MEMORANDUM

N° 50/2016 | 07/03/2016

The Memorandum is issued daily, with the sole purpose to provide updated basic business and economic information on Africa, to more than 4,000 European Companies, as well as their business parties in Africa.
More than 1,556 Memoranda issued from 2006 to end of 2015. More than 18,350 pages of Business Clips issued covering all African, European Institutions and African Union, as well as the Breton Woods Institutions. The subscription is free of charge, and sponsored by various Development Organisations and Corporations.
Should a reader require a copy of the Memoranda, please address the request to fernando.matos.rosa@sapo or fernando.matos.rosa@skynet.be.

2006 – 2015, 9 Years devoted to reinforce Europe – Africa Business and Development

Due to Technical Improvement works The Memorandum will be issued irregularly until the 11-03-2026. We will catch up with the African News flow.

SUMMARY

MEDITERRANEAN: IMPROVING ECONOMIES THROUGH INNOVATION

“How to develop technologies in Middle-Eastern and North African countries? Whether it’s educational reforms or the fight against corruption, improving the regional economy faces many challenges”, the ‘Forum euroméditerranéen des instituts de sciences économiques’ (FEMISE) said in a statement on its website (posted on Friday 26 February 2016), which tells about the work in progress between its experts and those of the ERF (Economic Research Forum). The two fora have “identified several avenues that could provide new momentum through innovation”, the statement said.

One suggestion is to ensure the “reform of the education system” and, in addition to providing financial aid to businesses, it was suggested that the state needs to intervene in other areas. “It must take down institutional barriers, protect innovators by implementing intellectual property laws and create technology parks”, Jean-Eric Aubert, a specialist in innovation policy advising international organisations and former programme manager at the OECD and World Bank, said in the statement.(FEMISE 29-02-2016)

http://www.femise.org/en/slideshow-en/femise-exploring-innovation-boost-for-southern-mediterranean-economies/

ETHIOPIA LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN FOR UN SECURITY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Ethiopia on Tuesday officially launched a campaign for a Non-Permanent Seat at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the term 2017-2018, APA learns here.

“If elected to the Security Council, Ethiopia will serve all members of the United Nations in discharging the charter–mandated responsibilities bestowed upon it in a true spirit of partnership and transparency,” Ethiopia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Tedros Adhanom said at the official launching of the campaign.

The African Union (AU) during its 26th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Governments held last January endorsed Ethiopia’s candidacy for the election to be held in New York in June.

“Ethiopia has always responded to UN calls for collective action on international peace and security. Since the inception of the United Nations, Ethiopia has deployed over 80,000 military and police personnel to more than ten peacekeeping missions worldwide,” he said.

Currently, Ethiopia is providing the second largest number of troops to the United Nations peacekeeping operations, a total of 8,326 personnel, according to Dr Tedros.

Dr Tedros finally called on the diplomatic community to lobby their respective countries to vote in favor of Ethiopia.

Ethiopia, one of the 51 pioneer countries that founded the United Nations in 1945, served the Security Council for two terms - in 1967 – 1968 and 1989 – 1990. (APA 01-03-2016)

TUNISIA: EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SUPPORTS SOLIDARITY MEASURES TAKEN BY THE COMMISSION

The European Parliament convened on Thursday 25 February 2016 in Brussels and adopted two resolutions regarding relations with Tunisia - one on a plan for exceptional access to the European market for 35,000 tonnes of olive oil per year for a period of two years, and another welcoming the prospect of a ‘deep and comprehensive free trade agreement’ (DCFTA). Both are conceived in a spirit of solidarity and support, at a time when Tunisia is undergoing the challenge of fighting both terrorism and an economic crisis.

“The EU must help Tunisia to succeed”, said Marielle de Sarnez, French Liberal MEP, who is a rapporteur on this subject. “We are responsible for defending the Tunisians and supporting their efforts to consolidate democracy and also, through this agreement, for contributing to their economic development, growth and employment”, she said during a presentation before the vote on the two resolutions.

During the debates, European Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström stressed the importance of these two resolutions: they touch the subject of relations with a ‘privileged partner’ who is about to celebrate the 20th anniversary of its association agreement with the EU. She stated that the framework for negotiations will be ‘asymmetric’ and will be prepared in stages, by introducing mutual listening and by accompanying grants with support measures. Malmström also recalled the commitment made to involve civil society in this negotiation process.(EU Parl. 29-02-2016)

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/20160223IPR15498/MEPs-back-more-duty-free-olive-oil-imports-to-help-Tunisia-but-want-safeguards

BOTSWANA, ZIMBABWE FASTTRACK PRISON EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

The 30th Zimbabwe-Botswana Joint Permanent Commission on Defence and Security has emphasised the need to fast-track the development and adoption of prisoners exchange programme to enable offenders from the two neighbours to finish their prison sentences in their own countries, they said in a joint communiqué on Tuesday.
The commission commended the government of Botswana for eventually agreeing to provide anti-retroviral drugs to foreign prisoners.

The communiqué said in the area of public security, the commission noted with satisfaction the cooperation among departments as they dealt with vices that included smuggling, theft of motor vehicles, cattle rustling, irregular migration, human trafficking, trafficking of precious minerals, drugs and other forms of transnational organised crime.

The commission acknowledged the immense benefits derived by Botswana and Zimbabwe from the five-year joint Foot and Mouth Control Programme that would expire on July 31.

It noted the need to review the current memorandum of understanding on foot and mouth disease cooperation and renew it for a further five-year period.(APA 01-03-2016)

MEDITERRANEAN: EDUCATION AND TRAINING: EBRD-ETF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) affirmed its belief in vocational education and adaptation to technologies through training. Considering this objective, the Bank has just established a ‘strategic partnership’ with the European Training Foundation (ETF), the EU agency for vocational training, to act in countries covered by the ‘Neighbourhood Policy’ and candidates for accession to the EU. Its objectives are detailed in a communication published on the EBRD website on Thursday 25 February 2016.

This partnership will be "expanded in particular in the SEMED region" (South and East Mediterranean). There are projects planned, for example in retail, such as the Mall of Arabia in Egypt or Ayla in Jordan. The ETF should contribute to the improvement of skills in the tourism industry.(EBRD 29-02-2016**)**

http://www.ebrd.com/news/2016/ebrd-helps-create-opportunities-for-young-people-in-partnership-with-european-training-foundation.html

ANGONABEIRO EXPANDS EXPORT MARKETS OF ANGOLAN COFFEE

Angonabeiro has started exporting Angolan Ginga branded coffee to Senegal after being launching exports to the Cape Verdean market, the company said.
The company said that in February it exported about 12 tons of "Café Ginga" to Senegal, after exporting 4 tons of coffee the previous month to Cabo Verde (Cape Verde) at the "beginning of the international expansion of Angolan coffee."
"Café Ginga", along with Delta and Delta Cafes Q, are the three brands of coffee owned by Angonabeiro, a subsidiary of Portuguese group Nabeiro, a leader in the coffee market in Portugal, Angola and Mozambique.
In 2015 the Portuguese group invested about US$1 million in the acquisition of the entire capital of Angolan public company Liangol, which it had managed for 14 years, after having recovered and modernised it.
Liangol, which was decommissioned in 1984, occupies an area of 4 hectares, with areas for storage, roasting and packaging. These facilities are where the Nabeiro group produces and sells 250 tons of coffee (2014) of its own brand Ginga, which is the clear market leader in Angola.
Angola was once the world's fourth largest coffee producer, producing 200,000 tons per year before 1975. Production now stands at less than 5 percent of that amount due to plantations being abandoned as a result of the civil war that followed Angola's independence from Portugal. (04-03-2016)

BARCLAYS AFRICA ISSUES CAUTIONARY AFTER UK PARENT 'EVALUATES OPTIONS'

Barclays Africa on Monday issued a cautionary following an announcement from Barclays plc regarding a potential sale of its shareholding in Barclays Africa Group.

UK-based Barclays plc, which owns 62.3% of Barclays Africa, on Sunday said it continued to evaluate its strategic options in relation to its shareholding in Barclays Africa and expected to update the market at the time of its 2015 full-year results announcement on March 1.
SA's Public Investment Corporation (PIC), which manages about R1.5-trillion in assets on behalf of the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF), told BDlive in January that it was keen to increase its 5.4% stake in Barclays Africa if Barclays wanted to sell down its holding.
A Barclays sell-down is seen as an opportunity for domestic investors to reclaim the banking asset from British control. The PIC is the biggest South African investor in Barclays Africa, with its stake valued at about R6.5bn.
Investment bankers said there were no obvious strategic buyers for the African business.
The value of the stake has fallen in recent months, making the option of steadily selling the stake to institutional investors less attractive.
Barclays Africa Group CE Maria Ramos said the company remained committed to Africa.
"With an independent board and a separate listing on the JSE, we are deeply rooted in Africa and remain firmly in control of our future.

"We continue to be optimistic about our prospects in Africa, where we have a strong franchise with assets of over R1-trillion. We are deeply committed to the success of our continent. Our destiny is in Africa," Ms Ramos said. (BD 29-02-2016)

ANGOLA'S STATE OIL FIRM SAYS ITS DEBT HAS SOARED 41% DUE TO LOWER OIL PRICES

Angola's state oil firm Sonangol said on Thursday the debt it owed to foreign oil companies had risen sharply due to lower oil prices and it expected this year to be "very difficult" as crude prices remained low.

Sonangol's net debt soared 41% year on year in 2015 to 1.24-trillion kwanza ($7.8bn) and revenues plummeted 54% due to suppressed crude prices, the company said in its annual results.

Much of Sonangol's debt is outstanding investment and operational costs owed to foreign oil companies, including Total, Chevron, Exxon Mobil, BP and Eni.

"The results and the company's financial performance will remain under heavy pressure," Sonangol said, adding that some planned investment projects would be placed under review.

Angola's oil production averaged 1.78-million barrels per day last year, up 6%, compared with 2014 and a further slight increase was expected this year, Sonangol said.

Angola, a member of the Organisation of the petroleum exporting countries and Africa's second-largest oil exporter after Nigeria, relies on crude export revenues for more than 90% of foreign exchange revenues.

A year of subdued oil prices has hammered Africa's third-largest economy and Angola's government is in discussions with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund about possible financial assistance. (Reuters 25-02-2016)

STRUGGLING EGYPT LOOKS ACROSS THE SAHARA TO AFRICA'S RICH POTENTIAL

The tourist town of Sharm el Sheikh in Egypt is battling to keep the doors of its hotels and restaurants open. The millions of tourists who normally patronise this picturesque town, which sits between the Red Sea and the Sinai Desert, have dwindled to a trickle after the crash of a Russian airliner with 224 people on board shortly after take-off from this popular holiday resort in October.

Not only are jobs and businesses at stake, the plunge in tourist dollars has exacerbated a serious foreign currency crisis.

Tourism contributes about 13% to Egypt's gross domestic product, and at its peak in 2010, the industry hosted nearly 15-million visitors.

The ailing town was given a boost earlier this month by the arrival of up to a thousand visitors for the Africa 2016 conference, an Egyptian government event designed to revitalise ties with the rest of Africa. Its secondary role was presumably to show the world, or Africans at least, that it is safe to travel there, with Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi hosting four African presidents (from Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Sudan) and Ethiopia's prime minister. The event was incident free but security was tight.

Sisi, battling with the economic legacy of political upheaval, wants to increase trade and investment with African countries. This month's event follows the launch of the Tripartite Free Trade Area, linking three major regional economic trade blocs, at the same venue last year, signalling a real determination to exploit the African market.

While Sisi spoke of the close ties between Egypt and Africa, the age-old question was raised about whether Egypt, along with other countries in North Africa, considers itself to be African, given its closer alignment with the Maghreb region and Europe. However, Egypt has been a member of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (Comesa) since 1998.

Its companies have invested $8bn in African countries to date in sectors including construction, transport, telecommunications, agribusiness and mining.

Egypt, as one of the most sophisticated economies in Africa alongside SA, has a trade balance with the rest of Africa in its favour. In 2014, exports to Comesa states were $2bn and imports only $700m.

SA is not among Egypt’s top five trading partners in Africa, but this may change with the launch of the Tripartite Free Trade Area, which will provide a critical Cape to Cairo trade link.

Egypt’s new interest in Africa is not necessarily good news. The country is aggressive in its trade strategy, while being prone to using nontariff barriers to protect its own industries. For example, East African producers have succeeded in obtaining extra protection from Egypt’s subsidised exports for their domestic products under the new free trade area until next year.

Egyptian-African trade represents just 6.5% of Egypt’s total trade volume. This indicates the size of the opportunity with the rest of Africa that Egypt is obviously keen to exploit now that its politics have become more settled.

Sisi’s human rights record is not in his favour, but this may not be an issue on a continent with serious problems of its own in this regard. However, he seems to be a man on a mission when it comes to the economic fortunes of his country.

His pet project, the $8.2bn Suez Canal expansion project, was completed in a third of the scheduled time. He now hopes to double trade with other African states in the next five years to $10bn.

Talk of Africa’s economic powers tends to focus on Nigeria and SA, and often Kenya. But Egypt’s focus on increasing its status in Africa may change the playing field on the continent in the not too distant future.(BD 25-02-2016)

SWAZILAND SETS ASIDE $6M FOR KING'S AIRCRAFT

Amid a devastating drought situation, the government of Swaziland has allocated $6million from local funds to pay interest of the state aircraft, APA reports on Saturday.
This follows a proposal made under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation on capital expenditure.

Just last month the country's Royal Swaziland Airways revived an airline with the aim to give impetus to the viability and success of the King Mswati III International Airport.

The new aircraft will be used by the King and the Queen Mother on international duties.(APA 05-03-2016)

MAURITIUS AND MADAGASCAR: TWO ISLANDS WORLDS APART

Madagascar and Mauritius are both in the Indian Ocean off the coast of Africa. Both were once French colonies, with language, culture and Francophone systems and institutions.

In Mauritius, the British usurped French rule in 1810, but retained French culture and law. Both islands won independence in the same decade — Madagascar in 1960 and Mauritius eight years later, in 1968.

Yet, the political and economic trajectories of the two countries since independence could not be more different. The contrast is perhaps most stark in their socioeconomic development in the past 40 years.

Today, Mauritius is the most competitive economy in Africa, while Madagascar is facing some of the most daunting development challenges in the region on the back of decades of instability.

Some liken Mauritius to Singapore. With a small population of 1.3-million and the progress it has made in growing from a sugar-based agrarian economy to a financial services hub, Mauritius exhibit traits of an Asian Tiger.

Development economists have studied it as an outlier in the African context. Nobel prize winner Joseph Stiglitz refers to the "Mauritius miracle".

At $10,000, the country boasts a per capita income 10 times the regional average.

But Mauritius is no miracle. Instead, it is an example of concerted choices and decisions to grow and develop through careful planning. Key to this has been a healthy and educated workforce.

With a strong focus on education and healthcare since the 1970s, Mauritius has invested heavily in the social welfare of its citizens and provides free universal education and healthcare.

It now ranks 63 out of 188 countries on the UN Human Development Index, unmatched by any other country in Africa.

Mauritius diversified its economy from a sugar-based monoculture to manufacturing and tourism and, more recently, world-class financial services.

Sustained economic growth, in the same mould of the Asian Tigers, has been crucial. Mauritius's economy grew at 5% for three consecutive decades until 2009. This provided a foundation for economic advancement, industrialisation and, ultimately, a service-based economy, meeting the essentials of broad-based development.

Meanwhile, Madagascar has — as described by a development bank expert — experienced 50 years of decline. The country slipped into economic and political freefall following a coup d'état in 2009, just as the rest of Africa was capturing the world's attention with its so-called rising narrative.

While the rest of the continent was enjoying its best growth decade on record, Madagascar's economic growth was well below its population growth, entrenching serious development implications.

Despite a rich endowment of metals and minerals — it boasts one of the world's largest nickel mines and the largest reserves of sapphires — Madagascar remains one of the least developed countries in the world. Its per capita income stands at a dismal $440 per annum.

But, with yawning inequality, the reality for ordinary Malagasies is even worse. Close to 90% of its 23-million citizens live on less than $2 a day. Health and education are at some of the lowest levels in the world, resulting in one of the poorest performances on the Human Development Index, ranking 154 out of 188.

In terms of aid, where development assistance is determined by performance and provided through incentives, Madagascar receives less than a seventh of the US dollar value development assistance countries such as Mozambique receive from organisations such as the World Bank. This is based on Madagascar's declining performance.

Experts seem to agree that years of poor politics and mis-governance have made Madagascar the worst-performing country that has not been in a state of war or armed conflict in the past few decades.

The implications for business are obvious. Single-factor theorems that suggest a comparative advantage by virtue of natural resources or population size and demographics explain precious little of the internal dynamics that shape and drive economic progress. Not to mention a gross distortion of market potential and inflated expectations around a so-called growing middle class.

Much depends on political decisions, policy choices and the institutions designed to manage them. For example, according to the GIBS Dynamic Market Index 2016, Mauritius is also a much more open and connected market and scores higher than Madagascar on key indicators such as the justice system, red tape and other areas of institutional progress.

The World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index ranks Mauritius at 28 out of 189 countries. Madagascar ranked 163. These measures have proven crucial in attracting investment and driving growth.

Mauritius is a much smaller island with fewer resources and a population a fraction of the size of nearby Madagascar. But, as this story of two islands shows, countries advance as a result of the choices that are made and a real commitment to inclusive growth. This may start with a plan, but requires a long-term commitment to improving the health and education of its people. (BD 29-02-2016)

EAC POSITIONS ITSELF FOR NILE IRRIGATION AND POWER PROJECTS

East African countries are positioning themselves to benefit from irrigation and hydroelectric power projects along the River Nile.

Eleven of 30 of such projects, commissioned under the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), will soon be completed after funding bottlenecks are addressed.

NBI executive director John Nyaoro told *The EastAfrican* that most of the $6 billion projects that have been in development for the past 16 years will be commissioned by 2017.

Mr. Nyaoro said that already, projects worth $1.3 billion are at various stages of implementation while 19 others have been lined up for implementation as soon as funds are made available.

Sourcing funding

The 10 countries sharing the Nile's waters — Kenya, Egypt, Ethiopia, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Burundi — are all involved in the projects.

The ministers in charge of water resources in these countries are working on ways of sourcing funding for the completion of the joint projects that seek to connect countries in the entire basin to clean energy resources for rapid industrialisation.

"One such power connection involves Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and South Sudan and another connects Ethiopia to Sudan," said Mr. Nyaoro.

The interconnections have been made easier by construction of electricity transmission lines to handle the increased wattage. According to Mr. Nyaoro, most of these lines will be commissioned by the end of 2016.

A series of activities have been lined up to celebrate the Nile Basin Initiative.

The initiative came into being on February 22, 1999 and has been expanded in the past 16 years despite funding challenges.

Effects of overfishing

There is also a fisheries project that seeks to mitigate the effects of overfishing on Lakes Edward and Albert under the Lakes Edward And Albert Fisheries and Water Resources Management Project funded by the African Development Bank.

"We want to regulate how Uganda and DRC manage the resources in the two lakes for sustainability. The regulations will deal with piracy and other attacks on fishermen," Mr. Nyaoro said. "Communities that live around the rivers that are at the risk of destruction are also being given alternative means of earning a livelihood through beekeeping, fish ponds and dairy farming."(BD 29-02-2016)

The NBI is also installing technologies that give early warnings for floods and droughts.
Mutaz Musa Salim, chairman of the Nile Council of Ministers, said all states must make a commitment towards mobilisation of resources to support the joint ventures.

"We still have a gap in funding, since only $1.3 billion of the required $6 billion has been received. This threatens the sustainability of the projects. We must now do more by engaging NBI's traditional and non-traditional development partners," said Mr Salim, who is the Sudanese Minister for Water Resources, Irrigation and Electricity.(East Africa 29-02-2016)

MOROCCO, EU TO JOINTLY APPEAL EUROPEAN COURT RULLING

Morocco and the European Union (EU) have decided to jointly appeal the ruling of an European Court ruling invalidating their farm trade accord with Rabat, the EU high representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini said.

The EU lodged an appeal last week against a European Court decision announced on December 10 to void the trade deal with Morocco in response to a suit filed by the Polisario Front, which wants independence for the Moroccan-controlled territory.

Ms. Mogherini made the remarks on Friday in Rabat, during a press briefing after a meeting with Morocco's minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Salaheddine Mezouar.

Stressing that the European Council "disagree" with the court verdict, Mogherrini said she had provided the necessary clarifications and assurances to Morocco with which they will work in partnership.

She describes talks with Salaheddine Mezouar as "frank, constructive and inclusive", which took place in "an atmosphere of mutual respect," and have allowed the EU to note "the serious situation" and stop on "the important communication gap and the additional risks that this contains the necessary confidence to the serenity of the partnership between the two parties."

While commending the frank, construction and inclusive discussion with the EU official, Mezouar denounced the decision of the European Court, describing it as "legally erroneous and politically biased," and must be corrected."

The EU and Morocco have struck agreements allowing duty-free quotas for agricultural products such as tomatoes and granting access for European vessels to fish in Moroccan waters in return for financial assistance. (APA 29-02-2016)

SIERRA LEONE TO BENEFIT FROM US ANT-MALARIA INITIATIVE

The Sierra Leonean government has hailed the inclusion of the country into an anti-malaria program run by the White House, according to a statement by the Ministry of Health and Sanitation on Monday.

The White House last week announced that it had included Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast and Cameroon into the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), which seeks to eradicate the parasitic disease in Africa and Asia.

The PMI is a bi-partisan effort initiated by former United States President George W. Bush and it intends to reduce the burden of malaria in Africa and Southeast Asia. It intends to have nearly 70 million more at-risk people have access to insecticide-treated nets, anti-malarial drugs, and other interventions.

The announcement comes as President Barrack Obama submitted a budgetary request for an additional $200 million for the initiative.

This, the White House said, will bring its total funding requested to $874 million for the next fiscal year, representing a 30 percent increase from what it had for this year.

"The inclusion of Sierra Leone in the PMI will be a realization of the request by President Ernest Bai Koroma during a White House meeting in 2013 with President Obama," the ministry said in the statement.(APA 01-03-2016)

ZIMBABWE COURT ALLOWS DIAMOND MINER TO RESUME WORK IN MARANGE FIELDS

A Zimbabwean court has allowed the largest diamond mine in the Marange fields to return and assume control of all assets after challenging the government's order to stop mining operations.

Zimbabwe's mining minister on February 22 ordered all nine companies operating in the diamond fields in the east of Zimbabwe near Mozambique to stop mining and leave because their licences had expired.

Mbada Diamonds, a 50-50 venture between the government and Mauritius-registered Grandwell Holdings, on Monday won a reprieve from the high court, which ruled that Mbada should have full control of its assets.

In the interim judgment seen by Reuters on Tuesday, the ministry of mines was ordered to let Mbada's security personnel have access to the company's mining site in Marange.

"As a contingency plan pending the hearing of this matter ... (minister of mines) shall allow such security personnel full access to all the relevant premises thereat, including residential premises, full access to all the equipment, diamond ore and any other assets," Judge Joseph Mafusire said.

A full hearing on whether Mbada could resume mining will be held on Wednesday.

Mines and Mining Development Minister Walter Chidhakwa said the government, through the attorney-general, would launch an appeal on Tuesday, which would automatically suspend Monday’s ruling.
"We believe in the original position that we took and we stand by that decision. The attorney-general will launch an appeal this morning," said Mr. Chidhakwa.
Mbada wants the court to remove the ministry of mines from its concession and force the government to renew its licence.
Analysts say the latest move by President Robert Mugabe’s government could further tarnish the country’s image as a risky investment destination, with investors already unnerved by Mr. Mugabe’s drive to force foreign-owned firms to sell majority shares to locals. (Reuters 01-03-2016)

UN SUPPORTS CABO VERDE WITH NEW ANNUAL PLAN

The government of Cabo Verde (Cape Verde) and the United Nations signed the annual work plan for 2016, estimated to cost over US$19.4 million, at a ceremony held Monday in Praia, the capital of the archipelago.

The plan, which was signed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jorge Tolentino and the resident coordinator of the United Nations, Ulrika Richardson, intends to follow up the priorities identified in the cooperation strategy of the United Nations with Cabo Verde for the 2012-2017 period.
The resident coordinator of the United Nations told Portuguese news agency Lusa that the plan for 2016 follows the main annual guidelines of growth and poverty reduction, consolidation of democracy and the strengthening of institutions, among others.
Japan, Luxembourg, the European Union, South/South cooperation, Canada and the Global Partnership for Education are some of the partners of this plan. (01-03-2016)

NEW EAC E-PASSPORT TO BE USED FROM JANUARY 2017

East African will begin using new EAC electronic passports from January next year after Heads of State from the member countries launched the international travel document at a Summit held in Arusha, Tanzania, yesterday.

Each member nation will have up to December 2018, to phase out their national passports.

This latest development is further demonstration of progress for the ongoing integration agenda.

The EAC is made up of six member countries. Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi and South Sudan which officially joined the bloc yesterday.

" The Heads of State further directed partner states to undertake awareness creation programmes and other continuous outreach programmes on the new international ea e- passport," reads part of the Communiqué that was issued after the Summit.

The bloc’s new electronic is said to be highly secure and difficult to duplicate when compared to the existing passports.

Electronic passports provide travellers with benefits such as use of automated border clearance or “E-gates", automated issuance of boarding passes, and faster travel arrangements with airlines.

Commenting on the development, John Mirenge, the chief executive officer of RwandAir, said: “That is a very welcome development since it will further ease intra EAC travels. From our perspectives, that is great for sub regional air travel business."

Apart from facilitating fast clearance of travellers at immigration checks, an e-passport's database is enhanced with Automated Fingerprint Verification System (AFIS) that guard against multiple passport issuances to the same person and enhances imposter detection.

An e-Passport is also known as a biometric passport. Biometrics are the unique and measurable physical characteristics of an individual that include face recognition, fingerprints, and iris scans.

An electronic passport looks like the traditional passport, but it contains an electronic chip that is encoded with the same information found on page 2 of the passport – the surname, given name, date of birth as well as sex.

Presidents Paul Kagame, John Magufuli, Yoweri Museveni, and Uhuru Kenyatta of Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya, respectively, attended the Summit while Burundi was represented by Joseph Butore, second Vice-President. South Sudan which has become the EAC's sixth member, was represented by Vice President, James Wani Igga. (New Times 03-09-2016)

EXPERTS WARN OF FAMINE IN SADC REGION

The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET) bulletin for the period February 17-25 has warned of a dire food security crisis in Southern Africa due to the erratic rainfall patterns, The Telegraph newspaper reported here Tuesday.
In a latest food security and weather hazards bulletin, FEWSNET said the 2015/16 drought was the worst ever recorded in the region in 30 years.

FEWSNET warned of significant reductions in crop harvests this year in Botswana, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Lesotho, Zambia, Swaziland and Mozambique due to the erratic rainfall.

"Most countries in the region are likely to experience an extended lean season by at least a month due to the effects of late planting experienced across the region. The start of the green harvest, which normally provides alternative sources of food to most poor households, is expected to start around mid-March compared to the usual February. The main harvest will also likely start in April.

"Regional cereal stocks in some surplus countries is limited. Zambia, which was the highest exporting country in the region last year, is left with exportable stocks of approximately 200,000 MT. The further decrease in exportable stocks in the region will likely result in significant price increases during the peak of the lean season in March, especially in Malawi and Zimbabwe, both deficit countries," FEWSNET said.

The largest precipitation deficits remained concentrated over southern Zambia, central and western Mozambique, southern Malawi and across most of Zimbabwe.

It was also noted that the erratic rainfall patterns had resulted in wilted and damaged maize crops over large portions of South Africa and Botswana. (APA 01-03-2016)

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.

www.acp.int www.aheadglobal.hu www.camaratenerife.com

www.africacncl.org www.elo-online.org www.helafrican-chamber.gr

www.htcc.org.hu www.norwegianafrican.no www.nabc.nl

Fernando Matos Rosa

fernando.matos.rosa@sapo.pt
fernando.matos.rosa@skynet.be