated into the 'G-Cloud' infrastructure to being built around virtualised network resources from cloud nodes in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso's capital, and five provinces.

Approximately 400 buildings in 13 regional urban centres will be connected through a 513Km fibre-optic IP/MPLS wide area network. Backhaul will be provided by an 800 km fibre-optic transmission system that will become part of Burkina Faso's National Fibre Optics Backbone.

Alcatel-Lucent and the Ministry of Development of the Digital Economy and Posts as well as the National Agency for the Promotion of ICT (ANPTIC) in Burkina Faso, are celebrating the 'G-Cloud' project launching. Their excellencies, Mr. Yacouba Isaac ZIDA, the Prime Minister of Burkina Faso; Dr. Nébila Amadou YARO, the Minister of Digital Economy and Post and Mr. Bo Jensen, the Danish Ambassador to Burkina Faso, were among the local and national dignitaries who attended a ceremony on 12 November in Ouagadougou.

The project is part of an ambitious IT and telecommunications strategy being administered by the country's Ministry for Digital Development (MDENP – Ministère du Développement de l'Économie Numérique et des Postes), and intends to enable connectivity between public departments and municipalities via an e-government platform – an integral element of Burkina Faso's Economic and Social Development Strategy, SCADD (Stratégie pour une croissance accéléré et un développement durable).

The network will support the anticipated increase in future demand for digital services to the health, education, justice, immigration, parliament and other sectors in the coming years. Under the agreement with MDENP, Alcatel-Lucent will support network and infrastructure operations to be installed by 2017. Financing for the project is being facilitated by the Danish government through the Danida Business Finance agency, whose contribution to the project amounts to Eur 30 million (19.9 billion FCFA) grant subsidy of Eur 15.5 million (10 billion FCFA).(IT News Africa 13-11-015)

EGYPT’S HIGH FISCAL DEFICITS GRADUALLY REDUCE

Egypt’s high fiscal deficits and government debt levels will gradually reduce, global credit rating agency Moody’s Investors anticipated in a recent report, affirming that growth has started to pick up.

Economic and fiscal reform momentum supports Egypt's B3 rating and stable outlook. Although still below pre-revolution levels, growth has started to pick up, and investor sentiment has improved, Moody's noted.

Egypt's gross domestic debt surged to 2.116 trillion EGP ($263.5 billion) in fiscal year 2014/2015, that ended June 30, and the country's budget deficit amounted to 11.5 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in the same period, compared to 12.2 percent a year earlier.

Egypt's government share of net domestic debt amounted to 1.871 trillion EGP at June-end. The figure marks an approximately 333 billion EGP increase from 1.538 trillion EGP in FY 2013/2014.(APA 09-11-2015)

SWAZI EXECUTIVES DEMAND REVIEW OF EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURES

Chief Executive officers, CEOs Swaziland’s fifty Category “A” parastatals to be reviewed as part of a bid to make employment attractive in the Kingdom, the local media reported on Saturday. Government-controlled Times of Swaziland says CEOs want Circular No.4 of 2013 to be reviewed so that they could benefit from annual cost of living adjustment because it is affecting the productivity and competitiveness of the parastatals.

The Circular says, CEOs, Chief Financial Officers CFOs and executive managers' salaries are capped using the total assets as per audited financial statements, experience required, staff complement, professional qualification required, sector of operation, complexity of the job, reliance on government funding and risk.

CEOs are now struggling to get people with the required skills as many were not willing to apply for jobs in the institutions because of the unattractive pay.

We are finding it difficult to retain or attract qualified staff hence we end up employing someone for the sake of filling a vacancy, said an executive manager in one of the parastatals.

Currently, CEOs, chief financial officers CFOs and executive management are not entitled to cost of living adjustment like the rest of their staff.

One CEO further said a number of public enterprises are experiencing an exodus of qualified and experienced staff.

We tried to bring it to the attention of the Minister of Finance Martin Dlamini that the remuneration criteria used for CEOs, CFOs and executive management is causing problems, he said.

Lower level employees are now reluctant to apply for executive positions because they will be later deprived of the cost of living adjustment they are currently enjoying.(14-11-2015)

CLIMASOUTH TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR ALGERIA'S NATIONAL WEATHER OFFICE

The EU-funded ClimaSouth project recently conducted a training for Algeria's Office National de la Météorologie (ONM) on the topic of climate downscaling in preparation for studies of climate change impacts on forest fires.

Material presented covered the topics of climate change, climate variability and downscaling. For specialized staff at the ONM, some lectures covered advanced topics including implementation of regional climate models.

The work will be further developed through collaboration between the ONM and Algeria's Direction Générale des Forêts, with technical assistance provided during the assessment of climate change impacts on forest fire risk in Algeria.

The **Clima South project** seeks to enhance regional cooperation between the EU and its southern Mediterranean neighbours and among the partner countries themselves (South–South) on climate change mitigation and adaptation, mainly through capacity development and information sharing. The overarching goal is to support the transition of ENP South countries towards low carbon development and climate resilience. (EU Neighbourhood 11-11-2015)

35 AFRICAN AIRLINES MEET IN BRAZZAVILLE

Thirty five African airlines, which are members of the African Airlines Association (AFRAA) are converging on Brazzaville to reflect on "the possibilities of liberalizing African skies".
They are rubbing minds on the occasion of the organization's 47th annual meeting, which began in the Congolese capital on Monday.

The theme of the meeting deals with the issue of air transport, in line with the ambitions and objectives of the African Union, which had, at its last summit on 30-31 January 2015, urged airlines to work together through joint business cooperation and initiatives, Congo's senior Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, Rodolph Adada said.

The Director of Equatorial Congo Airlines, Fatima Beyina-Moussa, who led the association in 2014 noted that the Brazzaville meeting will focus mainly on freeing up the African skies.

Since 1999, African countries have committed themselves to implementing the Yamoussoukro Decision,' which aims to reaffirm international safety standards and full exercise of the freedom of the sky she explained.

She also took the opportunity to remind participants that eleven African states, including the Republic of Congo have pledged to make the Yamoussoukro Decision' a reality by January 2017. We hope that other states will quickly follow suit in order to achieve a single aviation market in Africa.

She was also optimistic that the discourses during the meeting lead to positive, and most importantly, decisive changes for African aviation.•

AFRAA's 46th annual meeting was held in the Algerian capital, Algiers last year under the theme Succeeding Together through Innovation and Collaboration.(APA 09-11-2015)•

TOP RUSSIAN AIRLINE SUSPENDS FLIGHT TO EGYPT UNTIL 27 MARCH

Top Russian airline Aeroflot will suspend flights to and from Egypt from 1 December 2015 to 27 March 2016, the company’s press service reported on Saturday.
Given the ban by Russia's Federal Air Transport Agency on passenger flights to Egypt since 6 November 2015, Aeroflot has been flying passengers solely in one direction-from Egypt to Russia. The plan is to gradually reduce and temporarily suspend flights between Moscow and Egyptian airports until the end of winter schedule on 27 March 2016, according the statement.

The Russian company also suspended flights to Cairo and Sharm El-Sheikh and urged Russians already in Egypt to change their travel date if it is after 1 December.

Further, Russian authorities suspended EgyptAir from landing in Moscow's Domodedovo airport, where the airline had three flights a week.

Egypt received an official notification from Russia on the suspension of flights to Moscow starting 14 November, Egyptian Minister of Civil Aviation Hossam Kamal said on Friday.

Russia's ambassador to Cairo Sergei Kirpichenko told a local television channel that those cancellations of Egypt Air flights to Russia were temporary security measures.

A decree previously signed by Russian President Vladimir Putin banned all Russian airlines from landing in Egyptian airports in the wake of the crashed Russian A321 aircraft in Sinai. In order to compensate, Egypt Air was studying the ability to increase flights to Moscow.

Metrojet Russian A321 plane crashed in Sinai on 31 October, killing all 224 mainly Russians persons on board. Islamic State-affiliated group claimed responsibility but no evidence has been revealed yet.(APA 14-11-2015)

AIRTEL MONEY & KAMPALA CAPITAL CITY UNVEIL E-CITY PROJECT

Airtel Uganda and Kampala Capital City Authority have officially unveiled the e-City project, an electronic mode for collection of KCCA dues, that allows customers to pay their taxi monthly license, trading license & property rates, land dues and yellow fever vaccinations by using the Airtel Money platform.

Speaking at the launch event, the Airtel Uganda Managing Director Tom Gutjahr said that Airtel is proud to be associated with the development of Kampala and partnering with KCCA to ease the services provided to its residents. “As the smartphone network, we are extremely gratified that through Airtel Money, all Kampala residents can now pay for their services with ease, securely and instantly”, he said.

Since the launch of this product last year, Airtel money has been the major mode of payment that has been embraced by the public, according to the company, who have credited it for being simple, secure, time saving and instant. Customers do not have to wait in queues to make payments before they can get service from KCCA.

According to Airtel Uganda it has been at the forefront in regards to partnering with companies and fostering innovations that are aimed at improving the lives of their customers. With innovations such as; sending and receiving money across networks, Airtel Money ATM withdrawals, Bank integration, bill payments with Airtel money, Airtime topping up using Airtel Money and now KCCA fee payment using Airtel money, Airtel has always had the interests of their customers at heart and has tried to cater to all of them despite their different locations and economic activities. (IT News Africa 12-11-2015)

IMF PRAISES BOTSWANA FOR IMPLEMENTING DATA DISSEMINATION SYSTEM

International Monetary Fund (IMF) authorities said Monday that they are pleased that Botswana is the first country to implement the Enhanced General Data Dissemination System (e-GDDS), which was endorsed by the Executive Board in May 2015.

A statement from IMF states that at the request of the authorities, a mission from the IMF's Statistics Department visited Gaborone during November 2, 2015, to assist with the implementation of e-GDDS.

The mission helped redevelop the National Summary Data Page (NSDP), currently on the central bank website, utilizing the Open Data Platform installed with the support of the African Development Bank, to serve as a one-stop publication vehicle for essential macroeconomic data. This makes Botswana the first IMF member country to implement the recommendations of the e-GDDS,• reads the statement.

Publication of essential macroeconomic data through the new NSDP will provide national policy makers, a broad range of domestic and international stakeholders, including investors and rating agencies with easy access to information that the IMF's Executive Board has identified as critical for monitoring economic conditions and policies.

Making this information easily accessible in both human and machine readable formats will allow all users to have simultaneous access to timely data released on a disciplined dissemination schedule based on an Advance Release Calendar (ARC), which will bring greater data transparency, which will also be developed, the statement says.

The new National Summary Data Page will give users access to full information about the e-GDDS data categories by end January 2016.

The e-GDDS was established by the IMF's Executive Board in May 2015 to support improved data transparency, encourage statistical development, and help create synergies between data dissemination and surveillance.(APA 09-11-2015)

SWAZILAND IN 10 INVESTOR-FRIENDLY COUNTRIES IN AFRICA

The World Bank has ranked Swaziland eighth of top 10 African countries suitable for doing business, APA can report on Saturday.
The Washington-based institution says the regulatory environment is more conducive to starting and operating a local firm.

The rankings are determined by sorting the aggregate distance to frontier scores on 10 topics each with several indicators, giving equal weight to each topic.

The rankings for all economies are benchmarked for June 2015.
According to the World Bank, Swaziland is below Mauritius, Rwanda, Botswana, South Africa, Seychelles, Zambia, Namibia, Swaziland, Kenya and Lesotho.(APA 14-11-2015)

EU PROVIDES €78 MILLION TO SUPPORT JORDAN IN YOUTH EMPLOYMENTS, GREEN ECONOMY AND FACING SYRIAN REFUGEE FLOW

The EU is providing a €78 million package to support Jordan with developing skills for employment and social inclusion, promoting green technologies, innovation and economic development in the

Governorates most affected by the Syria crisis, and enhancing public education for displaced Syrian children.

As part of this support, a new €52 million programme "Budget Support Skills for Employment and Social Inclusion" will develop the relationship between skills and labour market needs under the Employment, Technical and Vocational Education and Training system.

The EU is making available €13.5 million to support innovation and economic development in the Governorates most affected by the Syria crisis. From this initiative, one project, focused on Irbid and Mafraq, aims to create business opportunities and jobs for host communities, enhancing local economic development and promoting innovation. A second aims at boosting the local economy by promoting green job opportunities for the most vulnerable and enhancing environmental conditions. A third project will be announced in the course of this month.

In addition, the EU has paid €12.5 million as the first tranche of the €55 million budget support programme to the Ministry of Education to deal with the Syrian refugee crisis. (EU Neighbourhood 13-11-2015)

BOTSWANA: SADC ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS DECRY CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS

Southern African Development Community (SADC) ministers responsible for environment and natural resources management who convened in Botswana recently noted that the region’s natural resources are threatened by amongst others illegal harvesting, illegal trade, over exploitation and the impacts of climate change, APA learnt here Monday.

In a statement, the ministers said these challenges undermine progress that the region is making in the fight against poverty, food security, job creation and economic development.

They emphasized the need to elevate the fight against poaching and control the illegal trade in wildlife to safeguard the region's fauna and flora.

Ministers underscored the contribution of natural resources and the environment to the socio-economic development of the region.

They observed that SADC is rich in natural resources, such as fisheries, forests, minerals and is home to the largest populations of wildlife, especially elephants and rhinos.

Ministers noted that the region has developed Protocols on Forestry, Fisheries, Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement, Environmental Management for Sustainable Development, and Shared Watercourses; which promotes sustainable management and utilization of natural resources and the environment.(APA 09-11-2015)

GHANA TO GET 845 MEGAWATTS OF POWER BY YEAR'S END

Ghana's Minister of Finance, Mr. Seth Tekper, has announced on Friday that the country was expecting to get 845 megawatts of electricity to help ease the current power crisis.
Speaking in parliament while presenting the 2016 budget, the Finance Minister said the government had put in place various measures to ensure that the perennial power crisis will be a thing of the past by the end of December this year.

He said other capital intensive projects have been embarked upon to ensure that Ghana had adequate power supply and eventually become a net exporter of power.

The minister's budget has highlighted the state's intended investments and interventions in the various sectors of the economy.(APA13-11-2015)

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