

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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SOUTH AFRICA: TELKOM SET TO DRIVE ICT INNOVATION AND GROWTH

Telkom has announced an investment of over R100 million in enterprise and supplier development with the launch of its FutureMakers programme. According to Telkom, FutureMakers focuses on driving innovation in the ICT sector by growing access to technology and by offering long-term support to its beneficiaries.

"We want to enable, empower and inspire entrepreneurs to stretch their ambitions and make their business visions a reality," said Telkom CEO Siphosiso Maseko. "By growing entrepreneurial opportunities within ICT, we can create jobs, improve access to technology and develop a stable and competitive supply chain. FutureMakers serves the national vision for broadband and ICT development, while also supporting our own enterprise and supplier development (ESD) objectives," Maseko said.

Minister for Small Business Development, Lindiwe Zulu applauded Telkom for this initiative. "We hope other corporates will emulate Telkom's example of giving practical expression to the national agenda of building strong and sustainable small businesses and co-operatives that will be engines of economic growth and job creation."

Minister Zulu added: "To address the triple challenges confronting our nation requires a collective effort. The need to support SMMEs and co-operatives is a responsibility of both government and the private sector. Together, we carry a responsibility to stimulate and support the growth and sustainability of the co-operative and small business sector. Together, we can unlock economic opportunities and thus achieve inclusive economic growth and sustainable employment, particularly for women, youth and people with disabilities".

FutureMakers supports small, medium and micro-enterprises (SMMEs) with funding, business development and telecommunications services. It works to identify and grow entrepreneurial opportunities across the ICT industry and within Telkom's supplier value chains. FutureMakers will leverage Telkom's own national footprint of products and services, resources, and assets, by providing funding, business support, technology and mentoring.

ICT has been identified in the National Development Plan as a critical enabler, providing opportunities for manufacturing, service provision and job creation. South Africa's National Broadband Policy calls for mechanisms to share infrastructure, enabling low cost and high quality communication, along with the promotion of research, innovation and entrepreneurship. The FutureMakers programme has been designed to deliver practical and tangible responses to these important national strategic objectives.

The FutureMakers programme comprises four pillars: FutureFund, FutureSource, FutureHub and FutureProof. Through the FutureFund, Telkom is making an initial investment of R100 million to extend financial support to SMMEs that supply Telkom or that work within the broader ICT sector. This funding will be in the form of working capital, loans and equity. Identity Development Fund managers have been appointed to manage the fund on behalf of Telkom.

In parallel with financial support, Telkom is also investing in local suppliers and partners as well as potential suppliers, third party distributors, internet cafes, and innovative ICT start-ups by helping them to become more competitive, through the FutureSource initiative. Entrepreneurs who are part of the FutureSource initiative will receive business development support and training from some of South Africa's top SMME development providers.

Business incubation services – or FutureHubs – form an integral part of the FutureMakers strategy. FutureHubs provide a platform for stimulating innovation and technology uptake within small businesses. The hubs reduce start-ups costs for new business and encouraging a support of collaborative

environment for developing enterprises. Telkom's longstanding sponsorship of the Bandwidth Barn in Cape Town will continue, along with a new programme to source, develop and support high innovation businesses.

Telkom is also investing over R5 million in upgrading a co-working and incubation space in Tshimologong Precinct, Braamfontein, which will be ready in November this year. Tshimologong will be Gauteng's first business incubator for the ICT industry. It will provide Johannesburg ICT entrepreneurs with access to broadband connectivity, mentoring and other incubation support.

Partnerships, in the form of the FutureProof initiative, form the fourth pillar of the FutureMakers strategy. By actively seeking out opportunities to collaborate with like-minded partners focusing on ICT innovation, FutureMakers will be able to extend its reach and effectiveness. The FutureProof initiative will not only benefit SMMEs but will also stimulate demand for, and productive use of, ICT products and services. By promoting entrepreneurial activity, Telkom is confident South Africa can improve competitiveness and job creation, across the ICT sector.

"We believe that real innovation and transformation within the ICT sector demands a departure from the historically fragmented approaches of the past, towards more inclusive and coordinated ventures. Through the FutureMakers programme we are inviting members of the ICT community to join us as we embark on this exciting journey of transformation," said Maseko. (IT Africa News 07-05-2015)

IMF TO SUPPORT SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE THROUGH THREE-YEAR AID PROGRAMME

The mission of the International Monetary Fund that was in São Tomé and Príncipe in the last two weeks agreed an economic programme with the government of the archipelago with a budget of US\$6.24 million, or 60 percent of the country's quota, according to a statement issued Thursday in Washington. The announcement, which follows a visit to the archipelago between 24 April and 7 May, to analyse the country's financial and economic programme, will now be discussed by the board of the IMF, which by July is expected to make a decision to approve this technical proposal based on an three-year extended credit facility.

The head of the IMF mission, Maxwell Opoku-Afari said in a statement "the recent macroeconomic performance of São Tomé and Príncipe has been generally positive" and stressed that despite slack economic growth since slowing to 4 percent in 2012, "There are encouraging signs, including increased foreign direct investment and the stable support of international donors," which led to GDP growth accelerating to 4.5 percent last year.

The main objective of the IMF programme is to "keep public debt on a sustainable path through fiscal consolidation and at the same time create space for reproductive public spending."

The goals shared by the government of Prime Minister Patrice Trovoada and the IMF include strengthening tax revenues, streamlining expenditure, public debt management, introduction of a comprehensive plan to eliminate the state's debt, strengthening financial supervision and banking legislation, improving the business climate and expanding the level of technical services to government institutions. (08-05-2015)

S/LEONE: NEW SOCIAL PROGRAM TO BENEFIT 126 000 PEOPLE

Sierra Leone in collaboration with the World Bank and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) had established a Social Protection Policy in 2011 which has culminated into a Social Safety Net programme.

According to a statement issued on Monday by the World Bank, the programme, which is aimed at supporting extremely poor households and vulnerable communities throughout the Ebola-hit country, was launched Monday by President Ernest Bai Koroma, in Magburaka, the headquarter town of Tonkolili - one of the country's poorest districts.

It is financed by a \$7 million grant from the World Bank a \$300,000 grant from UNICEF, and \$1 million from the Government of Sierra Leone, the communiqué reads in part.

This new Social Safety Net program builds on the country's Agenda for Prosperity whose core objective is to achieve middle income status by 2035 by reducing the number of Sierra Leoneans below the poverty line, said Saidu Conton Sesay, Chief of Staff in the Office of the President.

It will strengthen coordination and implementation of social protection programs that improve nutrition and health services, and access to education, in order to break the inter-generational cycle of poverty, Sesay added .

Kaifala Marah, the Minister of Finance and Economic Development said, "This Social Safety Net program was developed in line with Sierra Leone's development agenda, institutional and financial conditions and capabilities, and we hope that it will create a sustainable system to address the biting problems of poverty and inequity in the country." □

The country has come a long way in moving from an uncoordinated approach toward building a coherent social safety net system capable of protecting the poorest and most vulnerable, including from shocks such as Ebola, said Francis Ato Brown, World Bank Country Manager for Sierra Leone.(APA 04-05-2015)

ANGOLAN COMPANY ANGOSTONE SEEKS TO DIVERSIFY EXPORT MARKETS

Angolan ornamental stone quarrying company Angostone has invested over US\$55 million in the last 15 years on purchasing equipment for its quarries and on opening two concrete production plants, the company's chairman said in the city of Lubango.

Carlos Alberto Gonçalves added that the investment was also used to acquire power generators, transport, working equipment for workers operating in its eight quarries, located in the provinces of Huila, Namibe and Cunene.

He said that in this period Angostone also managed open in Lubango and Namibe two concrete production plants, which have been supplying concrete to construction companies conducting, mainly public, works in the region.

Even with the investments made, Carlos Alberto Gonçalves told Angolan news agency Angop that the company was producing only 4,000 cubic metres of granite per month, against the previous 12,000 cubic metres, due to a weak output to its two main markets, Europe and Asia.

Focusing its activity on Angola Classic, Silver, Gold, Oklahoma and Blue Marron granites, the board of Angostone is initiating contacts in Vietnam, Poland, Brazil and Indonesia with a view to exporting Angolan granite to these countries, as the European market (Portugal, Spain and Italy) is currently of little interest due to low trading prices.

Angostone was established in 2000 and explores granite in the provinces of Huila, Namibe and Cunene, and is also present in Brazil and Portugal. (08-05-2015)

ORANGE TUNISIA SHOWS GROWTH WITH 3 MLN USERS

Orange Tunisia is continuing to show itself as a viable mobile operator after five years on the local market the company announced it has attracted some three million users, positioning the operator as showing it can compete.

The announcement of solid growth comes after the company this week announced that Samsung's flagship Galaxy devices are now available to all its users as well as potential new customers. That announcement is likely to spur interest in the company as more and more Tunisians are using their smartphone and other mobile devices to browse the Internet.

“From the start the operator aimed to give Tunisians access to the latest technological innovations, simplify communication, create jobs and commit, as a responsible operator, to put digital to the service of Tunisian society,” the company said in a statement.

“The company feels it has mainly achieved its objectives thanks to the products and services it offers,” the statement added.

Orange launched the first 3G network in 2010 in Tunisia, just ahead of the uprising that ousted its government in January 2011, and the network now covers 88 percent of the population.

“3G dongles, laptops and smartphones are increasingly bringing the Internet to people for the first time at prices adjusted to the local economy,” Orange argued.

The operator has around 1,200 employees and is responsible for the creation of over 4,500 jobs in Tunisia. (IT Africa News 07-05-2015)

LANDFILL SITE IN CABO VERDE IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR WASTE COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT COMPANIES

The Santiago Landfill Site is a great opportunity for the creation of companies specialising in waste collection and treatment, the Prime Minister of Cabo Verde (Cape Verde), José Maria das Neves said a few days ago as he opened the facility on the archipelago’s largest island.

“We must not only ensure better environmental quality but also create opportunities from the waste for the country’s growth and to ensure income for families,” added the Prime Minister.

The landfill facility, which benefited from EU funding amounting to 6.5 million euros, has capacity to treat 1,200 tons of solid waste and an estimated lifetime of 20 to 25 years.

Official figures showed that about 66 percent of the more than 520,000 inhabitants of Cabo Verde live in urban areas and produce over 220 tons of solid waste per day, with half that amount, or 110 tons, originating in the municipality of Praia, which houses about a quarter of the total Cape Verdean population.

With the entry into operation of the Santiago Landfill Santiago, the next step will be to close all “open air” municipal waste sites, which the Government considers is “a big win for the environment and public health.”

Construction of the landfill site was completed in May 2012, but the facility was only delivered to the government in July 2014, due to difficulties experienced by both the government and the municipalities of the island of Santiago in raising funds to purchase the equipment the facility needed.

The landfill site opened after the two sides reached an agreement to create an inter-municipal system for solid waste management, which will be carried out by the public-private enterprise Praia Ambiente on a sub-concession basis.

The resources for sustaining the exploration and operation of the landfill site will be secured by charging a solid waste fee on electricity bills. (08-05-2015)

BOTSWANA ENERGY SUPPLIER WARNS OF ELECTRICITY OUTAGES

The Botswana Power Corporation (BCP) has warned on Monday that the electricity supply system remains vulnerable this week due to low generation capacity.

In a statement issued here Monday, BPC said an initiative to alleviate power supply challenges; a Demand Side Management program will be fully implemented from Monday for four hours until further notice.

While this program was planned to commence last week on the 28th April, customers are reminded that its implementation is only done when there is a supply challenge, said the statement.

The statement adds that the program is intended to keep load shedding as minimal as possible during peak demand as well as creating equity in the conservation of electricity.

It urged customers to use minimal electrical appliances during the peak times to avoid their households or small businesses being disconnected. (APA 04-05-2015)

ZIMBABWE'S TELECEL LOSES MOBILE LICENCE

Zimbabwe's telecoms regulator has cancelled the licence of the country's number two mobile phone carrier, Telecel, a unit of Netherlands-based Vimpelcom, and has given it a month to stop its operations. The Postal and Telecommunications Regulator of Zimbabwe (Potraz) did not give reasons for the cancellation, which came into effect on Tuesday.

But those in the know said on Wednesday that Telecel's demise had become apparent after the ousting of vice-president Joice Mujuru from the government and the ruling party.

Ms Mujuru was the information, posts and telecommunications minister when Telecel got its licence, and her husband, Solomon Mujuru, was a close business associate of its chairman, James Makamba.

The cancellation of the licence comes amid reports that Isabel dos Santos, the wealthy daughter of the Angolan president, Jose Eduardo dos Santos, has been eyeing the mobile phone operator in Zimbabwe for some time.

In March this year it was reported that certain political bigwigs in Zimbabwe had been pushing for the ousting of an empowerment outfit led by the exiled Mr. Makamba, to smoothen the way for Ms Dos Santos' eventual takeover of the mobile phone company.

A group that includes President Robert Mugabe's nephew, Patrick Zhuwao, has offered Mr. Makamba's Empowerment Corporation \$20m to acquire 40% of the stake held by the group in Telecel. But the deal collapsed after an urgent court application by the Empowerment Corporation that disputed the valuation of the company.

Barclays Bank International valued Telecel Zimbabwe at \$200m, which means the empowerment shareholding was worth \$73m and not \$20m.

Telecel, which is 60%-owned by Vimpelcom, has 2.5-million subscribers. It has so far failed to pay a \$137.5m fee to renew its 20-year licence in 2013, leading the government to threaten a switch-off earlier in the year.

"In order to facilitate the smooth switch-off of the Telecel Zimbabwe network as well as ensuring that disruption is minimised, Potraz concurrently issued a special licence to Telecel to continue providing telecommunications services for a period of 30 days," Potraz said.

Telecel said the measure was "unfair and unwarranted".

"Telecel has made every effort possible to comply with all legal and governmental requirements in Zimbabwe, and objects to this treatment in the strongest terms," the company said in a statement on Wednesday.

Under Zimbabwe's telecommunication laws, Telecel was entitled to appeal against its decision, Potraz said.

Telecel's subscribers should switch to Zimbabwe's rival networks, it suggested.

Econet Wireless is the largest mobile network while NetOne, which is wholly owned by the government, is the smallest of the three. (Reuters 30-04-2015)

AQUARIUS PRODUCTION GROWS 6% DESPITE ZIMBABWE ISSUES

Aquarius Platinum's quarterly financial and production results to end-March released on Tuesday production from operating mines was 6% higher than in the same period last year.

But quarter-on-quarter production fell 5% due to fewer working days, although group production for the year to date remains ahead of guidance, the miner said yesterday, in reporting a consolidated net loss after tax of \$8m in the quarter.

The group said that platinum prices, after rising at the start of January, continued their recent downward trend — falling to their lowest level in more than five years, and ending the quarter at \$1,141 an ounce, down 6%. Palladium prices ended 8% lower in the period, at \$736/oz.

But Aquarius said cost increases at its Kroondal mine and its Zimbabwean mine Mimosa were kept below inflationary targets in the nine months ended March this year, compared with the same period last year. However, quarter-on-quarter costs rose for both mines — by 7% and 2%, respectively.

Aquarius shares the Kroondal mine in SA with Anglo American Platinum and the Mimosa mine in Zimbabwe with Impala Platinum. It said platinum producers in Zimbabwe continued to engage with Zimbabwe's government over "resolving" a 15% royalty on the export of unrefined platinum, which was introduced in January.

Imara SP Reid analyst Sibonginkosi Nyanga said on Tuesday better production coupled with "excellent cost management" enabled Aquarius to generate positive operational cash flows, despite a fall in platinum group metals (PGMs) prices.

"It looks like Aquarius' assets are cash generative at current prices," he said. "This positive picture is partly offset by regulatory uncertainty in Zimbabwe with regard to indigenisation and the newly approved 15% tax on raw platinum exports."

The average PGMs basket price fell 4% quarter on quarter in dollar terms, and was down 9% compared to the previous corresponding period. The rand had weakened 5% on average quarter on quarter, and 8% compared with the quarter last year. This saw the miner's revenue slip 2% to \$50m.

Jean Nel, Aquarius Platinum CEO, said despite the "challenging operating environment", the group had recorded another "credible operating result".

"Most importantly, both Kroondal and Mimosa delivered production ahead of guidance and managed to contain annualised cost increases well below inflation," he said. (29-04-2015)

TWO FOREIGN COMPANIES WILL HELP EGYPT FACE SUMMER ENERGY CRISIS

An American and a German firm will operate in Egypt to generate 3,600 megawatts of electricity together, Egypt's premier said on Monday.

The companies have been contracted by the armed forces, Prime Minister Ibrahim Mehleb said.

This is part of an urgent plan to help Egypt combat a recurring energy crisis in the summer.

Although Egypt has been facing an energy crisis for years, power outages surge in the summer, and households may lose power several times a day. Egyptian authorities have often owed the power cuts to a larger fuel crisis.

Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi has repeatedly reiterated the importance of diversifying sources of energy, a direction Egypt has been taking in recent months.

The president said in January that Egypt aims to build solar power plants and wind energy facilities within the next three years, with a total capacity of 4,300 megawatts.

Egypt signed an agreement with Russia in February, in which Russia will help Egypt build a nuclear power plant in Dabaa, on Egypt's Mediterranean coast, allowing Egypt to also generate electricity using nuclear power. (Aswat Masriya 04-05-2015)

KAGAME EYES THIRD TERM IN RWANDA

Rwandan President Paul Kagame may extend his rule in the 2017 elections after parliament received two-million signatures calling for a constitutional amendment that would allow him to run for a third term.

The East African nation's president is restricted to two, seven-year mandates under the current charter.

Kagame, who has been in power since 2000, said last month that he was open to either staying on or leaving the position "depending on the interest and future" of the country. He did not support changing the constitution to remove the cap on terms, he said.

"Kagame, like all heads of state who change term limits, wants to give the impression that he would prefer to leave but is reluctantly staying on for the good of his people," Francois Conradie, political analyst at NKC Independent Economists, said.

The possibility of Mr Kagame running for an additional term with the backing of the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front bears similarities to the political situation in two of Rwanda's neighbours.

In Burundi, the ruling party's nomination of Pierre Nkurunziza to seek a third term in next month's elections has sparked violent protests that have left at least nine people dead.

Another Great Lakes country, the Democratic Republic of Congo saw demonstrations in January when lawmakers sought to change laws that would have delayed elections and extended President Joseph Kabila's 14-year rule. (Bloomberg 08-05-2015)

AFRICA HAS MADE 'SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS' IN INTEGRATING CROSS-BORDER PAYMENTS

Regions in Africa have made significant progress in integrating their cross-border payment systems, says Reserve Bank governor Lesetja Kganyago.

Speaking at the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (Swift) African regional conference in Cape Town on Tuesday, Mr. Kganyago said this trend might have contributed to the global decline in correspondent banking relationships and, if so, was a welcome development.

In the past, cross-border financial payments in Africa had mostly been facilitated through correspondent banking arrangements with banking partners mostly located in the US or Europe. These relationships were still in use today but were being found to be inadequate and inefficient, Mr. Kganyago said.

Across the continent regional arrangements had emerged in West, East and southern Africa to develop more efficient transaction mechanisms, which will hopefully lay a solid foundation for intra-African trade and investment.

"The advantage of these mechanisms is that the transacting parties have more control over their payments within the region," the governor said.

Mr. Kganyago said the implementation of the integrated regional electronic settlement system by nine participating countries of the Southern African Development Community (Sadc) in July 2013 had resulted in 43% of all Sadc cross-border payments being settled by Sadc banks on the system, rather than through cross-border correspondent banking systems.

The challenge for the future was to get these regional payment systems interfacing with each other, the governor said.

About 400 delegates from 40 countries were attending the three-day Swift conference to discuss developments in the securities markets on the continent, as well as how the technological innovations could be used to support the financial services sector and the growth of the continent.

Swift is a member-owned co-operative through which the financial world conducts its business operations.

The organisation's membership includes more than 10,800 banking organisations, securities institutions and corporate customers in more than 200 countries. (BD 05-05-2015)

ALGERIA: €4 MILLION AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT CIVIL SOCIETY YOUTH ACTIONS IN ANNABA, BECHAR, KHENCHELA AND ORAN

The EU Delegation in Algeria has launched a call for proposals for civil society organisations working on youth issues under the EU-funded Youth Support Programme.

With an indicative amount of €4 million, the call for proposals aims to support projects to strengthen the institutional, organisational and operational capacity of civil society actors active in the field of Youth Support in the four pilot wilayas.

The objective is to help civil society play its role in the development and strengthening of ties between institutions and civil society through the implementation of concrete actions on the ground.

The deadline for submission is **22 June**.

Information sessions will be held as follows:

Bechar - 17 May
 Oran – 19 May
 Algiers – 21 May
 Annaba – 24 May
 Khenchela –27 May

The Youth Support Programme, funded by the EU with €23.5 million, seeks to support reforms and actions of the Algerian government in its national policies towards youth in 4 pilot governorates (wilayas) of Annaba, Bechar, Khenchela and Oran. (EU Neighbourhood 05-05-2015)

SOUTH AFRICA STILL DOMINATES PRIVATE EQUITY EXITS

Almost half of the private equity exits in Africa come from SA, according to research by professional services firm EY.

However, this number is set to decline in the long term as investors put money in higher-growth economies elsewhere in Africa.

EY Africa's private equity leader Graham Stokoe said out of 40 private equity exits in Africa, 19 came from SA. Five were in Kenya, three in Nigeria and the rest in various countries such as Ghana, Uganda and Cote d' Ivoire.

In 2013, 29 private equity exits were made, making last year one of the best for private equity exits since 2007 with 34 exits, EY said.

SA continued to dominate due to private equity investments made about seven years ago, Mr Stokoe said.

In 2007, companies such as Alexander Forbes and Edcon were delisted from the JSE through private equity buyouts. Alexander Forbes was one of the large private equity exits in SA last year and the move paved the way for the financial services company to relist its ordinary shares on the JSE.

The Alexander Forbes initial public offering was valued at about R3.7bn. It had been delisted in a private-equity buyout worth R8bn in 2007.

A private equity exit that has long been awaited in the South African market is that of retailer Edcon.

Some of last year's private equity exits had arisen from investments in 2007, including that of parcel distribution company RTT. The value of the exits in Africa had not been disclosed, EY said.

Research done by consulting firm Bain showed earlier in the year private equity exits worldwide had reached a record of \$450bn last year as companies looking for growth acquired businesses from private equity companies.

Dorothy Kelso, head of strategy and research at the African Private Equity and Venture Capital Association, said it was "encouraging to note the broadening of exit routes over the past year with increasing options available ... to realise value".(BD 05-05-2015)

BERLIN VEUT FAVORISER LE RÔLE DE LA RELIGION DANS L'AIDE AU DÉVELOPPEMENT

Depuis les attentats du 11 septembre, la religion est surtout considérée comme une source de conflit. Mais elle peut parfois jouer un rôle positif, notamment dans les États autoritaires, où l'aide des gouvernements étrangers n'est pas toujours la bienvenue.

« La religion peut rapprocher les gens, et les motiver à être solidaires et à respecter l'environnement. Nous négligeons ce potentiel depuis bien trop longtemps », a estimé Gerd Müller, ministre allemand du Développement.

Un projet de recherche mené entre 2008 et 2015 par l'Institut Giga, basé à Hambourg, montre qu'en Afrique la religion a tendance à jouer un rôle destructeur dans 22 des 48 conflits étudiés.

Cependant, le directeur du projet, Matthias Basedau souligne que presque aucune recherche ne se penche sur le rôle de la religion sur la gestion des conflits. Selon lui, la religion est plus souvent une force positive qu'un accélérateur.

Matthias Basedau a donc élaboré un nouveau projet de recherche, grâce auquel il espère déterminer les conditions dans lesquelles la religion renforce le développement, et les conditions dans lesquelles elle le freine.

D'ici la fin de l'année, le ministère du Développement allemand souhaite présenter une initiative visant à utiliser la religion comme « puissance créative positive » dans le processus de développement.

Depuis 50 ans, le ministère allemand soutient des programmes de développement affiliés à des églises partout dans le monde. Rien qu'en 2014, ces projets représentaient 218 millions d'euros. Pour la première fois, on s'intéresse aux conséquences de ces aides particulières sur le terrain.

La semaine dernière, le sujet a été débattu à deux occasions : à la banque de développement KfW et chez Misereor, une organisation caritative catholique.

Martin Mauthe-Käter, du ministère du Développement, a souligné que la Banque mondiale, le ministère du Développement britannique et d'autres donateurs internationaux se penchent de plus en plus sur le rôle de la religion dans le développement depuis quelques années.

L'organisation d'aide au développement de l'État, Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), a été chargée d'identifier des cas dans lesquels les organisations de développement religieuses ont été particulièrement efficaces.

Un accès plus facile à certaines populations

Il est évident que les organisations caritatives gérées par l'Église ou d'autres communautés religieuses ont souvent un statut spécial dans les États autoritaires et répressifs.

Elles sont donc en mesure de mener des projets sociaux et de développement même quand les organisations laïques ne peuvent plus le faire, ou quand l'aide au développement des gouvernements étrangers ne peut être utilisée pour des raisons politiques.

La députée Claudia Lücking-Michel, de l'Union chrétienne-démocrate, parti de centre-droit, estime cependant que le rôle de la religion est presque toujours ambigu. Dans de nombreuses régions, la religion ne fait qu'exacerber des conflits liés aux ressources, comme l'eau, la terre, les pâturages, le pétrole ou les minerais, et les conflits politiques qui suivent souvent les divisions ethniques. Ainsi, Chrétiens et Musulmans s'affrontent souvent dans des conflits armés ou se persécutent mutuellement, souligne-t-elle.

Jusqu'ici, le ministère du Développement allemand n'a pas défini sa position sur les organisations d'aide au développement islamiques. Les Britanniques évaluent chaque organisation afin de s'assurer qu'elles ne soutiennent pas de combattants terroristes avant de leur faire des dons.

Si le ministère allemand du Développement souhaite réévaluer le rôle de la religion dans le développement, il devra trancher.(EurActiv 05-05-2015)

UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN (UFM) STAKEHOLDER'S CONFERENCE "TOWARDS A ROADMAP FOR BLUE INVESTMENT AND JOBS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN"

The Mediterranean region can tap further the potential of the blue economy. It can provide jobs and growth through the sustainable development of key strategic maritime sectors in this important sea basin. This can be promoted by increased clustering and networking of education and training organisations, pairing research and innovation capacity, matching supply/demand of skilled people and more access to finance. These are some of the cooperation and coordination challenges that need to be tackled. An Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Blue Economy to be held in autumn 2015 would bring about the political mandate and provide guidance for the further development of blue economy and promotion of blue jobs in the Mediterranean region.

In preparation for the upcoming Ministerial Conference, stakeholders of the **Union for the Mediterranean** will hold an event "**Towards a Roadmap for Blue Investment and Jobs in the Mediterranean**" on 27 May 2015 in Athens. The meeting will provide the opportunity to collect input from all actors in the region, including financial institutions, academia, business associations, civil society and organisations and international agencies about the challenges that need to be addressed and the emerging opportunities for investment and jobs creation in the blue economy of the Mediterranean basin. Registration will open soon (UfM 07-05-2015)

ETISALAT NIGERIA PARTNERING WITH TAXI SERVICE UBER

Etisalat Nigeria has announced a new partnership with taxi sharing service provider, Uber, in an effort to boost the San Francisco-based ride-sharing company's access to Etisalat customers in the West African country.

According to the company, Etisalat "will be the main data provider for Uber's services, supporting the company's growth in Nigeria."

Uber has launched across dozens of countries and cities, including in Africa, as part of the company's push into new markets. However, in Europe, the company has faced a backlash from traditional taxi drivers and government regulators, which has led to the ride-sharing service being barred from entry into the market.

In Nigeria, the push for Uber comes as the country is looking to bolster its IT sector even further and Etisalat hopes that it can help be a leader in the expansion of the Uber services on offer.

"As an incentive, Uber is offering all Lagos-based Etisalat customers NGN 2,500 off their first two rides," the company said. The move to join forces should enable Etisalat and its customers to increase their options for traveling from point A to point B in a timely and easy manner. The ride-sharing service is popular in many Western cities and the company believes that by linking with Etisalat Nigeria, it will help expand and boost the ride-sharing capacity in Lagos and across Nigeria. (IT Africa News 05-05-2015)

EU AND ALGERIA TO COOPERATE ON ENERGY

The EU and Algeria have launched a [political dialogue on energy matters](#) Meeting in Algiers on 5 May 2015, Miguel Arias Cañete, European Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy, and Yousef Yousfi, Minister for Energy and Mines of Algeria, agreed to cooperate on natural gas, renewable energy, energy efficiency, energy market integration and infrastructure development.

The cooperation follows the establishment of a strategic energy [partnership](#) in 2013.

"Algeria is a partner of crucial importance to the EU. The launch of an energy dialogue in Algiers today will contribute to a reinforcement of our bilateral cooperation in the new context of energy security," Arias Cañete said.

Two 'groups of experts' – one on natural gas and the other on electricity, renewables and energy efficiency - will be created. In addition, a business forum will be set-up with the first meeting scheduled for 2016 in Algiers.

Algeria is third biggest supplier of gas to the EU, and the EU is the biggest importer of Algerian gas. However, due to a lack of new investment, gas production in the country is declining and large reserves of gas remain unexploited. Enhanced political links on energy could boost investments in Algerian gas with the knock-on effect of improving Europe's energy security.

Meanwhile, the EU has agreed to share its renewable energy and energy efficiency expertise in support of Algeria's goal to reach 22 Gigawatts of renewable power by 2030 and a 9% reduction in energy consumption. (EC 05-05-2015)

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