

MEMORANDUM

N° 216/2015 | 18/12/2015

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SUMMARY

Record EU humanitarian budget adopted for 2016	Page 2
Quality of service of Nigerian Mobile Telecom operators still low	Page 3
Angola and China discuss strengthening geological and mining cooperation	Page 3
The EU Emergency Fund for Africa delivered actions to the irregular migration and forced displacement	Page 4
Swaziland: Credit to private sector at \$815m	Page 6
“Aceria de Angola” steelmaker replaces imports with domestic production	Page 6
New EU projects in the areas of Migration and Asylum	Page 7
Mozambican company exports more than 100 tons of tea to China	Page 8
Portuguese-speaking countries are a priority for the China Three Gorges group	Page 8
Health, green shipping, and windfarms amongst EUR 13 billion of new EIB schemes	Page 8
Botswana technology firm wins Orange prize	Page 9
Mozambique loses over 219,000 hectares of forest every year	Page 10
South Sudan’s elite make their money and run	Page 10
Egypt loses 280,000 mobile phone subscribers in September 2015	Page 11
Cape Verdean prime minister visits Portugal for business forum	Page 12
MEDREG 20th assembly paves the way for stable and integrated Mediterranean energy markets	Page 12
Botswana beef industry grapples with measles	Page 13
British group brings forward construction of hotel in Cabo Verde	Page 13

RECORD EU HUMANITARIAN BUDGET ADOPTED FOR 2016

As global humanitarian needs are set to reach a historic high in 2016, the European Commission is stepping up its humanitarian budget to record levels.

The European Commission has today adopted its humanitarian aid budget for 2016. With nearly €1.1 billion as an initial allocation, it is the highest EU humanitarian budget for life-saving relief in man-made and natural disasters to date. The record budget comes as global humanitarian needs are increasing due to the growing number of refugees and displaced persons as a result of armed conflict, the increasing impact of natural disasters, climate change and the economic crisis. The delivery of aid and access to beneficiaries has also become more dangerous.

"Next year we'll have a record budget due to tragically high levels of needs. The EU will continue to play its role to address the needs of the most vulnerable and can be proud to remain among the leading global donors of humanitarian assistance in 2016. At the same, I call on other donors to step up their commitments. From the refugee crisis to the impact of natural disasters, a stronger global response is needed." said Christos **Stylianides**, EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management.

The 2016 humanitarian budget will address the external dimension of the refugee crisis in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, the Western Balkans and Iraq. It will also assist people affected by other conflicts, such as in South Sudan and Ukraine, and it will address the needs of communities affected by complex and recurring crises in the Sahel region and Lake Chad Basin.

The funding will also help vulnerable people caught up in many of the world's 'forgotten crises', such as to displaced people in Colombia, Myanmar and Afghanistan, which otherwise escape the attention of the international community.

As a particular priority, the European Commission is set to increase in 2016 its humanitarian funding for [education in emergencies](#) from 1% to 4% of the EU's overall humanitarian budget, meeting the UN set target.

Other priorities include helping vulnerable communities prepare for and better cope with recurrent natural disasters, such as those of [South East Asia](#), as well as to improve aid delivery.

Background:

In keeping with guidance of the European Council of 23 September 2015, the budget includes a further €300 million to address the essential needs of people affected by crisis in Syria and Iraq. Together with [€200 million](#) already contracted in 2015, the Commission will thereby have delivered on its commitment to provide an extra €500 million over 2015-16 to help meet the humanitarian needs of the refugee crisis. Given the unpredictable nature of disasters, €189 million will remain in reserve in 2016 to respond to sudden catastrophes such as earthquakes and flooding or for allocation to ongoing crises during the course of the year, based on needs assessments.

EU humanitarian aid is impartial and independent, and is entirely based on needs, delivered in accordance with [humanitarian principles](#).

The EU's humanitarian assistance on average annually amounts to just over €2 per EU citizen per year, reaching over 120 million people in need across the world.

EU assistance is implemented via humanitarian partner organisations, including UN agencies, NGOs and the Red Cross family, who have signed partnership agreements with the European Commission. The Commission is closely monitoring the use of EU funds via its global network of humanitarian experts. (EC 16-12-2015)

QUALITY OF SERVICE OF NIGERIAN MOBILE TELECOM OPERATORS STILL LOW

Nigeria's leading survey and polling firm, NOIPolls Ltd says that recent telecommunications poll revealed a general decline in the proportion of subscribers who think they are getting value for money from their main network operators.

NOIPolls noted in its latest polling result released in Abuja that this perception, which cuts across all operators, is mainly due to high tariff, poor network service, poor promotions and undue credit deductions as reported by the respondents.

The result showed that almost half of the subscribers who use MTN as their main line think they are not getting value for money from this provider in 2015 (46 percent); representing a 6 point increase from 2014 (40 percent), although slightly more than half of the subscribers believe they are getting value for money.

Similarly, the quality of service provided by Etisalat seemed to have declined consistently from 2013 (97 percent) to 2015 (65 percent), thus depicting a decline in the level of satisfaction of subscribers to this operator.

It added that more findings revealed that more Nigerians have adopted the use of two lines either from the same network provider or from two different operators over the years.

According to the result, this trend has consistently increased from 2013 (40 percent) to 2015 (49 percent) with a total of 9-points within the period in view.

“In view of this, majority of subscribers use MTN either as their main line or as a supplementary line and this has been the trend from 2012 with the current figure standing at 96 percent.

“This represents a far margin between the use of MTN lines and other lines such as Airtel, Etisalat and Glo, in terms of the proportion of subscribers.

“This is no surprise considering the first mover advantage MTN had over these other operators in the mobile telecommunications industry,” NOIPolls said.

“Moreover, MTN topped the chart as the operator that provides the best services in 2015. This perception is commonly shared across subscribers who either use MTN or other operators as their main line,” it added. (APA 16-12-2015)

ANGOLA AND CHINA DISCUSS STRENGTHENING GEOLOGICAL AND MINING COOPERATION

The strengthening of geological and mining cooperation between Angola and China was one of the issues addressed by the Angolan Minister of Geology and Mines when he met Tuesday in Beijing with the Chinese Minister of Land and Resources, the Angolan Embassy in China said.

In a statement, the embassy said that as well as meeting with Minister Jiang Daming, Francisco Queiroz also met with the Director of the China Geology services, Hu Ping.

The Angolan minister noted during the two meetings that the two countries were already cooperating under the National Geology Plan (Planageo), launched in May 2014 to allow a geological and mining survey of Angola.

Planageo involves the services of four foreign companies, including China’s CITIC Construction, whose commitment to Angola was Monday reaffirmed by company president Hong Bo, during a working meeting with the Angolan minister.

On Wednesday Queiroz will take part, in Langfang, Hubei province, in the closing ceremony of first course with Angolan students who will work in geological laboratories across Angola, to be built as part of the National Geology Plan (Planageo).

The National Geology Plan is set to register, by 2017, all of Angola’s potential mineral resources, involving aerial surveys, collection and analysis of samples and is classified by the Angolan government as a structural instrument in the strategy to diversify the economy.

On Monday, the minister attended the signing ceremony of a memorandum of understanding between the Geological Institute of Angola and its Chinese counterpart. (16-12-2015)

THE EU EMERGENCY TRUST FUND FOR AFRICA DELIVERED ITS FIRST PACKAGE OF ACTIONS TO ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSES OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND FORCED DISPLACEMENT

Today, the European Commission announced the approval by the Operational Committee of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa of a package of 10 actions for an amount of €253 million to address the root causes of irregular migration.

Today, the European Commission announced the approval by the Operational Committee of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa of a package of 10 actions for an amount of €253 million to address the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement in the Horn of Africa region. This package of actions will contribute to the joint commitment of the EU and African partners at the Migration Summit in La Valletta to better manage migration.

Concrete activities will start in early 2016. They will focus on building the capacities of the countries of the region to fight against trafficking of human beings and smuggling of migrants (€40 million); creating employment opportunities and better livelihoods in particular areas of Ethiopia which are at the origin of migratory flows (€67 million); facilitating the return to stable areas of Somalia of Somali refugees hosted in the region and in Europe (€50 million); improving the reintegration of South Sudanese refugees in host communities of Uganda or creating favourable conditions for their return (€14.3 million); and supporting the implementation of the peace agreement in South Sudan and the return of internally displaced persons to their areas of origin (€77.6 million). All these actions and future packages of projects will benefit from evidence generated by a new Research Facility (€4.1 million) which will ensure that evidence is collected, disseminated and used amongst African partners, donors and the broader international community to further inform policy and decision-making. See below for a more detailed summary of the actions approved today.

This package of actions will help realise the outcomes of the Migration Summit between the EU and African partners held at La Valletta on 11 and 12 November 2015. In particular, it will contribute to the Summit's objective of launching specific priority interventions in 2016 in the areas of addressing the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement, legal migration and mobility, protection and asylum, prevention of and the fight against migrant smuggling and trafficking of human beings, and return readmission and reintegration. The actions approved today will also contribute to deepening progress in the implementation of the Khartoum process, a framework of cooperation and political dialogue between the EU and countries of origin, transit and destination along the East Africa migratory route, as well as the high level dialogues on migration with countries of the Horn of Africa, such as the recently signed "Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility" between Ethiopia and the EU and its Member States.

The majority of the actions will be implemented jointly by the European Commission and EU Member States, in full partnership with African partners.

Summary of the projects announced today

Regional actions

1. Better Migration Management in Support of the Khartoum Process (€40 million): This project aims at better managing migration in the countries of the Horn of Africa through the provision of capacity building and basic equipment to government institutions, in particular in relation to investigating and prosecuting cases of trafficking and smuggling, improving border management, generating and using statistical data. The project will also help in the development and harmonization of policies and legislative frameworks, notably on trafficking and smuggling, the provision of protection to victims of trafficking and smuggling, and the set-up of awareness-raising campaigns about the perils of irregular migration and options for legal migration and mobility.

2. Research facility (€4.1 million): This project aims at filling evidence-gaps through operationally-focused research with a view to informing project design and implementation; disseminating research results to African partners, donors and the broader international community to further inform their policy- and decision-making; and strengthening the capacities of partner governments and regional organisations to use evidence-based approaches to better manage migration and more effectively prevent and manage violent conflict.

National actions

Ethiopia

Two actions will be implemented in the migration-prone regions of Tigray, Amhara, Oromia, Afar, Somali and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR). They will complement each other in order to provide a comprehensive response to addressing prevalent root causes of irregular migration and displacement.

3. Stemming Irregular Migration in Northern and Central Ethiopia (€20 million): This project aims to address the root causes of irregular migration in the regions of Tigray, Amhara, Oromia and SNNPR, in particular in urban centres and urban towns. It will do so by enhancing the living conditions of potential migrants and returnees. This will be done by prioritising the creation of economic opportunities and job skills for vulnerable groups, in particular women and the youth, through technical vocational training, access to micro-financing and actions related to employment generation. A direct effect of these actions will also be the creation of conducive conditions for the effective return and reintegration of Ethiopians hosted in other countries.

4. Resilience Building in Ethiopia (€47 million): This project aims to address root causes of irregular migration and displacement in the regions of Afar, Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR and Somali, in particular in remote and drought-prone areas. Interventions will strengthen economic opportunities and resilience of the most vulnerable communities, through measures that increase livelihoods and employment, as well as better access to basic services such as health or water, hygiene and sanitation.

5. Enhancing Somalia's responsiveness to the management and integration of mixed migration flows (€50 million): This project aims to support the management of the voluntary return of Somalis hosted in Kenya, as well as other parts of the region and Europe, or fleeing conflict in Yemen, into stable regions of Somalia. It aims to create a favourable environment for return and reintegration, including through economic and social development, increased access to basic services, economic opportunities, and improved peaceful coexistence of both returnees and return communities.

South Sudan

Three actions will support the implementation of the recently signed peace agreement, in particular those chapters dealing economic and financial management, and development of social services. In doing so, the actions will strengthen the resilience of vulnerable communities and facilitate the return of displaced populations from protection camps to their areas of origin.

6. Provision of basic health – Health Pooled Fund 2 (€20 million): This project aims at supporting the implementation of the peace agreement, and in particular the development of social services by increasing access to, utilisation of and quality of health services (including maternal and child health, nutrition and availability of essential drugs) countrywide. Additionally, it will strengthen core local administrative systems to increase the efficacy of health services, and engage with local communities to integrate these interventions into existing community structures.

7. Improvement of delivery of basic education through improved management and teacher's training (€45.6 million): This project aims at supporting the implementation of the peace agreement, and in particular the development of social services by increasing equal access to primary education, improving rates of retention and completion, and increasing the skills and knowledge of teachers. Additionally, it will strengthen the capacity of authorities to improve teacher management policies and practices, hence making public systems more resilient to emergencies and crises.

8. Support to stabilisation through improved resource, economic and financial management in South Sudan (€12 million): This project aims at supporting the implementation of the peace agreement, and in particular the chapter dealing with economic and financial management, by strengthening a culture of accountability for lower levels of government, helping local institutions to manage public finances and human resources more transparently and responsibly. The project will also support the creation, reinforcement and functioning of key institutions for a responsible public financial management, such as the National Revenue Authority, hence tackling mismanagement of public resources as a key root cause of the conflict.

Uganda

Two actions will address the protection and developmental needs of people affected by long-term displacement in rural areas of Northern Uganda, particularly South Sudanese refugees who have fled conflict in South Sudan, and urban settings in Kampala and other densely populated areas, in particular Somali refugees.

9. Support programme to the refugee settlements and host communities in Northern Uganda (€10 million): In response to the recent influx of forced migration due to violent conflict in South Sudan, this project aims at addressing the developmental needs of South Sudanese refugees and host communities

in targeted areas of Northern Uganda through actions supporting improved livelihoods, economic opportunities, food security, intercommunity dialogue and conflict prevention, and education. Through this approach, the project will equip these populations with the necessary tools for their integration in host communities or return to South Sudan.

10. Strengthening social cohesion and stability in slums populations (€4.3 million): In a context of rapid and unplanned urbanisation and increased competition for scarce resources, this project aims to increase social cohesion and peacebuilding amongst refugees and host communities, in particular by providing economic opportunities and basic services to both communities alike, enhancing the space for refugees to participate in the social and economic life of local communities, and creating platforms for dialogue between civil society and public authorities. (EC 16-12-2015)

SWAZILAND: CREDIT TO PRIVATE SECTOR AT \$815M

Credit extended to the private sector amounted to \$815million in the past two months, the Central Bank of Swaziland revealed on Wednesday.

This reflects a marginal decline by 0.7 percent from the preceding months more so because of the reduction in claims on the private sector which was driven by claims on other sectors as well as claims on industry.

The bank reported that claims on other sectors decelerated by 17.5 percent to \$47.2 million largely driven by its components namely claims on other financial corporations (-21.3 percent), state and local government (-10 percent) as well as public non-financial corporations (-8.6 percent).

Claims of industry totalled to \$414.8 million at the end of September 2015. The reduction in claims on industry was largely observed in claims on community, social and personal services (-27.7 percent) as well as the manufacturing sector (-5.6 percent), reads the report in part. (APA 16-12-2015)

“ACERIA DE ANGOLA” STEELMAKER REPLACES IMPORTS WITH DOMESTIC PRODUCTION

The “Aceria of Angola” (ADA) steelmaking plant will meet the country’s needs for steel rods, estimated by the National Council of Angolan Shippers at 300,000 tons per year, the company’s chairman said Tuesday in Barra do Dande.

Georges Choucair pointed out that with the onset of steel production Angola will save at least US\$300 million in foreign currency, which is the value of the steel rods currently consumed by the country’s various economic sectors, particularly construction.

The chairman of ADA said that the raw material to ensure operation of the furnaces is scrap iron, which will be collected throughout the country and create 3,000 indirect jobs through a national platform for this collection.

The new steel plant is capable of producing 500,000 tons of steel per year, required an initial investment of US\$300 million and occupies an area of 150,000 square metres in the commune of Barra do Dande, Bengo province, and was inaugurated by Economy Minister, Abraão Gourgel.

Initially “Aceria de Angola” will produce 288,000 tons of steel rods, 132,000 tons of wire and 46,000 tons of electrowelded mesh. (16-12-2015)

NEW EU PROJECTS IN THE AREAS OF MIGRATION AND ASYLUM

In addition to the first batch of projects to be financed under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa the EU is going to implement another six actions (with a total budget of €41.6 million) focused on improving migration.

In addition to the first batch of projects to be financed under the [EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa](#) the EU is going to implement another six actions (with a total budget of €41.6 million) focused on improving migration management in developing countries and to maximise the positive impact of migration on the development of partner countries.

The Commission is a leading donor when it comes to migration and development; over €1 billion has been spent on more than 400 migration related projects between 2004 and 2014.

For 2014-20, migration features prominently under the Commission's funding instruments. Amongst others, €344 million are dedicated to migration under the Global Public Goods & Challenges (GPGC) programme for the seven-year period. The six actions announced today correspond to the 2015 programme of the GPGC on Migration and Asylum.

Summary of the actions announced today:

- **Pilot action on voluntary return and sustainable, community-based reintegration** (€15 million): the overall objective of the Action is to promote sustainable voluntary return and reintegration by building national capacities to enhance and facilitate a sustainable return and reintegration process.
- **Call for Proposals for the implementation of the Rome Programme (Rabat process)** (€15 million): The objective of the call for proposals will be to finance actions implementing the Rome Programme adopted in the framework of the Rabat process in November 2014 with the focus on promoting effective governance of migration and mobility flows in all their dimensions.
- **Global action to improve the recruitment framework of labour migration** (€8 million): The overall objective of the proposed action is to improve the recruitment framework of labour migration, in particular to allow governments, social partners and other stakeholders to effectively govern and manage recruitment within the overall labour migration process.
- **Addressing Mixed Migration Flows in East Africa** (€1 million, top up of an already approved initiative of €5 million): The proposed action aims in particular to increase the budget of the project "Addressing Mixed Migration Flows in Eastern Africa" currently under preparation and foreseen to be signed before the end of 2015. The overall objective of this action is to support countries in Eastern Africa / Horn of Africa to address mixed migration flows.
- **Guidelines on Mainstreaming Migration into Development Policy** (€2 million): The main objective of the action is to contribute to effective mainstreaming of migration into development policies. In particular, the initiative aims at developing practical and concrete guidelines for mainstreaming migration into development policy in the context of EU development funding in all relevant policy sectors and to test the guidelines in practice in selected partner countries.

In addition, a set of **Support Measures** (€605,380) will contribute to activities related to the preparation, follow up, monitoring, evaluation and audit activities related to the implementation of the Migration and Asylum component of the Global Public Goods and Challenges Programme. These measures will in particular help to provide support to EU delegations, headquarter services as well as beneficiary countries to design and deliver evidence based, high quality, value for money support projects and to engage in effective policy and political dialogue.

Migration also features prominently in geographical programmes (Pan-African Partnership instrument, regional envelope for Southern Neighbourhood, West Africa and Central Africa cross-regional envelope for Eastern & Southern Africa), as well as in some national programmes in countries such as Morocco, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Niger.

The overall objective of development cooperation related to migration is to maximise the positive impact of migration on the development of partner countries. Development cooperation can help partner countries improve their migration governance and in this way tap into the development potential of

migration. Also, by addressing political, economic and social instability, development cooperation in a number of sectors contributes to address the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement, helps to ensure that migration takes place in an orderly, safe and regular manner and is a choice rather than a necessity. (EC 16-12-2015)

MOZAMBICAN COMPANY EXPORTS MORE THAN 100 TONS OF TEA TO CHINA

The Chá Magoma tea company, which operates in the province of Zambézia, Mozambique, this year exported to China more than 100 tons of a variety of tea known as “Orthodox,” a company official told broadcaster Rádio Moçambique.

Valdemiro Varinde said the variety of tea exported was very nourishing and aromatic, allowing the company which is based in Gurué district, the centre of tea production in the country, to get the foreign currency needed to continue with its business.

This variety of tea was recently introduced at the request of the market, after 45 years of not being produced due to high production costs as only leaves from the top of each bush are picked, while other varieties allow leaves from the middle part of the bush to also be picked.

Chá Magoma this year sold a total of over 2,000 tons of tea picked from an area of 2,000 hectares, out of a total of 7,000 hectares of land that it owns.

With over 25,000 workers, in the last seven years the company invested over US\$10 million and the main export markets of the “Orthodox” variety are China, USA, UAE and Kenya. (11-12-2015)

PORTUGUESE-SPEAKING COUNTRIES ARE A PRIORITY FOR THE CHINA THREE GORGES GROUP

Portuguese-speaking countries are a priority for the China Three Gorges Corporation (CTG), which aims to become a world leader in renewable energy, said Thursday in Beijing the group’s vice president Lin ChuXue.

The vice president of the group was speaking on the sidelines of the first edition of the “Tomás Pereira Prize”, awarded annually to the best Chinese students of Portuguese by the Embassy of Portugal in Beijing in partnership with Portuguese and Chinese higher education institutions.

The four students awarded – one for each year of the degree – will be able to attend an intensive summer course in Portugal, sponsored by the CTG group.

“Four years ago, when we took part in the Portuguese privatisation programme, I realised for the first time the importance of Portuguese for our business,” said Lin ChuXue, alluding to the purchase of 21.35 percent stake in EDP – Energias de Portugal, in 2012.

The deal, which cost the Chinese group 2.7 billion euros, was one of the biggest investments by a Chinese company in Europe.

This year, EDP Renováveis concluded the sale to CWEI Brasil Participações, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the CTG group, of 49 percent of the capital of wind farms in operation and under development in Brazil.

“We have the ambition to become world leaders in the renewable energy sector,” Lin said, cited by Portuguese news agency Lusa, adding that “coincidentally the two most important projects and countries in this segment – Portugal and Brazil – speak Portuguese”. (11-12-2015)

HEALTH, GREEN SHIPPING, AND WINDFARMS AMONGST EUR 13 BILLION OF NEW EIB SCHEMES

The European Investment Bank today approved EUR 12.7 billion of loans to support new investment in energy, transport, education infrastructure, corporate research and food security and disaster recovery in

projects across Europe, Africa and Asia. It also approved funding strengthening the ability by local banks to support small businesses.

Werner Hoyer, President of the European Investment Bank Group, opened the December board meeting by briefing directors on the EIB's engagement at COP 21.

President Hoyer said: "The European Investment Bank warmly welcomes the agreement at COP 21 in Paris and stands ready to support it along with the other multilateral development banks. The new framework for investment is essential to contain climate change and address its impact in the most vulnerable countries. Now our task is to do more of what we do best: use targeted investment to mobilise private capital, without which it will be impossible to find the necessary resources for our ambitious goals."

Speaking about the Investment Plan for Europe, President Hoyer said: "I wish to thank the Council, the European Commission, the European Parliament, and all those who have enabled the Investment Plan for Europe to start unlocking new investment. In the course of the year, even before structures supporting the European Fund for Strategic Investments were in place, the EIB Group has approved over 100 operations under the plan, including transactions by the EIF backing investment by SMEs and midcaps. Even in 2015, covering the first months of the Investment Plan, the EU Bank has started getting Europe on its way toward stronger investment and enhanced global competitiveness."

Overall, representatives of the EIB's shareholders, the 28 EU member states and the European Commission, approved a total of 61 new loans, including 7 projects, in strategic infrastructure, such as transport, water, energy, innovation and agribusiness, earmarked for financing by the EIB under the EU budget guarantee as part of the Investment Plan for Europe.

The EIB Board approved financing totalling EUR 777.5 million for the seven EFSI projects, which include green ferries and improving rail access to ports in Spain, providing smart meters and supporting polymer research in Italy, and improving agribusiness production in Poland.

Projects approved by the EIB's Board of Directors include the development of innovative hearing aids in Denmark, a windfarm in southern Mongolia and an Icelandic geothermal power plant, and large scale investment in energy networks in southern England, Poland, Finland, Italy and Nicaragua.

The EIB board agreed to support significant new investment in schools and universities in Finland, France, Germany, Hungary and the UK, as well as backing student mobility loans under the Erasmus scheme in Spain. Following approval today the EIB is also expected to support enzyme research in Belgium, organic chemistry in Italy, development of next generation commercial vehicles in Germany and innovation to improve production of seamless steel tubes at plants across Europe.

Reflecting the crucial role of the European maritime sector the EIB also approved support for investment to improve access and capacity at Spanish ports and to reduce sulphur emissions of ships registered in Finland and the Balearics. New sustainable urban and intercity rail transport in Rotterdam, Cairo, Istanbul and Berlin, as well as Lithuania and Poland was also backed by the EIB board.

The meeting agreed EUR 3.6 billion of new lending for SMEs and Midcaps through local banks in Denmark, Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, Romania and the Netherlands, as well as support for online peer-to-peer lending in the UK.

The Board approved schemes to improve the competitiveness of agribusiness and food production in Poland, Georgia and Senegal, and investment to improve urban regeneration and local energy, transport and health infrastructure in Thessaloniki, Lund in Sweden, Vantaa in Finland, Rheinland-Pfalz in Germany and across Italy.

Following damage caused by tropical storm Chedza earlier this year, the EIB approved support to strengthen flood resilience and reconstruction of transport infrastructure in Madagascar.

All objects, including those earmarked for support under the EU budget guarantee, need to receive approval of the EIB Board prior to loan contracts being finalised. Loans and guarantees approved by the Board of Directors will be finalised in cooperation with promoters and beneficiaries, and figures may vary. (EIB 15-12-2015)

BOTSWANA TECHNOLOGY FIRM WINS ORANGE PRIZE

FarmConnecta, a Botswana-based start-up that has developed an information sharing and billing system designed for the agricultural community, received a prize valued at \$10 931 for winning the 2015 Asia,

Middle East, and Africa (AMEA) Developers Challenge prize, international mobile network provider Orange said Wednesday.

In a statement, Orange says FarmConnecta from Botswana has created a mobile marketplace dedicated to livestock trading.

Users can access market data and locate lost cattle via a simple mobile telephone. FarmConnecta takes full advantage of the Texting and Billing APIs to revolutionize m-agri applications in Botswana and potentially everywhere in Africa.

The 2015 Orange AMEA Developers Challenge was launched in August in France and 11 other countries in Africa and the Middle East: Botswana, Cameroon, C te d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Guinea Conakry, Jordan, Kenya, Mali, Niger and Senegal.

The purpose of the AMEA challenge is to help stimulate innovation in Africa by offering start-ups the possibility of using Orange's application programming interfaces (APIs) to enrich their applications with functionalities that are sometimes essential, such as billing or texting.

The call for applications attracted 1,200 innovative projects. Initially, ten projects per country were chosen for the shortlist. Twelve finalist projects were then chosen by a selection panel composed of experts from Orange and from the Information Technologies and Communications industry. (APA 16-12-2015)

MOZAMBIQUE LOSES OVER 219,000 HECTARES OF FOREST EVERY YEAR

Mozambique annually loses more than 219,000 hectares of forest due to illegal logging, a reality that particularly affects the provinces of Tete, Manica, Zamb zia, Nampula and Cabo Delgado, said in Chimioio Minister Celso Correia.

The Minister of Land, Forestry and Rural Development said that this situation had been aggravating the deforestation problem in the country, which has 27 million hectares of forest with logging potential, according to Mozambican daily newspaper Noticias.

During the Second National Reflection Meeting on the Exploration and Export of Forest Resources, attended by forest operators, industry technicians and representatives of civil society, Correia cited a university study estimating that over 727,000 cubic metres of wood is annually explored in Mozambique, with a trend for growth.

This volume is above the allowable annual logging of between 515,700 and 640,500 cubic metres, according to Correia, who claims that targeted exploration of forest species, mainly for export, has caused forest degradation.

The Minister noted that it was therefore urgent to introduce reforms in the forestry sector, which include monitoring and assessment of forest operators, suspending new applications for forestry areas, review of the law the overvaluation rate of wood, a ban on exports of timber logs and finally the adoption of the "Standing Forest" project, which aims to promote rural development based on protection, conservation, presentation, creation and sustainable use of the forests. (16-12-2015)

SOUTH SUDAN'S ELITE MAKE THEIR MONEY AND RUN

THE most conspicuous feature of South Sudan's elite is its absence. The newest country in the world is in dire need of committed, educated nation builders. But many of its most wealthy citizens park everything, from their assets, families and even themselves — outside the country.

The people of South Sudan spent decades fighting a war of secession with the Khartoum government to the north, only to plunge into an own civil war soon after independence in 2011.

In the past two years, more than 2-million people in a nation of 12-million have fled death and ethnic atrocities. An August peace deal may see the government and rebels form an interim joint administration, but even if that comes off, trenchant poverty and insecurity will pervade for years. Alongside that, due to reduced petroleum output because of fighting, a bad deal agreed with the north, and falling world prices, the oil-based economy is shattered. Without incoming dollars to sustain central bank reserves, the currency is now in meltdown.

Yet many have found a way to make money, thanks to the combined effects of oil revenues, aid dollars and corruption. Many are even proud that South Sudan is one of the few African countries that, on balance, sends millions of dollars out to its diaspora, rather than relying on remittances sent in from abroad.

Lual Malok, a businessman who rents out warehouses and offices in the capital Juba, sends thousands of dollars to his family in Kampala every month.

"I have four kids; these are from my first wife. Then I have two younger kids with my second wife. She's here," says Malok, whose business supports them all.

Like many South Sudanese, his first wife lives in neighbouring Uganda so the children can get a good, safe education they cannot hope to access at home.

"For renting, I have to pay \$1,100 per month, then for the food I send another \$1,000, plus every three months, I send \$3,200 for school fees," says Malok in his office. "All the business people here are the same: they transfer money out to their families, especially for school fees; that is a must."

Under development at home is only part of the explanation. A diplomat involved in protracted peace talks describes the South Sudanese leadership as "shameless looters who are living in luxury while showing breathtaking indifference (to their people)".

South Sudan was ranked 171st of 175 countries in Transparency International's annual corruption perceptions index last year.

The rot set in early. Within a year of independence, President Salva Kiir declared officials had already stolen horrifying amounts from the fledgling state. "An estimated \$4bn is unaccounted for or, simply put, stolen by former and current officials, as well as corrupt individuals with close ties to government officials," he wrote. "Most of these funds have been taken out of the country and deposited in foreign accounts. Some have purchased properties, often paid for in cash."

An investigation commissioned by Avaaz, an online campaign group, indicates South Sudan's top leaders move considerable property and banking assets outside their own country, into East Africa, the Middle East and Europe.

"While South Sudan goes up in flames, the families of the elite enjoy a luxurious lifestyle outside the country subsidised by endemic corruption of state coffers," Sam Barratt at Avaaz said.

In Kenya's capital Nairobi, South Sudanese number plates are commonplace on the sports utility vehicles that circulate the leafy suburb of Lavington.

Even so, the streets of Juba bear the marks of much change in the past 10 years. While the city was once a dustbowl in which the only accommodation comprised shacks, tents and containers, today it has high rises and even higher hopes.

Developers speak of creating rooftop cigar rooms to serve the country's elite; businesses from insurance to banks make record profits.

Car dealerships are still doing a decent trade, but they remember wistfully the best of the good old days, when the new government put in orders for dozens of vehicles at a time for ministers and senior public servants. Even today, the odd Hummer parks up outside late-night bars. (FT 07-10-2015)

EGYPT LOSES 280,000 MOBILE PHONE SUBSCRIBERS IN SEPTEMBER 2015

The number of mobile phone subscribers in Egypt declined by 280,000, or 0.46 percent, to settle at 93.24 million in September 2015, compared to 93.50 million in August 2015, according to a report issued by the Communications and Information Technology Ministry on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the number of mobile phone subscribers decreased by 1.6 million (3.8 percent) in September 2015, compared to the same month last year.

Mobile penetration rates shrank to 107.01 percent at the end of September 2015, compared to 110.76 percent for the same period last year.

The report also stated that landline subscriptions increased by 3.76 percent in September 2015, compared to August 2015, to reach 6.22 million subscribers, although it is still down by 9 percent from September 2014 numbers, where there were 6.84 million subscriptions. (APA 16-12-2015)

CAPE VERDEAN PRIME MINISTER VISITS PORTUGAL FOR BUSINESS FORUM

The Prime Minister of Cabo Verde (Cape Verde) is due Wednesday to begin a three-day visit to Portugal during which he will chair the opening, in Braga, of the 2nd Forum of the Exporters Union of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), reported the archipelago's press.

Commenting on the trip, which he described as "very short", Prime Minister José Maria Neves said that in addition to chairing the opening session of the forum, he would meet with various Portuguese politicians and the Cape Verdean community based in Portugal.

The 2nd Forum of the Exporters Union of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, sponsored by the CPLP Exporters Union (EU-CPLP), in conjunction with the Business Confederation of the CPLP (EC-CPLP), is taking place in Braga on 17 and 18 December.

This forum is expected to be attended by over 1,600 people, including representatives of public and private organisations, entrepreneurs from the nine Member States of the CPLP, community observers, other invited countries and international organisations for seminars, meetings, conferences, exhibitions and debates, all to create new business spaces in the community. (16-12-2015)

MEDREG 20TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY PAVES THE WAY FOR STABLE AND INTEGRATED MEDITERRANEAN ENERGY MARKETS

The EU-supported Mediterranean Energy Regulators' Association (MEDREG) has held its General Assembly (GA) in Tirana, at which 6 working group reports were approved.

The GA approved a comprehensive review of the results performed by the Association in the last 2 years in the overall framework of the evolution of the Mediterranean energy sector. Fact-findings from the document include several steps forward made at national level:

- The process of establishment of the Moroccan electricity regulator and the Egyptian gas regulator is advancing;
- Reinforcement of institutional cooperation with Euro-Mediterranean energy stakeholders;
- Enhancement of knowledge about good regulatory principles and practice among Southern shore members.

During the Assembly, MEDREG also presented and discussed two important results that will shape future activities:

- Cooperation between MEDREG and the Association of Mediterranean Transmission System Operators (Med-TSO) in the framework of the Euro-Med Platforms
- Mediterranean Financial Sounding Panel for Energy Regulation (Med-FPE), approved by MEDGREG to increase interactions with international financial institutions (IFIs) active in the Mediterranean energy sector.

MEDREG is an Association that brings together energy regulators of 21 countries around the Mediterranean in order to promote a clear, stable and harmonised legal and regulatory framework through a continuous cooperation among the Northern, Southern and Eastern shores of the

Mediterranean basin. MEDREG benefits from the support of the European Union and of the Council of European Energy Regulators (CEER). (EU Neighbourhood 04-12-2015)

BOTSWANA BEEF INDUSTRY GRAPPLES WITH MEASLES

Botswana's Minister of Agriculture Patrick Ralotsia said the measles situation in the country which is affecting the beef industry calls for a national campaign with farmers fully engaged, the Daily News reported here Wednesday.

He is quoted as saying that it has become a norm that during Christmas and New Year holidays, various choirs' competitions were held at lands where there were no toilets; people relieved themselves anywhere and cattle fed on human waste, which caused measles.

Minister Ralotsia also appealed to farmers to intensify campaign on the fight against measles, adding that the use of pit latrines at cattle posts and farms would help address the measles challenge.

As a result of such challenges, he noted that beef exporter Botswana Meat Commission (BMC) incurred running costs while on one hand received few cattle from farmers.

Therefore, Ralotsia appealed to farmers to work closely with BMC to help address challenges affecting the growth of the industry and even work towards satisfying European Union (EU) requirements.

â€œIf cattle ingest tapeworm eggs from humans, they can affect their carcass. In beef cattle, the human tapeworm is the culprit. Cattle feed can become contaminated with this parasite if untreated human waste makes its way onto cattle pastures," he said. (APA 16-12-2015)

BRITISH GROUP BRINGS FORWARD CONSTRUCTION OF HOTEL IN CABO VERDE

The foundation stone of the White Sands Beach & Spa hotel project on the island of Boa Vista in Cabo Verde (Cape Verde), has been brought forward to the end of December, said Victor Fidalgo, consultant to the UK's The Resort Group PLC.

This five-star venture that will operate under the Meliá Hotels & Resort brand will be built in Santa Monica, an 18-kilometre turquoise water fine sand beach that as yet has no human presence, according to Cape Verdean weekly newspaper A Semana.

The White Sands Beach & Spa, which will have 835 rooms and a wide range of entertainment and leisure facilities, has a construction cost currently estimated at 78 million euros.

The Resort Group owns a 750,000 square metre area in the Integrated Tourism Development Zone of Santa Monica, and the White Sands Beach & Spa's is its first venture on the island of Boa Vista and its fifth in Cabo Verde.

The group has two hotels in operation on the island of Sal and two under construction, Tortuga Beach, Dunas and Llana Beach, respectively. In November it laid the foundation stone of the Hilton Beach business hotel, and also has plans for more luxury tourist resorts on Boa Vista. (16-12-2015)

The Memorandum is supported by the Chamber of Commerce Tenerife, ELO - Portuguese Association for Economic Development and Cooperation, Hellenic-African Chamber of Commerce and Development, NABA - Norwegian-African Business Association and other organisations.

The Memorandum is also made available by the Chamber of Tenerife (by posting it at the Africa Info Market), ELO and NABA, to their Members.



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