

MEMORANDUM

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EU-TUNISIA: COMMISSION PROPOSES FURTHER EUR 500 MILLION IN MACRO-FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The European Commission is ready to further assist Tunisia in overcoming its economic difficulties and achieving more sustainable growth.

Following a request by Tunisia, the Commission has proposed today additional macro-financial assistance to Tunisia of up to EUR 500 million. This assistance will take the form of medium-term loans at favourable financing conditions.

Pierre Moscovici, European Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, said: *"The European Commission is living up to its commitment to provide greater support for the reform efforts made by Tunisia. More than ever, it is of utmost importance that Tunisia remains an example to the region. Tunisia's political transition process has been facing so many economic challenges since 2011. The recent terrorist attacks have exacerbated an already vulnerable balance of payments and fiscal position, creating important financing needs. Today's proposal will help Tunisia to cover external financing needs and will give its people some leeway to achieve a sustainable and inclusive growth model."*

Today's proposal for additional assistance is part of a wider effort by the EU to help Tunisia overcome the severe economic difficulties it has faced since its economic and political transition process began. Terrorist attacks in 2015 worsened the situation further by affecting key economic sectors such as tourism and transport. This macro-financial assistance programme complements the significant EU development assistance which Tunisia already receives in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy through the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) and other EU external financial instruments. This assistance amounts to more than EUR 1 billion in grants provided to Tunisia since the 2011 revolution, supporting for instance socio-economic development and job creation the democratic transition process, as well as sectorial assistance, for instance to support its olive oil production.

The EU macro-financial assistance programme will help to cover Tunisia's external financing needs in 2016 and 2017, while supporting reform measures aimed at achieving a more sustainable balance of payments and budgetary situation, improving the investment climate, and fostering economic integration and regulatory convergence with the EU. The ultimate aim is to help Tunisia lay the conditions for sustainable, inclusive and employment-generating economic growth.

The macro-financial assistance programme is meant to complement a new comprehensive economic adjustment and reform programme currently being discussed between Tunisia and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as a follow up to the Stand-by Arrangement approved by the IMF in June 2013.

Background

The new macro-financial assistance programme needs to be approved by the European Parliament and the Council before disbursements could start later this year.

The new assistance is due to be disbursed in three instalments during the period of the programme.

Macro-financial assistance is an exceptional EU crisis response instrument available to the EU's neighbouring partner countries. It is complementary to assistance provided by the IMF. Macro-financial assistance loans are financed through EU borrowing on capital markets. The funds are then on-lent with similar financial terms to the beneficiary countries.

A [first macro-financial assistance package](#) for Tunisia of EUR 300 million was proposed by the European Commission, and adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on 15 May 2014 (Decision [534/2014/EU](#)).

The package supported Tunisian reform efforts in the following areas: public finance management; fiscal reforms to increase tax collection and improve the progressivity of the tax system; reforms to strengthen the social safety net; financial sector reforms; and measures to improve the regulatory framework for trade and investment. To date, the first two tranches (of EUR 100 million each) have been successfully disbursed in 2015. The final tranche, also of EUR 100 million, is expected to be disbursed in the second quarter of 2016, subject to the agreed conditions being met.

Tunisia also benefitted since 2011 from over €1 billion in grants through the European Neighbourhood Instrument and other EU external cooperation instruments. Moreover, Tunisia also received over EUR 1.3 billion in loans from the [European Investment Bank](#) since the start of the revolution. (EC 12-02-2016)

ANGOLAN MINISTER WARNS OF CANCELLATION OF MINING LICENSES

The government of Angola is expected to withdraw licenses from operators who have mining concessions but do not have the capacity to develop the business, the Minister for Geology and Mining said Wednesday in Lubango, southern Huila province.

Minister Francisco Queiroz said at the end of a meeting with mining operators in the southern region of Angola, which includes the provinces of Huila, Namibe, Cunene and Kuando Kubango, there was a need to correct the current situation in which almost 2,000 licenses have been granted but most have yet to start operating.

“The government has a presidential decree that governs this matter, stating that the operators that have licenses but have not started mining will lose them,” warned the minister.

Queiroz, cited by Angolan news agency Angop, said that this measure aims to regulate mining in the country and give opportunities to those who really want and can engage in the activity.

During his visit, the Minister visited the southern regional head office of the Geological Institute of Angola, quarry company Omatapalo and the granite processing plant of Emanha. (12-02-2016)

US TO SPEND OVER \$60M TO FIGHT HIV/AIDS IN NAMIBIA

The US Ambassador to Namibia, Thomas Daughton on Thursday revealed his government planning to spend over N\$1 billion (\$67 million) on fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Namibia.

The ambassador said this while handing over medical equipment to four private medical centres for the performing of voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) in Windhoek.

What all this means is that alongside anti-retroviral treatment and HIV testing and counseling and prevention of mother-to-child transmission, we need to promote, expand and sustain voluntary medical male circumcision.

The reason seems pretty straightforward, even to someone like me who is not a medical professional. Voluntary medical male circumcision has proven to be one of the most economical and effective methods of reducing HIV transmission.

And reducing transmission is a key component of epidemic control. That is why it is so encouraging to see the government's proactive effort to scale up voluntary medical male circumcision here in Namibia, he said.

Ambassador Daughton said the private health sector in Namibia has a bigger role to play in the country's medical male circumcision. He said one out of every four VMMC performed in the country is done by the private sector.

There is an estimated 94 000 Namibian men covered by medical aid, which Daughton noted present an opportunity for private hospitals to make a lasting impact in the fight against HIV. Hence the US government is providing support to the development of VMMC through the Namibian Association for Medical Aid Fund.

The US, through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) has spent over N\$13 billion (\$800 million) in fight against HIV/AIDS in Namibia since in 2004.(APA 12-02-2016)

LES RELATIONS ENTRE L'UNION EUROPÉENNE ET LA TUNISIE

Dès le lendemain de la Révolution de 2011, l'UE s'est engagée à soutenir la transition entamée par le

peuple tunisien vers plus de démocratie, de liberté et de justice sociale.

L'appui de l'UE à la transition tunisienne

Dès le lendemain de la Révolution de 2011, l'UE s'est engagée à soutenir la transition entamée par le peuple tunisien vers plus de démocratie, de liberté et de justice sociale. Partenaires naturels au regard de la géographie et de liens culturels et commerciaux, l'UE et la Tunisie ont, dans ce nouveau contexte, conclu un "Partenariat Privilégié" en novembre 2012.

Ce statut particulier accordé à la Tunisie, parmi les partenaires de son voisinage sud, reflète l'engagement résolu de l'UE à soutenir la transition tunisienne face à des défis interconnectés : la consolidation de sa démocratie – notamment la mise en œuvre de la Constitution de janvier 2014 –, une situation socio-économique difficile - et la menace terroriste dans une situation régionale fragile. Il concrétise aussi une ambition partagée d'approfondir les relations bilatérales dans tous les domaines possibles – politique, culturel, économique, commercial, sécuritaire, etc. – et d'intensifier les échanges entre nos sociétés. Cet objectif commun a été réitéré au plus haut niveau politique, notamment lors de la participation exceptionnelle du Chef du gouvernement tunisien, M. Habib Essid, au Conseil Affaires étrangères de l'UE du 20 juillet 2015 présidé par la haute représentante/vice-présidente Federica Mogherini.

Depuis 2011, l'UE a plus que doublé le montant de sa coopération financière (dons) allouée à la Tunisie ; celle-ci est le premier bénéficiaire, dans le voisinage sud, du Programme "Umbrella" qui reconnaît les progrès en matière de démocratie et de droits de l'Homme. Les grands axes de l'assistance actuelle de l'UE sont les suivants : 1) Réformes socioéconomiques pour la croissance inclusive, la compétitivité et l'intégration ; 2) Consolidation des éléments constitutifs de la démocratie ; 3) Développement régional et local durable.

Ces subventions se doublent d'une assistance macro-financière (prêts) de 300 millions d'euros, à laquelle la Commission propose aujourd'hui d'ajouter un deuxième programme de 500 millions d'euros. Dans le cadre du "Partenariat Privilégié" et au regard de la singularité de la Tunisie, l'UE s'efforce d'identifier dans ses politiques sectorielles toutes les opportunités d'appuyer la transition et de renforcer les liens entre les Tunisiens et les Européens. Enfin, la société civile tunisienne, acteur fondamental de la transition (ce qui a valu au Quartet du dialogue national le Prix Nobel de la Paix 2015), est largement impliquée, notamment à travers des dialogues tripartites réguliers sur les grands chapitres de la relation UE-Tunisie.

Les relations UE-Tunisie ont connu des progrès importants en 2015, avec des résultats concrets dans les domaines suivants :

- En matière de lutte contre le terrorisme et de prévention de la radicalisation, dans le cadre du [dialogue politique](#) tenu pour la première fois à Tunis en septembre 2015 à la suite des attentats perpétrés au Bardo (mars 2015) et à Sousse (juin), l'UE a proposé à la Tunisie une liste d'actions supplémentaires de soutien à la Tunisie, en complément de son important programme d'appui à la réforme du secteur de la sécurité lancé en novembre 2015 ;
- Les négociations d'un futur Accord de libre-échange complet et approfondi ([ALECA](#)), levier majeur pour le retour de l'investissement et la croissance en Tunisie et pour son intégration économique et commerciale avec l'UE, ont été lancées en octobre 2015 lors de la visite à Tunis de la Commissaire Cecilia Malmström ;
- Une mesure exceptionnelle d'appui au secteur clé de [l'huile d'olive](#) tunisienne, consistant à augmenter pour deux ans le contingent annuel exempté de droits de douanes, est en voie d'adoption sur proposition de la Commission, afin d'apporter un soutien à une économie tunisienne lourdement frappée par les pertes du secteur touristique ;
- La Tunisie est depuis le 1^{er} janvier 2016 le premier pays arabe pleinement associé au Programme de recherche de l'UE [Horizon 2020](#), ce qui offre de nouvelles opportunités aux chercheurs et universitaires tunisiens.

Financement de la Commission européenne

Politique de voisinage

L'UE s'est engagée à nouer des relations étroites avec la Tunisie et à soutenir les réformes économiques et politiques de la Tunisie. Dans le cadre de la Politique européenne de voisinage (PEV), la Tunisie reçoit une aide financière de l'UE principalement par le biais de l'Instrument européen de voisinage (IEV). L'enveloppe indicative de l'IEV pour la période de financement actuelle 2014-2020 se situe entre €725 et €886 millions.

L'apport de l'IEV est complété par d'autres instruments financiers de l'UE tels que l'Instrument

contribuant à la stabilité et à la paix (IcSP), l'Instrument européen pour la démocratie et les droits de l'Homme (IEDDH), la Facilité d'investissement dans le cadre de la Politique de voisinage (FIPV) et des programmes thématiques dans le cadre de l'instrument de financement de la coopération au développement.

Fonds IEV/ IEVP

Depuis les mouvements du Printemps arabe en 2011, la Tunisie a bénéficié de plus d'un milliard d'euros de subventions, dont plus de €890 millions ont été fournis par les instruments de mise en œuvre de la Politique européenne de voisinage.

Pour la période 2011-2013, la Tunisie a reçu €445 millions d'aide au développement dans le cadre de l'Instrument européen de voisinage et de partenariat (IEVP), soit près de deux fois plus que le montant initialement prévu pour la Tunisie pour cette période. La part la plus importante de l'aide a été allouée au soutien de l'économie et au soutien de la transition démocratique. Le reste a été consacré à des projets bénéficiant aux citoyens tunisiens, en particulier dans les régions marginalisées. Ce soutien comprenait également des fonds significatifs (€ 155 millions) dans le cadre du "programme SPRING" qui récompense les progrès en matière de réforme démocratique et dont la Tunisie a été le premier pays bénéficiaire dans la région du voisinage sud.

L'aide bilatérale 2014 fournie dans le cadre de l'IEV s'est élevée à €169 millions et a mis l'accent notamment sur la reprise économique, les réformes dans les secteurs clés (système judiciaire, média, égalité des sexes, etc.) la gestion des frontières, les moyens de subsistance dans les quartiers urbains défavorisés de même que sur le soutien à la société civile. L'aide bilatérale 2015 fournie dans le cadre de l'IEV s'est, elle, élevée à €186.8 millions et a soutenu six programmes, principalement axés sur la reprise économique (dont le secteur du tourisme), la réforme du secteur de sécurité et le développement régional. Des fonds additionnels ont également été fournis dans le cadre du mécanisme de soutien incitatif (€50 millions en 2014 et €71.8 millions en 2015), qui récompense les progrès en matière de réforme démocratique par des financements supplémentaires (ce que l'on appelle "les financements cadres") .

Assistance macro-financière (AMF)

Quelles sont les spécificités de l'assistance macro-financière?

L'AMF est un [instrument de crise exceptionnel](#) mis en place par l'UE en faveur de ses pays voisins, qui rencontrent de graves difficultés avec leur balance des paiements. Une condition préalable à toute opération d'assistance macro-financière de l'Union est l'existence de mécanismes démocratiques effectifs, notamment le pluralisme parlementaire, l'État de droit et le respect des droits de l'homme. Cette assistance est complémentaire de l'aide du FMI. Dans le cas de la Tunisie, l'AMF complète un nouveau programme d'ajustement et de réforme économique qui est à présent en cours de négociation entre la Tunisie et le Fonds monétaire international (FMI), suite à l'expiration en 2015 de l'accord de confirmation (Stand-By agreement) approuvé en juin 2013. Pour financer l'AMF, l'UE emprunte des fonds sur les marchés internationaux de capitaux. L'assistance financière est ensuite octroyée à des conditions similaires au pays bénéficiaire.

L'AMF repose sur la mise en œuvre d'un programme de réformes par le pays bénéficiaires qui font l'objet d'un protocole d'accord.

De quelle assistance macro-financière la Tunisie bénéficie-t-elle déjà?

L'Union européenne (UE) et les autorités tunisiennes ont signé une première convention de prêt assorti d'un protocole d'accord pour une assistance macro-financière à la Tunisie (AMF) pour un montant total de € 300 millions en septembre 2014.

L'assistance est destinée à aider la Tunisie à progresser dans ses réformes économiques tout en soutenant ses efforts de réforme politique. Par conséquent, l'AMF est liée à la mise en œuvre par la Tunisie d'un certain nombre de mesures économiques, décrites dans le Protocole d'accord. [Ce premier programme a permis de soutenir la mise en œuvre d'un agenda de réforme ambitieux dans les domaines suivants: la gestion des finances publiques](#) : la fiscalité avec des mesures visant à améliorer la collecte de l'impôt et à améliorer la progressivité de l'impôt; des réformes visant la protection sociale, le secteur financier; et des mesures visant à améliorer le cadre réglementaire pour le commerce et l'investissement.

Cette aide financière, sous forme d'un prêt à moyen terme, a donné lieu à deux [déboursements](#) d'un montant de 100 millions d'euros chacun en 2015. Une troisième et dernière tranche de l'aide, d'un montant équivalent, doit être versée cette année, si les conditions sont remplies.

Quelle [assistance macro-financière supplémentaire](#) a proposé la Commission le 12 février?

Les attentats terroristes perpétrés en 2015, et les défis en termes de sécurité qui en découlent, ont gravement ébranlé l'économie tunisienne, affectant des secteurs clés comme le tourisme et les transports. Ceci a conduit à une forte révision à la baisse des projections de croissance pour 2015 et ont exacerbé les vulnérabilités de la balance des paiements. L'AMF de l'Union européenne couvrirait donc une partie des besoins de financement extérieurs de la Tunisie en 2016 et 2017, tout en facilitant les réformes destinées à redresser la balance des paiements et la situation budgétaire ainsi qu'à l'amélioration du climat d'investissement. La convergence réglementaire avec l'UE serait également favorisée.

Le 12 février 2016, à la demande de la Tunisie et après avoir conduit une évaluation ex ante, la Commission a proposé une assistance macro-financière (AMF) supplémentaire à la Tunisie, d'un montant maximal de 500 millions d'euros. Cette aide devrait également revêtir la forme de prêts à moyen terme. [Cette proposition](#) doit être approuvée par le Parlement européen et le Conseil selon la procédure législative ordinaire.

Coopération commerciale de l'Union européenne avec la Tunisie

La Tunisie a été, en juillet 1995, le premier pays méditerranéen à signer un [accord d'association](#) avec l'Union européenne. L'élimination des droits de douane conformément à l'Accord a été achevée en 2008, ce qui a permis la création d'une zone de libre-échange, la première à être établie entre l'Union européenne et un partenaire méditerranéen. Le 13 octobre 2015, l'Union européenne a entamé à Tunis les négociations pour un accord de libre-échange approfondi et complet qui s'appuiera sur la Zone de libre-échange déjà existante suite à l'Accord d'Association Euro-Méditerranéen. L'objectif de l'accord est l'amélioration des opportunités d'accès au marché et des conditions d'investissement, ainsi que le soutien aux réformes économiques en cours en Tunisie. Le premier volet des négociations a eu lieu en octobre 2015. Une fois achevé, s'appuiera sur la zone de libre-échange déjà existante, qui a pour base l'accord euro-méditerranéen d'association signé il y a 20 ans mais qui porte essentiellement sur le commerce des biens. Le montant total approximatif des échanges commerciaux pour 2014 atteint les 20 milliards d'euros. Les principales importations de l'Union européenne en provenance de la Tunisie consistent surtout en machines et équipements de transport (38,1%), produits textiles et d'habillement (24,9%), carburants et produits miniers (14%). Les exportations de l'Union européenne vers la Tunisie se composent principalement de machines et équipements de transport (34,9%), carburants et produits miniers (14,4%), ainsi que de produits textiles et d'habillement (12,4%) et de produits chimiques (7,7%).

Un meilleur accès pour l'huile d'olive

L'Accord d'Association Euro-Méditerranéen, signé en 1995, comprend un quota annuel hors taxes pour l'exportation d'huile d'olive de Tunisie vers l'UE de 56 700 tonnes. La Commission s'est toujours engagée à soutenir le gouvernement tunisien et ses citoyens ainsi que la reprise de la croissance économique tunisienne et à approfondir ses relations avec ce pays. Dans cette optique, nous avons proposé en septembre 2015, sur une initiative des ministres européens des affaires étrangères, de supprimer la limite mensuelle des exportations d'huile d'olive tunisienne vers le marché européen et d'accorder 35 000 tonnes supplémentaires hors taxes par an sur une période de deux ans (2016-2017) pour ce même produit. L'huile d'olive est la première exportation agricole de la Tunisie et représente près de 33% des exportations totales de la Tunisie vers l'Union Européenne. Plus d'un million de tunisiens travaillent de manière directe ou indirecte pour le secteur de l'huile d'olive. Ces deux mesures – la suppression de la limite mensuelle d'exportation et l'augmentation des quotas- permet dès lors de diminuer considérablement les lourdeurs administratives pour les autorités tunisiennes et de soutenir de manière significative la balance commerciale de ce pays.

Partenariat avec la BEI

Depuis 2011, la BEI a signé des opérations de financement d'un montant total de 1.3 milliards d'euros pour la mise en œuvre de nouveaux projets dans des secteurs clés de l'économie tunisienne, comme l'énergie, les PME, les infrastructures, l'éducation et le logement social. En 2015, les prêts de la BEI à la Tunisie s'élevaient à 200 millions d'euros.

Récemment, on peut citer comme [projet d'investissement-clé](#) pour le pays, «ETAP», un projet concernant le gaz tunisien du Sud (380 millions d'euros), qui a été signé en 2014. Le projet prévoit le développement d'un vaste gisement de gaz naturel («NAWARA») dans le Sud, d'un gazoduc de 370 km et d'une unité de traitement des gaz à Gabès.

En ce qui concerne les PME, la Banque [a accordé](#) une ligne de crédit de 50 millions d'euros à AMEN BANK en partenariat avec le Réseau Entreprendre pour soutenir les entreprises tunisiennes à vocation industrielle ou commerciale.(EC 12-02-2016

CABO VERDE SEEKS FINANCING FOR INVESTMENT FUND IN LUXEMBOURG

Cabo Verde (Cape Verde) next week in Luxembourg plans to present Fundo de Investimentos Afro-Verde 1 (African Green Investment Fund 1), a partnership between the government and the private sector to finance projects in the northern part of the archipelago, the Prime Minister announced recently. Cited by Cape Verdean press, José Maria Neves said the Afro-Verde 1 was the first large fund to finance economic projects in the region, which includes the islands of Santo Antão, São Vicente and São Nicolau.

The Prime Minister also mentioned the possibility in the coming months of creating Fundo de Investimentos Afro-Verde 2 to finance two projects in the south of the archipelago.

The Afro-Verde 1 will be presented during the Cabo Verde-Luxembourg Economic Forum Cape Verde, chaired by Prime Minister José Maria Neves, accompanied by a delegation including the Minister of Tourism, Investment and Business Development, Leonesa Fortes. (12-02-2016)

WOMEN AND YOUTH AT THE FOREFRONT OF FORUM ON SOUTH-SOUTH AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION

The African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), supported by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP), have wrapped up a symposium pledging to build new partnerships to empower women and youth.

The two-day event saw governments, civil society, private sector and development partners debate the key issues of jobs and entrepreneurship, with a special focus on how the mechanisms of South-South and Triangular Cooperation can help bring about change in developing countries across the ACP region and beyond.

“African, Caribbean and Pacific countries have a long history of collaboration in various fields, including under the ACP-EU partnership framework. We are excited to share these experiences, and to highlight the added value of South-South and Triangular Cooperation in enhancing inclusivity, diversity, innovation and genuine partnerships,” said Patrick Gomes, Secretary General of the ACP Group of States.

Participants examined key areas including the development of skills, enhancing institutional capacities, improving access to technology, land and efficient business services.

FAO is a longstanding facilitator of South-South and Triangular Cooperation – which sets a broad framework for collaboration among developing countries based on the concept of solidarity that breaks the traditional dichotomy between donors and recipients.

“FAO is very pleased about this partnership with the ACP, and is eager to work together to deliver results under the 2030 Agenda – under which all member countries pledged to leave no one behind. Without partnership no one will succeed. What we need is concrete action to support women and youth who are too often the ones left behind. Through South-South collaboration each ACP country has something to bring and share so we can accelerate real change for women and youth,” said Laurent Thomas, Assistant Director-General for Technical Cooperation and Programme Management at FAO. With more than 85 percent of young people living in developing countries, expanding national and regional policies and interventions on youth employment is considered essential.

“When you empower women you empower a community, a nation, humanity. If we are to combat poverty we have to guarantee that women have rights to land and access to technology and skills. Women should be part of policy making processes,” said Michaëlle Jean, Secretary General of the OIF. She went on to stress that young people are critical actors in development and called for groups to work together for concerted action.

“The youth development sector is a prime area for South-South Cooperation. Young People are dynamic, collaborative, and more globalized than ever before. We need to recognize them not just as beneficiaries, but as important drivers of development and agents of change,” said Katherine Ellis, Director of the Youth Division at the Commonwealth Secretariat.

“At the CPLP, South-South and Triangular Cooperation have already proved they play a role in areas such as food security and nutrition, health and in the fight against child labour,” said Manuel Clarote Lapao, Head of the Organization’s Cooperation Department.

Development agencies and countries including Benin, Mali, Mozambique and Uganda introduced their initiatives and projects at the symposium, as a catalyst to discussions on how similar techniques can be introduced elsewhere in the world to help combat hunger and improve rural livelihoods.

Among them were the ACP’s COLEACP Programme – a model which has been widely credited with bolstering trade to support smallholder farmers across Africa, the Caribbean, Europe and the Pacific. Through it, small horticultural businesses from these regions are actively promoting sustainable trade and poverty alleviation.

A joint initiative implemented by four UN agencies and national partners shared lessons on promoting rural women’s economic empowerment, through providing them with access to knowledge and skills in simple ways such as using solar powered radios to connect communities. The programme spans seven countries and is working with 75,000 rural women.

FAO presented the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools. The project, which was launched in 2003, is now in place in over 20 countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East – providing support to over 25,000 young women and men. Food security in these countries has improved and rural poverty rates have dropped.

Groups at the symposium agreed on an action plan to ensure that other ACP countries benefit from the shared experiences and best practices to fulfill their targets in line with the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including two key objectives to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls, as well as to promote decent work and economic growth. (ACP Secretariat 13-02-2016)

57 MILLION NIGERIANS NOW HAVE ACCESS TO FINANCIAL SERVICES

The Bankers Committee of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has said 57 million Nigerians, which represent 66 percent of the population, now have access to financial services.

The Director, Banking Supervision Department (CBN), Mrs. Tokunbo Martins, made this known on Thursday night in Abuja at the end of the committee's meeting.

"One of the major issues we discussed is the issue of financial inclusion. It is very important for 170 million Nigerians to have some form of access to financial services and so I am happy to report that there has been substantial improvement.

"You know a couple of years back, the number of Nigerians financially included was at 40 percent, but currently we have 66 percent of Nigerians financially included which is about 57 million Nigerians. According to her, the target of 68.5 percent is expected by the end of December 2016 and so that if it is achieved, the bank would have gone a long way in alleviating the sufferings of Nigerians

Martins said the North East region remained the most challenging area when it comes to financial inclusion.

She said the CBN would deploy more resources to the region to increase the level of financial inclusion.

Martins also said that within the last few months, the country had witnessed a significant increase in the demand for foreign exchange for payment of school fees and medical bills abroad.

She explained that the development was currently crowding out the demand for foreign exchange in the real sector such as manufacturing, agriculture, solid minerals among others.

She warned that if left unchecked, the trend could affect the banking sector's objective of stimulating the

real sector of the economy through the provision of foreign exchange to productive sectors of the economy. (APA 12-02-2016)

NIGERIA: MTN FINE - GOVERNMENT SETS CONDITIONS FOR TALKS

The Nigerian government wants MTN to pay a portion of the fine before talks can resume.

The government of Nigeria has called on MTN to make a down payment as a “show of good faith” before the mobile operator’s proposal for an out of court settlement will be considered, this according to a report in [Nigeria Communications Week](#).

Mr. Adebayo Shittu, Minister of Communication, said in Lagos that the federal government will not reenter negotiations with MTN until a substantial portion of the N780 billion fine is paid as an act of good faith.

Shittu said: “When MTN came, we understood their pleas. However, we added that if you cannot meet up with the fine, you have to add your account details to show that upon paying, your company will collapse. They are yet to respond on that. The next thing was for me to get a call that they are going to court. And now, they are coming back for out of court settlement. We don’t want MTN to die; rather, we want them to obey the law.”

The minister averred that MTN initially acknowledged the registration default and pleaded for leniency. Subsequently, President Buhari reduced the fine from N1.04 trillion to N780 billion.

A Lagos court has given MTN until March 18, 2016 to settle the matter out of court . (IT News Africa 07-02-2016)

SWAZILAND: LABOUR UNIONS THREATEN CHAOS AT PARLIAMENT OPENING

In a bid to force the government to release a salary review report, civil servants vow they will cause havoc during the opening of Parliament Friday, APA reports here on Thursday.

The unions, under the Trade Unions Congress of Swaziland (TUCOSWA), say the delay by the government to give them the report that was compiled four months ago is a sign that the government wants to tamper with it in a way that will suit the government.

“We will march to parliament and demonstrate there before holding our meeting to find a way forward,” says Quinton Dlamini, the President of TUCOSWA.

The Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Public Service, Evert Madlopha, who was also chief negotiator with the unions, told the local media that he was surprised the unions were planning to deliver yet another petition to Parliament after the one that they delivered to the ministry two weeks ago.

He said the government negotiations team is still in consultation with the cabinet.

The police have however assured that there will be peace during the event, which will be King Mswati III’s first national and public assignment after his two-month seclusion.(APA 11-02-2016)

NORWAY: 16TH OF FEBRUARY: CONFERENCE ON INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS & DEVELOPMENT

NABA founding members Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO), Innovation Norway, Norfund and Veiledningskontoret welcome you to the "Conference on International Business & Development" at NHO on the 16th of February. Key speakers include Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Børge Brende, Yara International CEO Mr. Svein Tore Holsether and NHO's Director General Ms. Kristin Skogen Lund. There will be a panel conversation between Norad's new Director General Mr. Jon Lomøy, Norfund's Managing Director Mr. Kjell Roland and Innovation Norway's CEO Ms. Anita K. Traaseth. NABA members DNV GL, Akva Group and SunErgy will be presented in a session on "commercial interests meeting development needs". Member of the NABA board and CEO of Mester Grønn AS, Mr. Erling Ølstad, will take part in a panel discussion with Civita Director Ms. Kristin Clemen, Norwegian Redcross President Mr. Svein Mollekleiv and Mr. Olav Peter Hypher from Statkraft. NABA member Basecamp Explorer and Managing Director Mr. Svein Wilhelmsen will present the positive outcomes of an investment in tourism, and there will also be a session on Nordic finance instruments with presentations from Norad, IFU and NEFCO. See complete program and register from this link: <http://www.innovasjon Norge.no/nkiu/> (NABA 20-02-2016)

NIGERIA SET TO DEPLOY ELECTRONICS DEVICES TO MONITOR BORDERS

Nigeria has resolved to deploy electronic devices in all its borders to check worrisome influx of illegal immigrants.

The Minister of Interior, Retired. Lt.-Gen. Abdul-Rahman Dambazau, said that most of the internal security challenges in Nigeria bothered on "accessibility and availability of weapons and drugs" which, according to him, were aided by the porosity of the borders.

"The porousness of Nigerian borders is a general problem. As I have said it before, it is covering over 5,000 kilometres all round and most of it, unmanned. We are looking into the situation certainly.

"One thing I am very sure of is that we will apply technology in order to monitor all the borders and to also check unnecessary incursion, particularly, those who come in here with bad intentions.

"Most of the internal security problems we are having have to do with accessibility and availability of weapons, of drugs and that we are going to check.

"If we are able to do that, I am sure that 50 percent of the internal security problems would have been solved," he said. (APA 12-02-2016)

ALGIERS: ENERGY - DEMONSTRATION USES JATROPHA TO PRODUCE RENEWABLE ENERGY

"[JatroMed](#)", a demonstration project supported by the EU which uses the plant *Jatropha curcas* as a means to produce renewable and sustainable energy in the Mediterranean region, has just published a newsletter about its activities in 2015.

With a total budget of EUR 1.82 million, the project is being co-funded (64%) by the EU over a period of 4 years.

The *Jatropha curcas* plant has notable energy potential and could be used for the production of renewable energy through joint initiatives in Egypt, Morocco, and Algeria. (EU Delegation - Algiers 10-02-2016)

http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/algeria/documents/press_corner/2016/4th_jatromed_newsletter.pdf

NAMIBIA'S OPPOSITION LEADER CALLS FOR BUILDING OF UNDERGROUND WATER RESERVOIRS

Official opposition leader in parliament, McHenry Venaani on Thursday called on the government to urgently look into avenues of channelling or diverting flood water for future use.

Given the scarcity and unreliability of rainfall in Namibia, the DTA of Namibia leader said it is imperative that the maximum output possible is extracted from whatever rainfall that is received, even if in the form of floods.

We submit that it is high time that government looks into building underground water reservoirs throughout the country in drought prone areas so that this water can be utilised for irrigation and thereby contribute towards greater food security, Venaani said in a statement.

He made the call in reference to the current flooding in the Omusati region, north of the country, which has washed away homesteads, crop fields and left hundreds displaced.

It is no longer acceptable for Namibia to continually be caught by surprise by the same weather patterns and it is thus time that we evolved into a country that seeks to not only cope better with natural disasters like floods and droughts, but that is generally in a state of readiness for such eventualities and is able to minimise damage and extract the maximum output possible from such events, particularly in the case of floods, and this can be done by building underground water reservoirs, said the opposition politician. (APA 11-02-2016)

NIGERIA MAY STOP PROVIDING FOREX FOR SCHOOLING, MEDICAL BILLS ABROAD

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) says very soon, it would no longer give foreign exchange to Nigerians seeking to use it to pay school fees and medical bills abroad.

The CBN observed that school fees and medical bills constituted about 15 percent of Nigeria's forex demand.

The CBN said after the bankers' committee meeting in Abuja that it would be focusing on releasing forex to the manufacturing sector, which would in turn grow the Nigerian economy.

Tokunbo Martins, the director of CBN banking supervision department, told journalists in Abuja the pain would be temporal and that it would drive real growth in the nearest future.

"It is something that affects all of us, and I think that the watchword is belt tightening. It is pain we may need to go through today, so that there will be long term development in the country," she said.

"If you think about it, the pressure on forex now from school fees abroad is significant. The pressure from medicals are significant. At what point should we begin to look inward? As Nigerians, we also need to be patriotic in terms of our sentiments," she added.

According to her, the committee plans to divert such medical and school fees forex to boosting manufacturing in Nigeria. (APA 12-02-2016)

MEDITERRANEAN: DRAMATIC FISH STOCK DECLINE THREATENING MARITIME ECONOMY

Mediterranean fish stocks are in decline, and the situation is becoming "dramatic", European Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Karmenu Vella said Tuesday at a high-level seminar on the "Status of the Stocks in the Mediterranean".

The seminar was held on 9-10 February in Catania (Sicily). In his opening speech, the Commissioner said that the decline in fish stocks is posing a threat to the maritime economy.

The Commissioner said that “the facts are undisputed: some stocks are on the verge of depletion. All in all, 93% of the fish stocks assessed are over-exploited”.

The problem not only concerns the north shore of the Mediterranean. He noted that “some of the stocks are shared with neighbouring countries”. He plans to “discuss the management of those stocks with our partners, and work to get their political support” on a joint conservation programme. The Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) “gives Member States the opportunity to act together in regional groups to manage their shared resources”.

Vella hopes to bring together ministers from all Mediterranean countries at the international Seafood Expo Global exhibition in Brussels in April. “In addition I will be travelling to several key partnering countries to seek their engagement, explore solutions, and assess the many opportunities the blue economy can offer”. (EC 09-02-2016)

ETHIOPIA ESTABLISHES A TASKFORCE TO PREVENT ILLEGAL MIGRATION

Ethiopia has established a taskforce that helps to prevent illegal migration, the country’s Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has said in a statement on Thursday.

The taskforce, comprising members from various governmental and non-governmental organizations, is tasked to implement the law against illegal migration and manage the full implementation of the country's law, the statement said.

Moreover, the taskforce is responsible to prevent crimes, create awareness, and rehabilitate victims as well as to provide psychological and social supports at a national level.

Ethiopia is one of the eastern African countries whose thousands citizen migrate South Africa, Europe and United States in illegal way. (APA 11-02-2016)

AFREXIMBANK URGES INCREASED AFRICAN PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACTIVE SECTOR

The President of the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), Dr. Benedict Oramah, has said that Africans must increase their participation in the continent’s natural resource sectors in order to boost the amount of rent accruing to the continent from its abundant resources, create employment and heighten the developmental impact on national economies.

Speaking at a reception organized by the Orion Group during the International Petroleum Week in London, Oramah said: “It is mind boggling for a continent that accounts for more than 10 percent of total global oil reserves to only receive less than 3 percent of the over \$3 trillion global oil revenue.”

A statement by Afreximbank quoted Oramah as saying that although Africa accounts for about 50 percent of global gold production, its export receipts from the precious metal amounted to less than 4 percent of the more than \$300 billion global gold export earnings.

Recognising the urgent need to address this disparity, Afreximbank was working to support the emergence of strong African Champions to lead the economic transformation of the continent and that the Bank had designed a special African Content Support Programme to facilitate the active involvement of African entities in the natural resource supply chains across the continent.

According to him, the programme provides financing to African entities in their bidding, acquisition of concessions or service contracts in key extractive industries and participation in the trading of the commodities.

Commending the Orion Group for being the largest wholly-owned African oil trading company, the President said that the company was an example of an African-owned entity making a big difference.

He added that Afreximbank extended support amounting to some \$1 billion to its operations in Africa through the Bank's syndicate partners.

Afreximbank's other recent financing transactions in the natural resources sector include a \$663-million syndicated reserve base lending facility for Eroton for the acquisition of an oil mining lease in Nigeria and a \$65-million facility to El Sewedy Electric for the purchase of payment instruments. (APA 12-02-2016)

AFRICAN UNION'S SOMALIA MISSION HIT BY EU FUNDING CUT

The African Union (AU) has criticised the EU's decision to cut funding for its peace-keeping mission in Somalia by 20% at a time when it is entrenched in a deadly battle with terrorist militants.

The AU has been sending task forces to Somalia for the last nine years to combat al Qaeda's affiliate group in the country, Al Shabaab, in an attempt to liberate the region. Currently, 22,000 troops are deployed there under the mandate of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

The European Union bears much of the costs of the mission, which is composed of troops seconded from the military forces of Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda and Burundi. AMISOM soldiers are supported with some \$200 million a year by the EU following a European Parliament Resolution. The EU is the biggest donor involved in the peacekeeping mission.

However, according to the AU, Brussels intends to cut this support by 20%. At a meeting held in Addis Ababa at the end of last month, [AU leaders expressed their concerns](#) about what impact a drop-off in funding could have.

"As you are all aware the European Union made the decision to cut the allowances to the uniformed personnel of the Mission by 20%, starting in January 2016," said Ambassador Francisco Caetano José Madeira, head of AMISOM.

"This measure will no doubt affect the personnel who are making the ultimate sacrifice in service of Africa. Especially now, when more is expected of AMISOM. It is my view that we should pursue various funding mechanisms to sustain the current support for AMISOM," he added.

The Al-Shabaab militant group has been active in Somalia for a number of years and wants to establish an Islamic theocracy. They are believed to be behind a suicide bombing that downed an airliner last week. AMISOM is the only peacekeeping mission in Somalia to currently support the internationally-recognised government, but the EU's decision to cut its funding will mean that soldiers' pay will drop from \$828 a month to less than \$165.

Brussels' penny-pinching comes at a time when Al-Shabaab forces are rallying and looking to take strategic positions in Somali cities. Their latest offensive against AMISOM forces was launched in El Ade, near the Kenyan border, resulting in more than 100 casualties. The militants also took several hostages. The group also captured the historic city of Marka just three days ago.

"We have to understand that war is expensive. The war on terror has moved to Africa and it is here to stay. That is why we must be ready to pay its costs," Professor Derrick Muasya, a researcher and expert in sub-Saharan conflicts, told EurActiv.

"It's a difficult balancing act for the African Union, which has a lot to do if it is to stop the spread of terrorism and it has only limited resources to do it with. Therefore, the AU is going to have to chase other resources to fund this war, which is going to last a long time," Muasya said.

According to Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson of the AU, the war in Somalia costs the governments behind the mission \$45 million a month.

"It would be even more costly if the AU withdrew its troops from Somalia. This would mean that Al-Shabaab had won and terror would spread unchecked. The 20% cut in EU funding forces the AU to

develop a serious and long-term funding strategy, with the aim of bringing this war to a more cost-effective and swift resolution," Professor Muasya added.

Background

On 16 September 2013, the EU and Somalia jointly launched what they called 'A new deal for Somalia' at a Brussels event, involving a pledge of €650 million in aid.

One year before, a new Somali parliament had elected Hassan Sheikh Mohamud as President, ending a phase of a transitional federal government with a view to finalising a new constitution before elections planned for 2016.

The New Deal is based on principles agreed at the High-Level Forum for Aid Effectiveness in Busan in 2011, consisting of: 1) sectoral top priorities following five peace and state building goals, 2) partnership principles and 3) implementation and monitoring arrangements.(EurActiv 10-02-2016)

BOTSWANA RANKED 30 IN INDEX FREEDOM FROM 186 COUNTRIES

The 2016 "Index of Economic Freedom" has rated Botswana among the world's freest economies with an overall ranking of 30 out of 186 surveyed jurisdictions with an improved score of 71.1, APA learnt here Thursday.

Botswana's latest score places the country above the majority of European Union member states as well as many others economically advanced, OECD, states.

Published on an annual basis since 1995 by The Heritage Foundation and its global partners the Index of Economic Freedom seeks to track the progress of economic freedom around the globe while documenting the powerful positive impact of advancing economic liberty.

With specific reference to Botswana, the 2016 report notes that: Botswana's economy has been diversifying, largely because of foreign investment attracted by low taxes, political stability, and an educated workforce. The country continues to set an example in the management of large endowments of natural resources. The level of corruption is the lowest in Africa. An independent judiciary enforces contracts effectively and protects property rights.

The report further notes that the overall freedom to establish and run a business is relatively well protected. With a one-stop shop for entrepreneurs in place, opening a business is easy and straightforward. The mismatch between labour market demand and the supply of skilled workers continues. Government-administered prices for electricity and water have risen, but the IMF reported that total grants and subsidies amounted to less than 7 percent of GDP in 2015.(APA 11-02-2016)

The Memorandum is supported by the ACP-African, Caribbean, Pacific Secretariat, Chamber of Commerce Tenerife, AHEAD-GLOBAL, ELO - Portuguese Association for Economic Development and Cooperation, Hellenic-African Chamber of Commerce and Development, HTTC - Hungarian Trade & Cultural Centre, NABA - Norwegian-African Business Association, NABC- Netherlands Africa Business Council, and other organisations.

The Memorandum is also made available by AHEAD-GLOBAL, Chamber of Tenerife (by posting it at the Africa Info Market), CCA - Corporate Council on Africa (USA), ELO,HTTC ,NABA,NABC (by posting selected news) to their Members.



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