

MEMORANDUM

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AN OLD FRIEND AND OLDER FOE UNITE AGAINST MUGABE

Morgan Tsvangirai and Joice Mujuru.

One is a female former teenage guerrilla fighter who became President Robert Mugabe's closest ally, the other is a battle-hardened, male opposition leader often dismissed as a busted flush. But, despite their differences, Joice Mujuru and Morgan Tsvangirai are in talks to lead a united opposition alliance to try to unseat Mugabe in Zimbabwe's much-anticipated election next year.

The president, 93 and increasingly frail, has vowed to stand again to extend his rule, which began in 1980 and has been dominated by economic collapse and political repression. His Zanu-PF party has a stranglehold on government, the civil service and military, and has a record of election interference and voter intimidation that presents a formidable obstacle for any challenger.

"For us, it is the more the merrier in this opposition alliance," Mujuru told AFP, speaking from her home on outskirts of Harare. "This is a coming-together in great numbers as a democratic force that should give confidence to our people."

Zimbabwe's history of violent and fraud-riddled elections has eroded public trust in voting, but the coalition leaders hope a unified alternative to Mugabe will produce a high turnout that will make it harder to rig the result.

"I don't expect Mugabe to say 'I am going to create conditions for free and fair elections'," Tsvangirai, 65, told AFP at his office in central Harare. "We need 80% participation, not 40%. If there is an overwhelming verdict, there will be no one who will stand in the way of the people."

Tsvangirai, leader of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party, knows first-hand the dangers of tangling with Mugabe's regime. Since emerging as an anti-government trade unionist in the 1980s, he has often been targeted by the security forces and was brutally assaulted by police in 2007. He won the most votes in the first-round of the 2008 presidential elections, but poll officials said it was not enough to avoid a run-off against Mugabe.

As Zanu-PF loyalists unleashed a wave of violence, Tsvangirai pulled out of the race and became prime minister in a power-sharing government in which he was widely seen as being out-manoeuvred by Mugabe.

"Zanu-PF has not won recent elections, it has rigged them," Tsvangirai says. "Anyone who is interested in ending Zanu-PF should unite, in spite of ideological differences. I think she [Mujuru] means well. I mean well. People will realise both of us are committed to the process."

Many of Tsvangirai's supporters and anti-Mugabe activists view Mujuru as an untrustworthy opposition voice. She served for 34 years as a loyal Zanu-PF minister and was a favourite to succeed Mugabe. As a youth, she fought in the war against colonial rule and was famed for shooting down an enemy helicopter. But in 2014 she was ousted as the country's vice-president in a purge when Mugabe's wife Grace accused her of plotting a coup.

Having formed the new National People's Party, 62-year-old, Mujuru may draw some support from former Zanu-PF voters, women, the business community — and even disgruntled members of the military.

Seen as a relative moderate within Mugabe's circle, she recalls working well with Tsvangirai during the 2008-13 2013 power-sharing government. "For me, it was a chance of seeing Zimbabweans working together in a more harmonious way," she says. "I was one of the very few people who was always receptive to opposition parties."

The potential of a united opposition was underlined in Gambia's election last year when rivals came together to defeat long-time dictator Yahya Jammeh. A new opposition alliance is also planning to fight in Kenya's August poll.

The Zimbabwean coalition made significant progress last month by signing up Welshman Ncube, who led a group that split from Tsvangirai's MDC. Similar deals are in the works with the People's Democratic Party, led by the respected former finance minister Tendai Biti, as well as with more than a dozen smaller parties.

Tsvangirai, who is recovering from cancer, appears set to be the coalition's presidential candidate — with Mujuru likely to offer him her full support. But critics say his political sway is too narrow to build a truly broad anti-Mugabe movement that would include churches, civil action groups and radical activists behind last year's surge of street protests.

"There is little doubt that Morgan should be the leader, the issue is on what grounds the support comes from others," says Ivor Jenkins, of the In Transformation Initiative, a South African pro-democracy group

that is aiding talks among the opposition. "The game-changer might be the realisation that this could be their last chance. If they don't take it, there are many years of bigger chaos ahead." (AFP 12-05-2017)

NIGERIA INTERNET USERS HIT 90M IN MARCH

The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has said that internet users in Nigeria hit 90 million in March.



The telecommunications industry regulator said in its monthly internet subscribers data that internet users declined by 26,081 in the month under review.

The data indicated that internet users on both Global System for Mobile communications (GSM) and Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) networks dropped from 90,029,182 in February to 90,003,101 in March.

It showed that out of the 90,003,101 internet users in March, 89,972,792 were on GSM networks, while 30,309 users were on CDMA networks.

It added that the GSM service providers lost 26,081 internet customers after recording 89,972,792 users in March, as against 89,998,873 it recorded in February.

The CDMA operators had retained 30,309 internet subscribers in March as recorded in February 2017.

The data revealed that MTN had 30,519,351 subscribers browsing the internet on its network in the month under review.

It said that MTN recorded an increase of 218,646 internet subscribers in March, after recording 30,300,705 in February.

According to the data, Globacom has 27,021,200 customers surfing the net on its network in March, revealing an increase of 88,715 users, from 26,932,485 that surfed the internet on the network in February.

Airtel had 19,468,684 internet users in February, showing a reduction of 44,924 customers from 19,423,760 recorded in March.

The data also showed that Etisalat had 13,008,481 customers, who browsed the internet in March, revealing a decrease of 288,518 users from 13,296,999 users recorded in February.

The NCC data also revealed that the CDMA operators, Multi-Links and Visafone had a joint total of 30,309 internet users on their networks in March, maintaining the same record of February.

According to the data, Visafone has 30,305 customers surfing the internet in March, while Multi-Links has just four internet users.

It noted that the decrease in the use of the internet in the month of March showed that service providers had to ensure that more Nigerians embraced data as the next revolution. (APA 08-05-2017)

THE SUN RISES ON ONLINE TRAVEL IN AFRICA

As prices for minerals rise, Africa's business travel sector is benefiting and a number of firms are gearing up for a predicted boom in online travel. Sally White reports

Money is flowing into Africa again. The soaring prices for minerals (from copper to cobalt, gold and diamonds) of the last few months are beginning to restore its fortunes, and those of its online hospitality industry. Demand is rising for raw materials for mega government infrastructure and wealth creation programmes promised from China to the US. As it does so, Africa's position as the World's No.1 mining location is drawing to its cities international business travellers and conference organisers, along with the financiers.

There is going to be more money around to invest in Africa's many tourist attractions, boosting the already rising incoming-traveller numbers: more money, too, for mobile phones and online business development. Inevitably, there will also be more expansion and M&A in the travel industry itself. A first major one has just come with the [agreed merger](#) of HotelOga and Savanna Sunrise.

African [OTA Wakanow](#), has seized on the increasing interest in African holidays to announce plans for a UK office. This follows on its European launch of DestinationsAfrica®, a global booking platform that aggregates African packaged holidays from over 23 African countries. The US is among future new offices.

There are other signs, too, that activity levels are rising: at [Africa Internet Group](#) (Africa's first unicorn), for example. This was founded by two of German tech incubator Rocket Internet's top French executives and has also pulled in as investors major international funds and companies.

While the greater part of its business is in consumer goods and services, Africa Internet is now expanding and rebranding its [OTA](#) to [Jumia Travel](#). Offering access to 25,000 hotels in Africa and 200,000 around the world and with offices in ten African countries, Portugal and France, it claims to be Africa's No.1 hotel booking site. Jumia Travel has now integrated its flights and hotel booking on the same platform.

Most of Africa's online marketing is for merchandise and services (such as jobs and real estate) rather than travel. So, with their specialisations, HotelOga and Savanna Sunrise regard themselves as hospitality technology leaders. Together, with their partnerships with Expedia, Booking.com, TripAdvisor, HotelBeds, CTrip and many more, they aim to form a giant African [OTA](#).

"From the position we are building, we are now well poised to expand our footprint to Frontier and Emerging Markets globally," Savanna Sunrise co-founder Havar Bauck stated in his press release. This OTA, Dubai-based with a Nairobi hub, was set up by two Norwegian hoteliers, who started four years ago with a bricks-and-mortar hotel. It has never had outside backing and runs at a profit. The group now offers bookings at over 400 hotels across East and Central Africa.

Bauck added: "The challenges facing the hospitality sector across these markets are very similar, and we are eagerly preparing to tap into the immense opportunities that exist."

Mobile catches up

HotelOga was created in Nigeria just a year ago. It had backing from the Polish venture capital service SpeedUp and was established with the aim of helping African hotels maximise their online presence. It now has more than 500 hotels signed up for its online booking engine, channel manager and management systems.

Founder Marek Zmysłowski knows his market, having built and managed Africa Internet's travel business, according to his interview with VanguardNews.com. As mobile internet penetration rapidly increases, he says, the African travel and hospitality industry is now catching up with the new mobile consumer.

There is a lot of scope to increase online travel booking within Africa

Consultants McKinsey told the *Financial Times* last year that about a third of the African population had internet access. But it predicted that this would rise to 50% by 2025, and would include 360 million smartphone owners.

There is a lot of scope to increase online travel booking within Africa - Amadeus said last year that only 16% of travellers booked through OTAs. However, it saw sufficient opportunity for growth in Africa to invest \$40 million in African and Middle East OTA Travelstart. It did so along with MTN, the major African mobile and digital services operator.

"Trends are changing rapidly, booking habits are switching to online, hotels will be more active in setting up hotel rates like airlines, with more online payments. The question really is, how fast we can make that shift happen," Zmysłowski told AppsAfrica.com.

"The African travel sector is one of the fastest growing in the world. Technology is changing travel at an increasing pace, this is why building a travel technology company in Africa and beyond is so exciting," he added.

These two companies agreed to merge at similar valuations. Marek Zmysłowski will take the role of the CEO, and Håvar Bauck will be the Executive Chairman. The group will retain both brands initially, until a unified marketing strategy is rolled out in the near future.

The African travel market is beginning to look very attractive. After a slow start, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) says, African airlines had their best growth performance last year since 2012 - up 7.4%. IATA says growth is being underpinned by strong demand on routes to/from Asia and the Middle East.

Tourism rose by 4% in the first half of last year (the latest numbers out) according to the United Nations World Travel Organisation (UNWTO). It has described Africa as being one of the fastest growing bases for tourism sector globally, behind South-East Asia.

IATA does point out that economic conditions in much of Africa are still difficult, particularly in the biggest economies of Nigeria and South Africa. Yet, the upward trend in seasonally adjusted passenger traffic numbers "has reasserted itself in recent months, helped by strong demand on routes to/from Asia and the Middle East." (There traffic grew by 18.6% during the Jan-Nov period in 2016 compared to the same period in the previous year.)

However, numbers like those coming out other parts of Africa, such as South Africa and especially Sub-Saharan Africa, are extremely encouraging. As the UNWTO pointed out, economic star region Sub-Saharan Africa "is noted to be on an upward recovery curve at 12%" - a very promising growth trend. (Eye for travel 06-03-2017)

SIERRA LEONE: CHARGES ON TOLL ROAD COMMENCES IN JULY

Charges for use of Sierra Leone's first-ever toll road will commence this July, APA learned in Freetown on Monday.



The Chinese company which is constructing the four-lane road, under a loan agreement with the Sierra Leone government, said it expects work on the first phase of the 62 km road to have been completed by

then. The road links Freetown to the interior of the country, from Wellington in the east end of the capital city, to the northern business town of Masiaka.

The China Railway Seventh Group (CRSG), in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth, last week commissioned a batch of youths to embark on nationwide sensitization exercise on the use of the road and the charges involved.

The group of 60 youths who underwent training at the Ministry of Youth Affairs will also collect data on motorists and travellers who use the road.

The Chinese company is spending US\$165m to construct the road and in return will run it for 25 years to reclaim its money.

The sensitization activity will last four months. (APA 08-05-2017)

DANGOTE FOUNDATION SPENDS N200M ON REHABILITATION OF KANO HOSPITAL

The Dangote Foundation has announced the completion of renovation of sections of the Kano Specialist Hospital and handed it over to the management of the hospital.

To complement the N7 billion Surgical and Diagnostic Centre (SDC) currently under construction with the sponsorship of Dangote Foundation, the organisation has concluded the renovations of some sections of the specialist hospital in Kano which gulped over N200 million.

According to a statement from the foundation, the 900-bed capacity hospital, reputed for highest number of in-patients in sub-Saharan Africa, has been lacking facilities and might tarnish the new SDC being built by the foundation, hence the decision to carry out the construction and renovation of the auxiliary facilities.

According to the statement “the Foundation is currently building a N7 billion Surgical and Diagnostic Centre at the hospital and the Foundation whose Chairman is from the State, said it was committed to its timely completion.

“We handed over to the hospital management a renovated maternity ward, two ultra-modern maternity laboratories, upgraded water supply system Eclampsia ward, theatre and improved sanitary environment befitting of a specialist hospital.”

President of Dangote Group, Aliko Dangote, who was represented by his daughter, Hajiya Fatima Dangote, explained that the provision of the health care facilities was in line with the focus of the Foundation to contribute to improved health care service delivery in Nigeria as well as nutrition on the African continent.

He stated that his Foundation has mandate to intervene in the critical areas such as health, education and human development which was why the Foundation has also embarked on some poverty alleviation programmes targeted at women at the grassroots.

Kano State Governor, who was represented by his deputy, Hafis Abubakar, expressed the state's gratitude to Dangote Foundation for coming to the aid of the state in the task of provision of sound health care to the people of the state.

He urged other public spirited individual and organisations to rise up and partner with the state government orts at making life more meaningful to the people saying government alone could not provide all that the people need.

The Deputy Governor then called on the staff of the hospital to make judicious use of the facilities and maintain them like their personal property so that they can serve the people for a long time.

The state Commissioner for Health, Kabiru Getso said the Murtala Mohammed Specialist hospital Kano, was established about 92 years ago and is one of the biggest facility in Africa; with the maternity ward alone recording no fewer than 2, 000 deliveries monthly.

Head of Medical laboratory of the hospital, Magaji Minjibir said the intervention by Dangote foundation was timely, because the state of the hospital has been appalling. According to him, the hospital's laboratory has suffered congestion and the hospital generally bedeviled with many infrastructural challenges.

"At the Chemical pathology, we had to wait for our equipment to cool down before we process results. The Histology department had to stop work temporarily. Our autoclave is about 15 years old and outdated. We have only one microscope and this cannot cater for our teeming patients while lab staff take turns to perform tests and this delays results especially for patients in emergency cases", Minjibir stated.

The Matron in charge of Maternity ward, Hauwa Mansur Waziri, who also spoke on the pitiable situation of the hospital before the Dangote Foundation's intervention, said the new facilities will go a long way in improving services and saving more lives.

"There is no doubt that our staff will now be motivated by the conducive environment made possible by the Foundation. They can now perform their duties free of so many hazards. The wards now have bright light, functional tools, water and toilets. All these would enhance condition of patients and help healing process", she stated with excitement. (This Day 03-03-2017)

JAPAN OFFERS \$15M GRANT FOR UGANDA RURAL WATER SUPPLY

The government of Uganda has received a \$15 Million Grant from Japan to facilitate the supply of water to rural areas in Eastern Uganda.



The grant seeks to provide a piped water system meant to increase the daily water supply in five Eastern Uganda districts and also reduce waterborne diseases.

During the signing of the grant in Kampala this morning, Japan Ambassador to Uganda Kazuaki Kameda, said the project will provide a direct support to Uganda towards achieving part of the goals of the national development plan which seeks to increase access to water in rural areas from 65 to 79 percent.

Ambassador Kameda says the project scheduled to kick off in a month's time will be implemented by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to address issues of drastically changing climatic conditions in Uganda which is characterized by prolonged dry spell and irregular rainfall.

Uganda's Finance Minister Matia Kasaija, welcomed the grant saying it will enhance water supply amounts by 581 cubic meters per day, and increase the served population in the target rural growth centres from 13,800 to 24,738 by 2022. (APA 08-05-2017)

MOZAMBIQUE'S GAS BOOM DREAM UNDER THREAT

The small, palm-fringed fishing town of Palma was meant to become a symbol of Mozambique's glittering future, transformed by one of the world's largest liquefied natural gas projects.

But construction has fallen far behind schedule and the town's fate is uncertain after gas prices fell and the government became engulfed in a \$2bn debt scandal.

Tucked between the turquoise waters of the Indian Ocean and thick tropical forests, Palma remains a sleepy village of 3,000 people, still waiting for the promised arrival of new jobs and infrastructure.

The discovery of gas reserves in 2010, estimated at 180-trillion cubic feet (five trillion cubic metres) in the surrounding Rovuma Basin, was the biggest natural gas find in recent decades.

Experts have predicted that Mozambique could become the world's third-largest exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG) — and an African version of wealthy Qatar.

Plans to exploit the reserves moved fast, and Palma's residents were soon looking for opportunities to lift themselves out of poverty in one of the world's poorest nations.

"It's only through such projects that we will get proper jobs because otherwise we just depend on the sea," said 46-year-old fisherman Pedro Abuda-Nchamo. Since the discovery of the gas, the face of the town has started to change.

Excavators and construction vehicles are working on the planned liquefaction plant and export facilities. A gated residential complex for the anticipated influx of skilled workers is almost ready, and the town's first shopping mall is being built.

But the much-touted gas project has run into strong headwinds.

Initial estimates were that the first LNG would come on stream in 2016 but now it is expected in 2023 — or later.

The plunge in global gas prices has led energy companies to slow down capital expenditure.

Meanwhile the government in Maputo is caught up in a debt scandal that has triggered an economic crisis unseen since the end of the southern African country's civil war in 1992.

News emerged last year that the government had borrowed massively — including three secret loans amounting to \$2 billion — between 2012 and 2014 to fund a coastal protection project.

As a result, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank have suspended budgetary support.

The loans, which the government is unable to repay, were taken out in anticipation of the gas windfall that remains elusive.

"The government thought it would repay the loans with gas money," said Borges Nhamire, analyst with CIP, an anti-corruption non-governmental organisation.

Analysts fear that Mozambique's state-owned Empresa Nacional de Hidrocarbonetos (ENH), a minority partner in the gas project, may now struggle to raise its contribution of the share capital — although ENH insists it will honour its share of the deal. Meanwhile, other players in the multi-billion-dollar gas project appear to be making investment decisions.

In March Exxon announced that it was buying for \$28bn, a 25% stake in Italian energy giant ENI's Mozambique gas resource.

That same month another major player, US oil and natural gas company Anadarko, also said it was investing \$770m in its deepwater project in Mozambique where it "expects to continue advancing" and that it has "made good progress on the legal and contractual framework." But Nhamire said it will take a "long time" for any benefits from the gas project to reach average Mozambicans.

The long-running conflict between the ruling Frelimo party and opposition Renamo fighters engaged in a low-key armed insurgency resurfaced in 2013, but a ceasefire in place since December has raised hopes of progress towards permanent peace.

Yet the debt controversy has dented investor confidence and provoked fears that Mozambique is another African victim of the "resource curse".

"It's been really a pretty serious disaster that impacted right throughout the economy," said Peter Fabricius, a consultant with the South Africa-based Institute of Security Studies.

"What it does indicate is serious deficiency in governance and that is at the heart of any discussion about whether resources are going to become a blessing or a curse."

For a decade until 2014, Mozambique experienced galloping growth of more than 7% annually, fuelled by foreign capital inflows on the back of coal and natural gas discoveries.

But growth has slowed by half from 6.6% in 2015 to 3.3% last year, and the central bank in April forecast "a continuation of the weakening of economic activity".

"Foreign direct investment declined by 20% indicating a decline in confidence in the economy," said the World Bank in its latest country overview. For Palma residents, delays in the start of the gas project are breeding anxiety and frustration.

"They promised that when the companies come we would get jobs but until now it has not happen and people are complaining," said Amade Mussa, a village leader.

The government insists the Palma project is still on track and that local people will benefit even as some have to be relocated for the construction of the gas terminal. "Our priority is to take that community out of poverty," Land Minister Celso Correa told AFP. (AFP 07-05-2017)

ETHIO-DJIBOUTI ELECTRIC-POWERED RAILWAY BEGINS REGULAR SERVICES

The electric-powered Ethio-Djibouti railway on Wednesday began regular services between the two countries.



The train which departed from Furi-Lebu, Addis Ababa, to Dire Dawa could travel at 60 kilometers per hour.

The electrified railway line that links Addis Ababa with the port of Djibouti provides landlocked Ethiopia with railroad access to the sea.

More than 95 percent of Ethiopia's foreign trade transaction passes through Djibouti.

The standard-gauge railway executed by China Railway Group and the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation, replaces the former Ethio-Djibouti line that was powered by coal and diesel which was built by French companies between 1894 and 1917.

Ethiopian Railway Corporation Chief Executive Officer Dr. Getachew Betru said the railway line with state-of-art technology is expected to play a pivotal role in enhancing Ethiopia's import-export activity.

According to him, the railway will contribute to advancing integration between the two countries and further enhance bilateral economic ties.

Ethiopia started trial services in October 2016 by transporting relief food aid from Djibouti. (APA 10-05-2017)

MTN TO INVEST R540M IN IRANIAN NET BROADBAND NETWORK

MTN, Africa's largest cellphone company by subscribers, has agreed to invest R540m (\$40m) in Iranian Net.

Iranian Net is a fixed line broadband network in which the company plans to buy an initial 49% stake.

The outline of the deal, announced on Monday, extends MTN's interests in the Iranian telecoms market that has opened up to foreigners following the lifting of international sanctions.

MTN has been trying to repatriate \$1bn in accumulated dividends from its 49% stake in wireless network operator Irancell.

The latest agreement, which is still at a nonbinding stage, is the second for MTN in Iran this year after it invested in Iran Internet Group, which runs a car hailing app called Snapp.ir.

MTN said it will pay R540m to buy a 49% stake in Iranian Net and will invest an additional R3.4bn in both equity and loans to help the Iranian company develop a fibre network over the next five years.

"This investment, should it be completed, represents an opportunity to capitalise on the continued strong growth expected in the Iranian broadband market, with an initial focus on eight of the main cities," MTN said in a statement. (Reuters 08-05-2017)

HUMANITARIANS IN \$1.5BN APPEAL TO BEAT FAMINE IN SOMALIA

Humanitarians on Thursday launched a \$1.5 billion revised humanitarian response plan to provide lifesaving assistance to 5.5 million people who are facing famine in Somalia.



The revised plan launched at the opening of the London Somalia Conference hosted by the United Kingdom comes as the humanitarian situation in Somalia is deteriorating rapidly and an elevated risk of famine persists with some 6.7 million people now in need of humanitarian assistance.

"Of these, 3.2 million people are in crisis and emergency phase and 3.5 million are in stress phase. Some 680,000 people have been displaced due to drought since November 2016. The projected number of children who are or will be acutely malnourished has gone up by 50 per cent since the beginning of the year to 1.4 million," said United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Already, donors have provided \$634 million since the beginning of the year, with a gap of \$875 million remaining.

The situation continues to deteriorate and the possibility of famine in 2017 remains very real, despite an already massive scale-up of assistance since the beginning of the year.

The UN Secretary-General António Guterres has called for further scale-up of the humanitarian response in Somalia and strengthening of the partnership between the international community, the Federal Government of Somalia and humanitarian partners to avert famine.

"Since my visit to Baidoa in March, authorities and humanitarian partners have worked together to make extraordinary strides to rapidly reach millions of vulnerable Somalis with water, food and critical health and nutrition services," Guterres said in a statement issued in Nairobi.

With the resources received thus far, there has been a massive scale-up of the response and millions of people at risk of starvation and disease are being reached with assistance and protection.

Further funding is still required to reach millions of people in urgent need of assistance as the current rainy season is expected to produce below-normal rainfalls, necessitating a sustain response through December, added the statement by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

The London Somalia Conference convenes international partners to accelerate progress on security sector reform, build on the international response to the ongoing drought and humanitarian crisis and agree the new international partnership needed to keep Somalia on course for increased peace and prosperity. (APA 11-05-2017)

BOOSTING AGRICULTURE COULD MITIGATE AFRICAN FAMINE THREAT IN A WARMING WORLD

Civil society and NGO leaders met during the [World Economic Forum on Africa](#) for a famine briefing to discuss how to improve the lives of the millions impacted by the food crisis devastating the Lake Chad Basin in West Africa.

Experts say that adverse weather patterns and climate change are here to stay, which means famine could become a recurring problem in many areas of Africa. As a result, immediate mitigation efforts must also include long-term interventions led by local actors, coupled with investments spread across the agriculture sector in areas such as irrigation and access to markets.

As well as the Lake Chad Basin crisis, there has already been a famine declared in South Sudan and another one is looming in Somalia.

Gilbert Foussoun Hougbo, president of the International Fund for Agricultural Development — which works closely with smallholder farmers to promote rural transformation — said that making agriculture in Africa appealing to investors is a dimension of famine that must be addressed.

“Investment in agriculture by default is not appealing because the private sector will think about putting money elsewhere, so we must create conditions to make it much more appealing starting with derisking,” he said.

Smallholder farmers must also augment their productivity levels beyond subsistence production to attract large pools of financing, he argued.

“Smallholder farmers are not treating farming as business,” said Dyborn Chibonga, CEO of NASFAM, the National Smallholder Farmers’ Association of Malawi. “When you treat farming as business, you know that you’ll be producing surpluses and you are looking at local markets and national markets.”

Executive Director of OXFAM International Winnie Byanyima said to address climate change’s role in famine, her organization is planning a major shift in humanitarian response policies.

“Instead of giving bad aid, just coming in and leaving, we want to plant capacity so that people see the aid and bounce back stronger, with a stronger chance to survive,” she said in front of a dozen participants.

By 2018, OXFAM plans to channel 30 percent of its resources for humanitarian work through local actors. Unless people are able to also cope on their own in response to a changing climate the responses from outside groups will never work, Byanyima said. (DEV 05-05-2017)

NIGERIA TO ESTABLISH NIGERIAN TRADE NEGOTIATION OFFICE

Nigeria’s Federal Executive Council (FEC) has approved the establishment of a Nigerian Office for Trade Negotiations.

The Minister of Industry, Trade and Investments, Mr. Okechukwu Enelamah, told journalists after the FEC meeting on Wednesday in Abuja that the agency would coordinate trade negotiations by ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs).



He explained that the agency would be domiciled under the Economic Management Team under the presidency while a chief negotiator of an ambassadorial status would be appointed to man the office.

“Trade is something that is quite pervasive, we get involved in a lot of negotiations and a lot of MoUs assigned on trade. What we found happening in various ministries, agencies and departments of government was that there was insufficient coordination and therefore it had unintended consequences and cost for us.

“There are a number of examples of these things that have happened, so the cabinet decided that it is wise to establish a coordinating central office for trade negotiations. The office will be headed by a chief negotiator of ambassadorial rank that will then work with both the Economic Management Team and the cabinet,” the report by Nigeria’s Independent newspaper quoted the minister as saying.

According to him, some of the objectives of the office will be to help us to coordinate the various trade discussions and negotiations that will hold and to achieve coherence in our policies, so that the nation’s policies will pull its trade together.

He noted that the measure is part of an offensive strategy of being proactive in engaging some of the discussions the nation is having on the continental free trade area agreement that it is negotiating, including other free trade agreements that it had entered into with strategic partners all over the world.

“It will also help us in the implementation of our economic recovery and growth plan because clearly there is an intention to engage and work with other countries in that process,” he added. (APA 11-05-2017)

TUNISIAN WEEK: A STRONGER EU-TUNISIA PARTNERSHIP



From 2 to 4 May, Members of the European Parliament (EP) and their counterparts from the Assembly of Representatives of the People (ARP) of Tunisia shared their experiences of parliamentary, legislative and representative good practices.

"Cooperation between our two parliaments has emerged stronger from this Tunisian week", said European Parliament Vice-President David-Maria Sassoli as the event closed on Thursday. "We must now give concrete form to the shared experiences and good practices, to benefit all our citizens", he added.

In various workshops, they debated, in particular:

- intensively and constructively, the role of political groups in a parliament ([workshop I](#)),
- the need to involve parliaments in all trade negotiations, well upstream, and before it is concluded, to prepare the EU-Tunisia Free Trade Agreement ([workshop II on the FTA](#)),
- the need to strengthen ARP-EP links to tackle corruption and the financing of terrorist networks ([workshop III on fighting money laundering](#)),
- the need to promote a culture of gender equality in order to transform legal provisions into social reality and establish a women's committee within the ARP ([round table on gender equality and women's participation in public life](#)),
- the expectations of Tunisia's young people to be able to study, be trained and work in line with the laws in force in ([workshop IV on the links between Parliament and civil society](#), and
- substantial support from the EU to Tunisia, with a conditionality policy tied to the implementation of reforms ([debate on current and future EU-Tunisia relations](#)).

ARP President Mohammed Ennaceur said: "*Stepping up European aid to the new Tunisia will be crucially important and will be a big help in laying the foundations of a real and effective strategic partnership that matches the challenges that Tunisia faces*".

"*You can count on our support; we are in favour of stepping up European Union assistance under the various partnership instruments. It is important not only to consolidate economic growth, but also to ensure that it is sustainable,*" said European Parliament President Antonio Tajani at the 2 May opening of the Tunisian week at the European Parliament. (EEAS 08-05-2017)

EU Neighbours South - [Mogherini confirms EU's commitment to accompany Tunisia and support its youth](#)

[EU cooperation with Tunisia](#)

[Q&A: Supporting Tunisia's transition: a strategic priority for the EU](#)

CABO VERDE GOVERNMENT HAS A PLAN TO RECOVER AIRLINE TACV

The Cape Verdean government already has a credible plan for the recovery and restructuring of Cabo Verde's (Cape Verde's) flagship airline Transportes Aéreos de Cabo Verde (TACV), the Cape Verdean prime minister said in a statement on Monday.

Ulisses Correia da Silva, who noted that the World Bank is making support for the archipelago dependent on the resolution of the "TACV problem," said that the solution for the airline will be announced soon.

The Prime Minister gave assurances the World Bank's representatives with "a credible programme for the recovery and restructuring of the company and its future privatisation," ensuring that it will be possible to overcome the conditions for the aid programme.

The World Bank has approved a new aid programme for Cabo Verde over the next three years, with a financial package of US\$90 million, expected to start in July, depending on the resolution of the "TACV problem," according to the World Bank representative for Cabo Verde, Louise Cord.

On Tuesday, Cabo Verde's finance minister said that the restructuring plan for the airline is in its final phase.

TACV has an accumulated debt of US\$120 million, which represents 8% to 9% of the country's gross domestic product, according to the finance minister. (10-05-2017)

WEST AFRICA LOSES OVER \$2 BILLION TO ILLEGAL FISHING BECAUSE GOVERNMENTS DON'T TALK TO EACH OTHER

Greenpeace says poor government communication and coordination is hurting West Africa's ability to combat illegal fishing, losing it billions of dollars each year in the process. The problem has become so severe that it is threatening food security in the region, the environmental group says in a [new report](#) (pdf).

"Fish stocks are not restricted to national boundaries, and that is why the solutions to end the overfishing of West Africa's water can only come from joint efforts between the countries of the region," Ahmed Diame, Greenpeace's Africa Oceans campaigner, said in a statement. Halting illegal fishing is only possible, Diame said, if governments pool resources and work together to standardize legislation and establish joint monitoring centers.

Both international and regional vessels are guilty of contravening existing regulations, Greenpeace found during a ten-week surveillance voyage from February to May. It documented a number of illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing practices off the coast of Mauritania, Senegal, Cape Verde, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, and Sierra Leone. After boarding 37 fishing vessels, the group found evidence of infractions like illegal shark finning, possession of incorrect net mesh sizes, and fishing without licenses or outside of permit areas. These illegal activities were carried out by vessels with Chinese, Italian, Korean, Comoros, and Senegalese flags.

Across the world, illegal fishing is a major problem with far-reaching environmental and socio-economic consequences. The practice threatens the livelihoods of millions of people who rely on healthy fisheries and [cheats governments](#) of billions of dollars in revenue. Unregulated fishing also depletes vulnerable species [including](#) sharks, seahorses, reef fish, and spiny lobsters.

In West Africa, the problem is [even acuter](#)—with the fishing industry already facing a [heavy burden](#) from officially sanctioned foreign vessels. The region loses an estimated \$2.3 billion annually to illegal fishing, [according to](#) a recent study by Frontiers in Marine Science.

Illegal trawlers in the region use a number of strategies to pillage marine beds without being caught. In Guinea-Bissau, Greenpeace found that vessels turned off their automatic identification tracking system to move fish and supplies from one ship to another without recording the transfer. The process, known as transshipment, has long been [frowned upon](#) by the international community because it allows vessels to launder illegally caught fish and continue fishing without returning to a port.

In Guinea, a Chinese trawler was found with shark fins on board, and small net sizes, which are banned because they help bring in a bigger haul. In Sierra Leone, trawlers from South Korea, China, and Italy were caught obscuring the names of their ships and missing logs of their total catch numbers. In Mauritania, large fishing vessels were also seen operating very close to local fishermen.

This illegal activity contributes to unemployment [and desperation](#) in the region and may push fishermen into illegal activities like piracy. As the organization Oceans Beyond Piracy noted this year, the number of piracy incidents in West Africa [almost doubled](#) between 2015 and 2016. While piracy has declined in recent years in East Africa due to increased security, illegal fishing off the coast of Somalia was one of the main reasons [it took off in the first place in 2009](#)—and [has contributed](#) to its comeback this year. (Quartz Africa)

ANGOLA'S BIOCUM EXPECTS PRODUCTION INCREASE IN 2017

Angolan bioenergy company Companhia de Bioenergia de Angola (Biocom) plans to produce 73,000 tonnes of sugar, 17,000 cubic metres of ethanol and 200 gigawatt hours of electricity this year, said the company's production director, Marcos Brandão.

The director of production also told the Angop news agency that the figures for 2017 represent an increase in production compared to 2016, when the company produced 52,000 tonnes of sugar, 14,000 cubic metres of ethanol and 100 gigawatts of energy.

To increase production, Biocom has prepared 18,000 hectares of sugarcane, although it has planned to plant an area of 25,000 hectares by the end of the year, said Brandão.

The Biocom plant, located in the municipality of Cacuso in the province of Malanje, in a concession area of 80,000 hectares, has a maximum daily production capacity of 30,000 to 40,000, 50-kilo sugar bags, although it is still producing between 8,000 and 10,000 bags, depending on the available raw material. When Biocom reaches peak production in 2020, the company will be producing 256,000 tonnes of sugar, 234,000 megawatts of energy and 30,000 cubic metres of ethanol, which will contribute to Angola's energy security and increase the supply of ethanol in the Angolan market.

Biocom is a company that resulted from a partnership between Odebrecht Angola Produtos e Serviços, a subsidiary of Brazilian group Odebrecht, the Angolan company Cochan, with 40% each and the state oil and fuel company Sonangol, with the remaining 20 %. (10-05-2017))

CHIA SEEDS A BOOMING BUSINESS IN UGANDA

Latest super food, the chia seed, is returning super profits for small-scale farmers in Uganda.

For some of the world's elite and health conscious, the chia seed marks a height of status just like the rival Goji berries, kombucha, wheatgrass and acai berries – who have all been, received enthusiastic endorsement from television celebrities, and passed – once did. For others, most notably living in the rural lands of Uganda, chia is the seed for survival.

The success of the seed has meant that farmers have turned from traditional crops to farm the product. So far, farmers have seen their earnings increase three-fold.

First grown halfway across the world by the Aztecs in South America, the super food now holds a strong position in the Ugandan region.

Chia Organic was the first company to grow chia seeds in Uganda on mass, their product is now so popular internationally, that they can't even meet 30% of the demand for it.

The global focus on the product has moved away from the seed's ancient routes in South America, to mainland Africa. Anne Nacharia, Director of Chia Organic, believes that Ugandan chia is more popular than the seed grown in other countries because of the fresh Ugandan soil.

"Most of the soil in Uganda is virgin," Nacharia told [Al Jazeera](#).

"It [the soil] hasn't been farmed: So we don't expect any pests to be in the soil; we don't expect any chemicals to be in the soil; we do not expect any form of weeds – these funny funny weeds that attack chia in Mexico.

"Because of the virginity of the land, and because of the non-existence of pests in the soil, we are able to farm absolutely chemical-free – no pesticides, no fertiliser and still we are able to get a very high yield."

Currently, health-devotees in the West are following the research on chia's well-known health benefits. But farmers are concerned that the demand may soon disappear, as another super food is discovered and grabs the attention of the West.

To combat this, companies are making an effort to try to create a market for the seed in Uganda. At the moment, the majority of chia grown in Uganda is exported, but there is an increasing market for this product – as the health benefits of the food become better known.(CGTN 07-05-2017)

TAXES IN ANGOLA CAN BE PAID IN FOREIGN CURRENCY

Tax payments in Angola will be able to be made in foreign currency, under an amendment to the General Tax Code approved on Tuesday by the members of the Angolan parliament, Angolan news agency Angop reported.

The document, which was discussed at the meeting of parliamentary committees on Constitutional and Legal Affairs and the Economy and Finance, is a government initiative that is justified, according to the

Minister of Finance, “due to geopolitical and cyclical factors (...) which forces emerging economies like Angola to renew their efforts.”

Minister Archer Mangureira also said that it was a one-off amendment aimed at raising more resources in foreign currency, reducing pressure on the balance of payments and spending abroad.

The minister also said that the proposed amendment to the General Tax Code will also make it easier for taxpayers or state-owned credit companies to have tax relief when they pay their taxes.

The proposal will also facilitate the process of paying arrears of companies that are State creditors and have fiscal responsibilities, in part or in full, depending on what has been agreed upon. (10-05-2017)

The Memorandum is supported by the ACP-African, Caribbean, Pacific Secretariat, Chamber of Commerce Tenerife, AHEAD-GLOBAL, Business Council for Africa, Corporate Council on Africa, 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, SwissCham-Africa and other organisations.

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



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