

# MEMORANDUM

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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.

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## **NIGERIA TO SPLIT UP STATE-RUN OIL FIRM**

Nigeria is to break up its state-run oil and gas firm into 30 separate companies, the country's junior oil minister announced, as part of wider plans to overhaul the corruption-ridden operation.

Emmanuel Ibe Kachikwu told an energy conference in Abuja on Thursday that the move was designed to make the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) more efficient.

"For the first time we are unbundling the subset of the NNPC to 30 independent companies with their own MDs," said Mr. Kachikwu, who is also group MD of the NNPC.

"Titles like 'group executive directors' are going to disappear and in their place you are going to have CEOs and they are going to take responsibilities for their titles."

Reform of the NNPC began last year when President Muhammadu Buhari sacked the entire board and appointed Mr. Kachikwu, an experienced oil executive formerly with ExxonMobil.

He has promised to uproot the firm's "anything goes" culture, overhaul opaque practices and warned of sackings for underperformance.

Losses at the NNPC had been reduced from 160-billion naira to 3.0-billion naira by January this year, Mr. Kachikwu told delegates, promising a profit by the end of the year.

Mr. Buhari, who was elected last year on an anticorruption ticket, has vowed to recover what he said were "mind-boggling" sums of money looted from government coffers in previous administrations.

Nigeria is Africa's biggest oil producer and relies on the sector for most of its revenue but the country has been hit hard by the fall in global crude prices since mid-2014.

Mr. Kachikwu said some oil-producing countries would meet in Moscow on March 20 to discuss a way out of the slump. (AFP 04-03-2016)

## **KENYA: DOCTORS DEVELOP SMARTPHONE APP TO DETECT BLINDNESS**

A new smartphone application, which has been dubbed PEEK (Portable Eye Examination Kit), has been developed in order to help address cases of visual impairment among schoolchildren.

Developed by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, in collaboration with Kenyan doctors, PEEK utilises smartphone technology in order to allow doctors to PEEK inside the eye and carry out various tests. These tests according to the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, include visual acuity, colour and lens vision as well as retinal imaging.

When utilising the application, in conjunction with a smartphone, a child's detected impaired vision is showcased on the smartphone's screen. Once diagnosed a parent, or head teacher, will be notified – via SMS – asking them to present the child for treatment.

According to a report via [Business Daily Africa](#), Hillary Rono, the hospital's ophthalmologist and PEEK co-founder stated that: "21,000 school-going children in Trans Nzoia had been screened using PEEK... out of which 900 were found visually impaired and were referred for treatment at the Kitale County Hospital Eye Unit."

In the report, Rono added that: "Out of the 2.5 million people in Trans Nzoia, 80 per cent have eye problems that if not checked would lead to avoidable blindness." He went on to say that five in every 1,000 people in the region are blind. Rono further stated that the disparity between demand for childhood eye services and health personnel was what informed the innovation, which can be used by teachers with minimal training.

The initiative, which has been sponsored by Standard Chartered Bank, is part of its 'Seeing is Believing' initiative. Standard Chartered Bank has since invested \$350,000 in a three-year programme to screen pupils in 350 schools in Trans-Nzoia. This is according to [Ventures Africa](#). (IT News Africa 03-03-2016)

## **ETHIOPIA: REGIONAL BLOC TO LAUNCH ELECTRONIC PASSPORT**

The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is set to launch an electronics passport, which is believed to help ease movement of citizens and strengthen the drive towards regional integration, the regional bloc said in a statement on Friday.

The official announcement about the latest initiative is expected at IGAD's 17th regular assembly underway in Arusha, Tanzania.

Besides its role in bolstering regional unity, the electronics passport is expected to facilitate the movement of citizens in member countries.

The proposed initiative will come into effect in Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi.

It was indicated that the new passport will eventually fully replace the existing national passports. (APA 04-03-2016)

## **CABO VERDE HAS OVER 200 HOTEL UNITS IN 2015**

Cabo Verde (Cape Verde) in 2015 had 226 hotel units in operation, representing a year on year fall of 1.3 percent, reported the National Statistics Institute (INE) of the archipelago.

INE, which Thursday released the results of its annual hotel sector inventory, also said that the hotel units in operation had an accommodation capacity of 10,626 rooms, 18,055 beds and 22,954 places, which represented decreases of 2.0 percent, 0.7 percent and 0.9 percent, respectively compared to 2014.

The island of Santiago, the largest and most populated in the country, stood out with 49 tourist accommodation establishments, which corresponds to 21.7 percent of the total, followed by the islands of Santo Antao with 42, Sao Vicente with 40 and Sal with 28 establishments, representing 18.6 percent, 17.7 percent and 12.4 percent of the country's capacity.

The survey's results revealed that Sao Vicente, with three, was the island that gained the most units in 2015 over the previous year.

Sal was the island with the largest number of rooms, with 47.2 percent of the total, followed by the islands of Boa Vista with 24.7 percent and Santiago with 11.2 percent.

By type of establishment, hotels continued to lead with 75.6 percent of the rooms, inns represented 7.4 percent and bed and breakfasts just 6.7 percent. (04-03-2016)

## **FORECAST FOR LESS RAIN IN KENYA PRESENTS MIXED PICTURE FOR INFLATION OUTLOOK**

Precipitation during Kenya's long rain season starting this month is expected to be low in most parts of the country and poorly distributed, weather officials said, presenting a mixed picture for the inflation outlook.

Weather forecasts in the East African nation — which predominantly relies on rain-fed agriculture — are key in gauging inflation trends.

Kenya's inflation rate slowed to 6.84% year-on-year in February from 7.78% a month earlier. Kenya is the world's leading exporter of black tea, making it a major foreign-exchange earner.

The Kenya Meteorological Department said in its long rains (March-May) outlook that food-growing areas of the Western, Nyanza, Central and Rift Valley areas would have near-normal rain, and it advised farmers to take advantage of the favourable weather.

"The expected late onset and ... poor distribution of the seasonal rainfall is, however, likely to delay planting in most agricultural areas," James Kongoti, the director of KMD said on Wednesday. The weather office said hydroelectric power generation was likely to improve because the Tana River, Turkwel and Sondu Miriu catchment areas would have near-normal rainfall, leading to a significant improvement in water levels at dams, KMD said. KMD also said parts of country's northeastern and eastern provinces, which border on the already drought-prone Somalia and Ethiopia, would receive lower rainfall. (Reuters 02-03-2016)

## **DJIBOUTI LAUNCHES NEW PROJECT FOR EXPORT OF ETHIOPIAN GAS**

President Ismaïl Omar Guelleh of Djibouti on Thursday laid the foundation stone for a new mega-gas project for the export of Ethiopian gas, comprising a natural gas pipeline, a liquefaction plant and an export terminal at Damerjog in Djibouti, APA learns on Friday.

The pipeline project will enable Ethiopia to export gas to China and support socio-economic development across the region.

The new 700 km pipeline will transport up to 12 billion m<sup>3</sup>/y of natural gas from Ethiopia to Djibouti. The liquefaction plant will have capacity to produce up to 10 million tons of liquefied natural gas (LNG) per year after completion of the project.

The project, which will be funded by Chinese firm POLY-GCL Petroleum Group Holdings Ltd, will cost approximately US\$4 billion. Construction work is expected to start shortly and will take three years to complete.

Speaking at the launching ceremony, the Djiboutian Minister of Energy, Ali Mahmoud Yacoub, said: "The mega gas project involves three countries – Djibouti, Ethiopia and China – which have agreed to work together in order to make this project successful and operational as soon as possible.

The foundation stone laying ceremony follows the signing of the Framework Agreement between Djibouti and POLY-GCL in October 2014, the Protocol Agreement between Djibouti and Ethiopia in February 2015.

"Djibouti sits at the crossroads of one of the busiest shipping routes in the world, linking Europe, the Far East, the Horn of Africa and the Gulf. It is a natural gateway for Africa, providing sea, air, rail and road links.

"The new pipeline and associated facilities form part of the government's plan to develop infrastructure across the country and will lead to closer economic ties with Ethiopia.

"This project reinforces Djibouti's position as a commercial and regional economic hub and will expand the capacity of its sea ports. It is also a great opportunity to strengthen the regional integration policy. Indeed, both Djibouti and Ethiopia seek to extend this policy to the energy sector," Yacoub said.

Mr. Barton Yu, Chairman and President of POLY-GCL, said: "This is an important energy project for POLY-GCL Petroleum Group in our endeavor to develop mutually beneficial cooperation with the governments of Djibouti and Ethiopia. It will enhance the well-being of the Djiboutian and Ethiopian peoples, while creating a positive impact on China's energy security."

The mega gas project will become the second major joint energy infrastructure project between Djibouti and Ethiopia. In September 2015, the two countries signed a US\$1.5 billion agreement to construct a 550 km refined petroleum products pipeline linking Djibouti's ports to the Awash terminal in central Ethiopia. Scheduled for completion in 2018, the petroleum pipeline will be built by Black Rhino Group and Mining Oil & Gas Services. (APA 04-03-2016)

## **ETHIOPIA: 4TH INTERNATIONAL COFFEE CONFERENCE KICKED OFF IN ADDIS**

The 4th International Coffee Conference kicked off Monday in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, at the United Nations Conference Center under the theme "Nurturing Coffee and Diversity."

The Conference attracted more than 1,000 international coffee producers, buyers, decision makers, private sector representatives and international agencies.

In his opening remark, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, said Ethiopia is ready to put in place coffee development and marketing system which guarantees the equal benefit of actors in the coffee industry.

Ethiopia, which is the origin of coffee Arabic, is the principal beneficiary from coffee export. Coffee accounts 25 percent of the total export earnings of the country, he said.

Ethiopia and Uganda are the only among the 25 coffee supplying African countries with no decline in coffee productivity; he said, attributing this to the due attention Ethiopia has given to the sector.

According to the Premier, Ethiopia has set a target of becoming the second largest coffee producing country in the world within the coming five to seven years.

Hailemariam expressed his hope that the Conference will discuss on how to solve the many challenges of the coffee industry.

Africa's vulnerability to climate change and coffee price volatility should end, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), Dr Erastus Mwencha, said.

In a related development, some 53 companies and unions engaged in coffee production and processing staged exhibition at the conference. (APA 07-03-2016)

## **MUGABE SAYS HE HAS NO PLANS TO RETIRE FROM OFFICE**

Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe says his successor must be chosen democratically and that his wife will not automatically inherit the role, a warning to feuding members of his Zanu (PF) party that he is still in charge after 36 years in power.

The comments from Africa's oldest leader, now aged 92, are his clearest indication that he wants to be president for life.

In a two-hour interview with state broadcaster ZBC TV late on Thursday he said: "Why successor? I am still there. Why do you want a successor? I did not say I was a candidate to retire." Leaders were elected not appointed, he said.

"In a democratic party, you don't want leaders appointed that way to lead the party. They have to be appointed properly by the people, at a gathering of the people, at a congress." Mr. Mugabe said he was not behind his wife Grace's quick rise within Zanu (PF), which has led to reports that she has plans to succeed her husband.

"Others say the president wants to leave the throne for his wife. Where have you ever seen that, even in our own culture, where a wife inherits from her husband?" Mr. Mugabe said.

The former liberation fighter was chosen in 2014 to lead his party for another five years, automatically becoming the Zanu (PF) presidential candidate for Zimbabwe's 2018 presidential vote.

He would be 99 if he won and completed that term, his last under a new constitution. He also told ZBC TV he wanted to live to 100, that he was fit and still did daily morning exercises.

Zimbabweans follow his health with keen interest and some fear the government could be paralysed and the country riven by instability if he dies without resolving the succession issue.

"I am happy because I am about to reach the age I want. You know the age I want to reach — 100 years. So only eight years remain," Mr. Mugabe said.

Fighting over leadership of a post-Mugabe Zanu (PF) has intensified since late 2014, when Mr. Mugabe accused his deputy, Joice Mujuru, of plotting to oust him, and thus fired her. Ms Mujuru launched a new political party this week.

Mr. Mugabe said Ms Mujuru's party was doomed to fail and that Zanu (PF) was still intact. The in-fighting was "peripheral", he said.

Critics blame Mr. Mugabe for many of the Zimbabwe's problems.

They say his policies, including the seizures and redistribution of white-owned commercial farms, drove one of Africa's most promising economies into an eight-year recession and almost halved output.

In the same interview, Mr. Mugabe said his government would take possession of all diamond operations, a week after his mines minister ordered a halt to mining in the Marange diamond fields.

(Reuters 04-03-2016)

### **DUBAI CONSORTIUM BUILDS HOTEL COMPLEX IN CABO VERDE**

A consortium from Dubai will invest about US\$70 million in construction of a hotel complex on the island of Fogo, Cabo Verde (Cape Verde), called "Aloe Vera Resort & Spa," reported Cape Verdean weekly newspaper A Semana.

The consortium members are investors from Austria, Germany, Italy and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) that Sunday concluded a five-day visit to Cabo Verde and the island of Fogo, during which they presented the project to the municipal authorities.

The newspaper also wrote that construction work for this five-star hotel complex should start this year, with completion scheduled for 2020.

The "Aloe Vera Resort & Spa" will be located between the city of São Filipe and the port of Vale dos Cavaleiros, occupying an area of 150,000 square metres. It will include a 50-room hotel and 100 luxury suites, a "villa" with 50 apartments, several shops and a residential area with 47 modern villas of varied type, as well as a Spa – Wellness and Healthcare Centre – with a covered area of 3,000 square meters.

The investors believe that the development will have great impact on tourism of the island of Fogo, highlighting scientific interests, the potential of which is connected to the active volcano of Cha das Caldeiras. (04-03-2016)

### **NIGERIA OVERHAULS NATIONAL OIL COMPANY**

The state-run Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) is to be unbundled into 30 companies.

Nigeria's Minister of State for Petroleum Resources Ibe Kachikwu said on Thursday that the major overhaul of the company would be made public next week.

Kachikwu said that the NNPC would be unbundled to four or five main operational zones comprising 30 companies to be headed by a director each.

Speaking at the 2016 Annual Oloibiri Lecture Series and Energy Forum organised by Society of Petroleum Engineering (SPE) Nigeria Council, Kachikwu said: "For the national oil company, a lot of work is going on; I am sure some of you have seen the effects.

"But within the next one week, we are going to be announcing some really major overhaul of the system; one that hasn't been done in over 20 years."

According to him, the effect of that will be to quite frankly unbundle the huge company into four to five main operational zones - the upstream, downstream, midstream, refining and of course every other companies that are trending to the venture group.(APA 04-03-2016)

## **TANZANIA FARMERS, PASTORALISTS LAUNCH FORUM TO RESOLVE WATER CONFLICTS**

At a remote village of Itunundu in Iringa, farmers and pastoralists recently met to discuss the best way to share land resources while charting out a strategy to prevent unnecessary fights among themselves. No one in the village ever imagined that this meeting would ever take place as the two groups had for long considered themselves enemies: they often clashed for water and pastures to feed their animals thus causing deaths and loss of property.

But the real story of that rare occasion was that it's possible for rival groups to iron out their differences, thanks to a 'loose' coalition that had been formed.

For decades, farmers and herders in this tiny village nestled in Pawaga division, located 65 km from Iringa region in Tanzania's southern highlands, have been scrambling for water for irrigation and pastures for feeding animals; in the process, triggering deadly conflicts.

Pawaga division is considered one of the bread basket areas of Tanzania where people grow maize, rice and vegetables in the valleys whereas others keep animals in the highlands. Despite a clear demarcation of the areas that are controlled by farmers and those controlled by herders, there have been frequent clashes.

There are now promising signs that hostility between the two groups may be coming to an end, thanks to a new alliance that has brought farmers and herders to the negotiating table. The coalition, which was initiated by Tanzania Natural Resources Foundation (TNRF) – a civil society-based initiative on land-based resources — tries to build an understanding of the political economy of resources-based conflicts and suggest alternative solutions.

Deadly conflicts have been raging in Tanzania for decades as farmers and herders scramble for resources as climate change continues to take its toll. The worst conflict between pastoralists and farmers occurred in December 2000 in Kilosa district, Morogoro region, where 38 farmers were killed. Hostilities re-ignited in 2008 and eight people were killed, several houses set ablaze. Pastoralists, who are considered more affluent than farmers, are often accused of influencing political decisions by bribing local leaders who allow them to let cattle graze in farmland and trample on crops.

Although the government has tried to foil these conflicts by opening up more grazing areas for nomadic pastoralists, analysts say such clashes have persisted. Tanzania has approximately 21 million head of cattle, the largest number in Africa after Ethiopia and Sudan. Livestock's contribution is at least 30 per cent of agricultural gross domestic product. Through the new alliance, farmers and pastoralists in Pawaga often meet and openly talk to find solutions on matters that affect them.

Godfrey Massay, TNRF's land-based investment coordinator, said the 'loose' coalition has been trying to resolve conflicts through discussions where pastoralists and farmers meet and openly express their point of views. "Farmers and herders need to know that there are people who benefit from their conflicts and do not wish to see the conflicts resolved," he told IPS in an email.

Massay said the recurring fights is a symptom of a bigger problem that requires joint efforts to resolve them because they involve externally- driven factors of bigger agricultural and conservation interests. Pawaga division has become the centre of conflicts due to its plains and valleys that attracts competing interests of pastoralists, farmers and wildlife conservation. The division, which borders Ruaha National Park, attracts many herders from neighbouring areas with the number of cattle surpassing 35,000.

A baseline study conducted by TNRF in the area in 2014 revealed that resource-based conflicts in Pawaga are caused by the lack of land use planning, 'green' grabbing, increased large-scale agricultural investments, weak policy, corruption and scepticism toward pastoralism as a viable livelihood option.

While some farmers in the division accuse some of their leaders of harbouring ill-motives against them, other claim that pastoralists have invited their friends from neighbouring districts. "We have identified areas of interest and mutual understanding between the two groups, I don't see any reason why they should keep fighting," said Khalfani Lulimi, a ward councilor at Itunundu.

According to Massay, TNRF separately initiated talks with village leaders, farmers and pastoralists group last year to understand their point of view and establish a common area of interest, Massay said.

Both groups had strong leaders who easily understood a bigger picture of the problems they were facing, thus it was easy for them to agree to work together and develop a joint work plan, TNRF officials said. After months of negotiations, the coalition was officially launched last year after electing leaders and developing rules of conduct as to how they would run their work.

The coalition was then introduced to district authorities and started a close working relationship with village leaders. "This is the first and the only platform that brings together farmers and pastoralists to discuss issues that affect them openly without fear or favour" said Massay.

Barely six months since the alliance's formation, the number of violent clashes have dropped, Pawaga division officials said. "This shows that no matter how deep the conflict is, it can be resolved by just talking" said Donald Mshauri, Iringa district land officer.

The coalition has won confidence from both groups that have agreed to allow pastoralists graze on rice husks after harvesting seasons for a small fee which is payable to the village government. Although this innovation is still in its pilot stage, it has succeeded in eliminating the existing animosity between rival groups, TNRF officials said.

Henry Mahoo, professor of agricultural engineering at Tanzania's Sokoine University of Agriculture, told IPS that in order to resolve tensions between the two groups, a land use plan, which will clearly identify areas under pastoralists' ownership and those controlled by farmers, should be drawn up. "All concerned parties must be involved in the negotiation process, and there must be a forum where farmers and pastoralists openly talk about their problems," he said. (IPS 03-03-2016)

### **FIRST PHASE OF NZETO/SOYO HIGHWAY IN ANGOLA DUE TO BE COMPLETED IN JULY 2017**

The first phase of construction of the Nzeto/Soyo highway, in the province of Zaire, will be completed in July 2017, said an official of the provincial delegation of the Angola Institute of Roads (INEA).

The highway in question is, according to the project, 150 kilometres long and in the first phase will have four lanes, two in each direction, which will be increased to four lanes in each direction in the second phase.

Manuel Diangani, director of the studies division of the provincial delegation, said that the project includes nine bridges with separate parallel lanes, the first of which, built by the Portuguese company Conduril, is almost complete.

The remaining eight bridges are being built by Angolan company Carmon Reestrutora and are 85 percent complete, Diangani said according to Angolan news agency Angop.

The route of the highway was split into three sections of 45, 96 and 8.1 kilometres, which were awarded respectively to CMC, China's Sinohydro and EMCICA – Sociedade Construção Imobiliária de Cabinda, Lda. (04-03-2016)

### **U.S., NIGERIA, CORPORATION LAUNCH \$20M WOMEN'S HEALTH INITIATIVE**

Nigeria, U.S. and General Electric (GE) have jointly launched a \$20 million new mother-and-child health initiative to expand access to pre-natal screening to over two million expectant mothers in Nigeria by 2020.

The GE is an American multinational conglomerate corporation.

U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria James Entwistle said that the "Healthymagination Mother and Child Initiative" would help to reduce preventable mother and infant deaths.



Entwistle said that there were 40,000 maternal deaths per year in Nigeria and that many pregnant women delayed seeking care until potential life-threatening condition arose.

He said that no mother should die from preventable causes.

According to him, the tripartite partnership between Nigeria, U.S. and GE would identify at-risk pregnancies early and refer women to higher level of care.

The \$20-million endeavour, according to him, will also address maternal and child health challenges among health workers in Nigeria.

He said that the initiative would enhance training of midwives, nurses and other professionals in the use of portable ultrasound (Vscan Access) screening tool to determine at-risk pregnancies.

“The U.S. Government is committed to engaging in effective and innovative alliance with the private sector to support Nigeria’s criteria development needs.

“We are proud to collaborate with GE to bring quality health services to millions of women and children in Nigeria,” he said.

He said that the initiative would target 1,300 midwives and prenatal primary healthcare givers with over 100,000 hours of training over the next three years in maternal and child health care.

He said that six states and the Federal Capital Territory were being targeted. (APA 04-03-2016)

## **EGYPT: SUPPORTING AGRIBUSINESS AN EBRD PRIORITY**

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) underlined, in a report published on its website, on Thursday 3 March 2016, the importance of developing the agribusiness sector in Egypt. This is one of the priorities in this country, it says. As part of these activities, the EBRD provided a EUR 53.65 million (EGP 500 million) loan to ‘Juhayna’, the largest dairy producer in Egypt, to boost milk production, introduce new products and support the company in meeting high environmental standards.

The EBRD and Juhayna designed an innovative training programme to support local farmers in the Nile Delta and the rest of Egypt. Juhayna selected several of their small and medium-sized milk suppliers to undergo an audit and receive advice on how to improve their performance. The training activities are funded by the European Union’s Neighbourhood Investment Facility and Juhayna is sharing part of the costs. (EBRD 04-03-2016)

<http://www.ebrd.com/news/2016/ebrd-eu-and-juhayna-support-sustainable-dairy-farming-in-nile-delta.html>

## **SWAZILAND TO INTRODUCE FREE SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Swaziland’s Ministry of Education and Training will table a discussion paper before Cabinet as a move to meet the United Nations Agenda 2030 with regards to Free Secondary Education, APA reports on Friday.

Minister Phineas Magagula says they have already started compiling data and they are closely monitoring enrollment and the rate at which children are born.

This will enable us to project as to how much will be needed to roll out this programme which will cover basic education for the first three levels of secondary school, being Forms One to Three as this is in line with United Nations agenda 2030, a master plan comprised of 17 Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 169 specific targets to be foisted on all of humanity.

The program is a follow-up to the last 15-year UN plan, the defunct Millennium Development Goals, or MDGs and it also dovetails nicely with the deeply controversial UN Agenda 21, even including much of the same rhetoric and agenda.

The minister could not specify when they were expecting to complete the exercise and the possible time at which they would be ready to roll out the programme, saying there are still a lot of calculations to be done.

Currently, the country has fully-rolled out Free Primary Education (FPE), which was introduced seven years ago, with this year's FPE budget allocation sitting at \$83.6m of the total \$1.9billion allocated for the ministry.(APA 04-03-2016)

### **S/LEONE: GOVT CRACKS WHIP AGAINST OIL DEALERS**

The Sierra Leone government is contemplating punishing oil marketers for violating rules that have led to incessant fuel shortage, an official has told parliament, according to reports on Friday.

Dan Mason, the Chairman of the Petroleum Regulatory Authority (PRA), said a daily stock analysis to ascertain the quantity of fuel in the country could prevent shortages but accused most of the marketers of violating the rule.

He was speaking after being summoned by the parliament following public queries about the latest fuel shortage in the country.

The MPs, according to sources, also wanted to hear from the Authority about the issue of fuel prices.

The government is under pressure to reduce pump prices.

On Thursday a group of civil society organizations issued a 14-day ultimatum for the government to reduce pump price and investigate oil marketers for their role in the frequent fuel shortage.

The government has refused to reduce the pump price, citing huge subsidies.

Mason told lawmakers that between June and July 2015 alone, the government parted with le18 billion in subsidies.(APA 04-03-2016)

### **MEDITERRANEAN: ACCESS TO FINANCE FOR MICRO SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES**

A high-level seminar on Access to Finance for Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) was held in Brussels on Wednesday 24 February 2016. The goal of the seminar was to identify the reforms needed to foster the financial inclusion of MSMEs and enhance their contribution to job creation. The

agenda also included discussion of the public policies and instruments that play a key role in initiating and advancing these reforms. (Ebesm 24-03-2016)

<http://www.ebesm.eu/posts/access-to-finance-stimulating-msme-growth-in-the-med-region>

## **AFRICAN PETROLEUM PRODUCERS TO CONVENE IN ABUJA AMID LOW OIL PRICES**

The African Petroleum Producers' Association (APPA) has unveiled in a statement that the CAPE VI: 6th African Petroleum Congress and Exhibition will take place in Abuja, Nigeria on 15 – 17 March 2016. According to the statement obtained by APA on Friday, the event will take place against the backdrop of low oil prices, which has resulted in significant knock on effects for the economies of the eighteen member states of the APPA.

Key government, institutional and private sector petroleum stakeholders, will come together to take both long-term and short-term positions on the continents oil and gas sector, the statement reads in part.

Last year at the CAPE VI launch press conference, Nigeria's Minister of State for Petroleum, Dr Ibe Kachikwu stated that it is essential for African petroleum producers to work together in these turbulent times to develop resources, share expertise and technology, in order to cut production costs.

He highlighted that due to the aforementioned points, CAPE VI was the perfect platform to bring everyone together, to respond to this challenge.

He also stated that Nigeria was a key founding member of APPA and a promoter of the African Petroleum Congress. We hope that the event will highlight the nation's oil and gas potential to a global audience and help showcase Nigeria's small and medium scale oil and gas companies to other African countries and world at large."

APPA is an intergovernmental organization whose objective is to serve as a platform of cooperation and collaboration, sharing of knowledge and skills among African Petroleum Producers' Association Member Countries.

The aim of the Association is primarily to promote Common initiatives in terms of policies, management strategies in all areas of the gas and petroleum industry with the view of enabling member countries to make the best of the exploitation of these non-renewable resources.(APA 04-03-2016)

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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.

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