

# MEMORANDUM

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**News of Africa, without comments, as they are published.**

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## IMF WARNS SOUTH AFRICA OVER THE ECONOMY'S VULNERABILITY

The IMF warned SA on Thursday that its economy was extremely vulnerable to external shocks and funding shortfalls, although it stuck to its earlier growth forecast for the country of 1% for 2017.

In an executive report following a country visit in the last week of June, the IMF also said policy uncertainty linked to political turbulence would weigh on business and consumer confidence.

SA's economy entered recession in the first quarter and is suffering from an unemployment rate of close to 28%.

Bitter divisions in the ANC as the contest to replace President Jacob Zuma intensifies, have also raised investor fears that policy to revive growth would take a back seat.

"Following last year's near standstill in economic activity, growth is projected to increase to 1% in 2017 and 1.2% in 2018, still insufficient to keep pace with the rising population," the IMF said.

Investor confidence has been depressed by political uncertainty following the axing of finance minister Pravin Gordhan in March and subsequent credit downgrades to subinvestment.

It has also been rattled by worries about the South African Reserve Bank's future independence and by plans for the redistribution of land.

GDP contracted 0.7% in the first quarter after contracting 0.3% in the fourth quarter of 2016, dragging the economy into its first recession in nearly a decade.

"External and domestic contexts could result in significant shocks ... especially if accompanied by further downgrades of local currency sovereign credit ratings to below investment grade," the IMF said.

On government debt, the fund said: "Low growth has taken a toll on the state of the public finances, increasing government debt."

The government's balance sheet was also exposed to sizable contingent liabilities from state-owned enterprises.

Finance Minister Malusi Gigaba, under pressure to detail plans to turn the economy around and avoid credit downgrades deeper into junk, said last week SA might be forced to seek outside financial assistance if the economy kept sinking.

This week he announced a R2.3bn bail-out of state-owned South African Airways, one of a clutch of state-owned enterprises heavily dependent on government guarantees totalling nearly R500bn, about a third of total state expenditure. There is another request from the ailing state broadcaster, the SABC, still to consider.

The IMF placed the burden of economic growth squarely in the Treasury's court in the midst of hotly contested debate about the mandate of the Bank and whether it should be responsible for socioeconomic wellbeing.

Public Protector Busisiwe Mkhwebane recently directed Parliament to initiate proceedings to amend the Reserve Bank's constitutional mandate in a report on an apartheid-era lifeline granted to Bankorp, which was subsequently acquired by Absa.

The Bank, Absa, Gigaba and Parliament are all going to court to have that decision set aside.

Uncertainty about the direction of future economic policies in the run-up to the ANC's December national elective conference had also hurt consumer and investor confidence, the IMF said.

"Public discourse in the run-up to the 2019 presidential elections is increasingly focusing on 'radical economic transformation,' including more rapid transfer of economic resources to the black majority and other disadvantaged groups.

"The remainder of this year may bring increased competition among candidates for election in December to the presidency of the ANC.

"Low investment and consumer confidence have been associated with rising uncertainty regarding the direction of policies as well as perceptions of weakening governance."

The IMF's executive directors found that the scope for monetary policy — the preserve of the Bank — or the Treasury's fiscal policy to stimulate the economy was limited.

The Bank's decision to keep interest rates on hold at 7% was appropriate, given that headline inflation was projected at marginally below the upper threshold of the Bank's target band of 3% to 6%.

"Directors highlighted the need for prudent fiscal policy aimed at maintaining debt sustainability, while prioritising progrowth and pro-poor spending," the IMF said.

“They encouraged the authorities to strengthen budget execution and the implementation of revenue and fiscal reform measures to ensure that government debt stabilises significantly below 60% of GDP,” the fund said.

“In particular, they emphasised the need to monitor and manage fiscal risks from explicit or implicit government guarantees, and the importance of reform of state-owned enterprises,” it said. (Reuters 06-07-2017)

## **SUPPORTING #DIGITALAFRICA BRINGS REWARDS FOR EUROPEAN AND AFRICAN BUSINESS ALIKE, SAYS MAJOR CONFERENCE AHEAD OF G20 DESIGNED TO SPUR INVESTMENT AND CREATE JOBS IN AFRICA**

Leading figures from banking and business have joined government and public institutions from Europe and Africa, to mobilize renewed support and investments for Africa’s digital economy. The gathering, in Berlin today, is being hosted by the European Investment Bank and Afrika-Verein, the German business association. The German Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Co-operation is patron of this high-ranking event.

**“Africa Day - Empowering Millions: Africa’s Rising Digital Economy”** is being held this year on the eve of the G20 summit under its German Presidency, in line with the G20’s initiative Compact for Africa, supporting the EU’s New Consensus for Development, as well as delivering on the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The aim is to support development by fostering innovation, tech entrepreneurship and the expansion of the digital economy in Africa through well targeted investment and practical support on the ground. Investors, start ups, small businesses and major companies in Europe and Africa will join the discussion to help pinpoint ways, projects and initiatives to encourage future investment.

Werner Hoyer, President of the European Investment Bank, opened the conference emphasising: “Investing in Africa’s digital economy is a necessary step towards opening new investment opportunities, connections between people and businesses. This is a sector where the EU bank has wide expertise around the world and is ready to invest not only in high tech but also in basic telecommunication infrastructures, from West to East and North to South Africa. Supporting Digital Africa, the skills, the start-ups and the capacity of the young generation, is already bringing opportunities not just for African business but for European businesses too, and that of course means the creation of sustainable jobs and flourishing communities. Africa is the continent of the future, and by strengthening our partnerships, communications, connections, particularly between the public and private sectors, we can deliver investments towards the SDG objectives.”

Stefan Liebing, Chairman of the German-African Business Association commented: “The ongoing digitalisation gives our neighbouring continent the opportunity to be one step ahead. Africa’s youth gains new prospects and the private sector develops new business cases. We need to bring sophisticated businesses together with young ideas to achieve the progress that Africa is demanding. Germany set an example by putting the continent on top of the G20 Agenda. This focus for Africa needs to continue – even after G20.”

Delivering the Conference’s opening speech, Gerd Mueller Minister of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Development and Co-operation underlined: “Sustainable and inclusive growth in Africa is a priority for the German G20 Presidency. With the Agenda 2063, Africa has already set out its path towards sustainable development in the coming decades. We are providing strong support to the implementation of the Agenda 2063, especially through our Marshall Plan with Africa and our initiatives for rural development, vocational training and the digital sector.”

“Africa Day” is the third EIB conference in a series initiated under the Luxembourgish EU-Presidency in 2015. Due to its success, the decision was taken to make the event annual. 2016’s Africa Day was held in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire. It focused on skills and jobs for young people, innovation in finance and tackling the challenge of migration. This year’s event in Berlin explores the crucial role of digitalisation around private sector development and investment in Africa. Africa Day alternates between Europe and Africa, so next year will aim to continue the tradition with a meeting in Africa.

### **About the European Investment Bank**

The European Investment Bank is the public bank of the European Union, It owned by the 28 Member States. Operating in more than 130 countries, and in Africa since 1963, the EU's bank is helping the EU meet its objectives globally including to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals. Last year the EIB invested more than 8bn EUR outside the EU, in projects to support the Sustainable Development Goals: creating good jobs and fighting poverty, supporting young people, women and rural populations, preventing disease through access to clean water, supporting green energy and building vital transport links. Around 25% of that was in Africa. In the last five years, the EIB has invested over EUR 10bn in over 200 projects on the African continent.

### **About Afrika-Verein der deutschen Wirtschaft**

The German–African Business Association (Afrika-Verein der deutschen Wirtschaft) is the foreign trade association representing German companies and institutions with an interest in Africa. Through its well-established networks, the Association promotes exchange between German and African representatives from both business and politics. In doing so, the Association advocates a new conception of Africa in Germany: Africa as a continent of opportunity. The Association provides information about countries and markets and represents the interests of its more than 600 members nationally and internationally with respect to political, economic and media issues. The Association positions itself as a competent contact point and contributes actively through political dialogue to setting the stage for the successful involvement of German business in Africa.

### **About BMZ**

The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) defines the framework for German development policy. The purpose of Germany's development policy is to reduce poverty; make globalisation fair; secure peace, liberty, democracy and human rights; and ensure protection of the environment and of natural resources. The BMZ works closely together with international institutions and other donors. Civil society players, faith-based organisations, foundations and private sector players are also important partners. (EIB 06-07-2017)

[Speech of EIB President Werner Hoyer](#)

[EIB Investments in African, Pacific and Caribbean Countries](#)

## **LUNGU INVOKES STATE OF EMERGENCY IN ZAMBIA AFTER FIRES AND VANDALISM**

President Edgar Lungu said on Thursday that he had invoked emergency powers in Zambia to deal with "acts of sabotage" by the opposition, after fire gutted the country's biggest market.

"In order to preserve peace, tranquility, safety of our citizens and national security, we had no choice but to take this decision given the events that have occurred in the recent past," Lungu said. "In the past few months, the country has experienced unexplained fire outbreaks and vandalism of strategic installations bordering on economic sabotage."

Fires have been reported at courthouses in Lusaka and the towns of Kabwe, Mongu and Monze, while markets have been burned in Lusaka and the southern town of Choma since United Party for National Development leader Hakainde Hichilema was arrested on April 12 and charged with treason. Hichilema was detained after a convoy he was traveling in failed to pull off the road for Lungu's motorcade.

Lungu said the measure, in Africa's second-biggest copper producer, would safeguard investments in the country, but if the International Monetary Fund found the emergency powers to be ill-advised, it was free to terminate talks meant to provide financial assistance to Zambia.

"This power [state of emergency] I have invoked is only for seven days," Lungu said, a day after saying that the fire in the capital was politically motivated arson. "Parliament will, within the next seven days, determine whether it will be there for one week, one month, three months or six months."

Lungu said the powers would not disrupt normal life, but were aimed at those who posed a danger to public security. Under state of emergency laws, police can prohibit public meetings, close roads, impose curfews and restrict movements.

Last month, Zambia's parliament suspended 48 opposition lawmakers for 30 days, citing their absence during a March 17 speech by Lungu to the assembly. Their suspension was "credit-negative" because it

raised the risk of domestic political turmoil that would discourage foreign investment and external support, Moody's Investors Service said on June 19.

The yield on Zambia's \$1bn worth of eurobonds, due in 2024, rose 16 basis points on Wednesday to 7.85%, the highest since April 26, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. (Reuters, with Bloomberg 06-07-2017)

### **MOZAMBIQUE LEADER UNVEILS NEW \$300M CENTRAL BANK HEADQUARTERS**

President Filipe Nyusi of Mozambique has inaugurated the new headquarters of the Bank of Mozambique in Maputo, APA can report on Monday.



The \$300 million three buildings are a towering new landmark in downtown Maputo, and the largest of the buildings is an office tower 29 storeys tall, occupying a construction area of 25,900 square metres. The new central bank building was officially opened late on Monday.

Construction began in 2011, to modernize the central bank's headquarters, improve working conditions for staff, and guarantee a better provision of banking services to the state and to other public bodies. According to a central bank official, the resources came from the bank's own funds, and did not involve taking any debt.

Meanwhile, the bank does not intend to abandon its old headquarters, which is a historic colonial building dating from 1964, and the governor of the bank, Rogerio Zandamela, has pledged to maintain it. In his brief inauguration speech, Nyusi praised the role of the central bank in checking inflation, and in halting the depreciation of the Mozambican national currency, the metical.

(APA 03-07-2017)

### **NATIONAL STRATEGY NEEDED TO INCREASE EMPLOYABILITY OF LEBANESE RETURNEES, REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS, ETF STUDY FINDS**

The European Training Foundation (ETF) held a high-level workshop in Beirut on 4 July, during which ETF labour market experts presented the findings of a research mapping skills policy and support measures in Lebanon.

The ETF research, the first of its kind, shows that a national mobility strategy would help Lebanon better utilise the skills of refugees, foreign workers, migrants, expatriates and returnees.

Building upon the inventory of 'Migrant Support Measures from the Employment and Skills Perspective', the ETF research identifies 17 measures in Lebanon that aim to support labour mobility, job and skills



matching for expatriates and returnees, potential emigrants, foreign migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.



Twelve measures focus on support for refugees, as well as ‘vulnerable’ Lebanese beneficiaries. Three focus on foreign migrant workers and two cater for Lebanese emigrants and expatriates.

The majority of measures are financed by the international donor community, including the EU, which is the world’s leading donor in the international crisis response in Syria.

According to the World Bank, in 2013 there were 810, 900 Lebanese living abroad, but more recent estimates place that number as high as 10 million.

Lebanon is also an immigration destination for low-skilled workers from the Middle East, Asia and Africa, with an estimated 1.6 million foreign workers in the country, employed primarily in construction, agriculture and domestic work.

The country is also dealing with a massive influx of refugees, an estimated 1.6 million from Syria, which is putting increased pressure on the community of low skilled workforce.

The ETF report calls for a national migration policy to increase employability of Lebanese emigrant workers wishing to return to Lebanon, foreign immigrant workers, and refugees.

The European Training Foundation is a specialised EU agency, working with 29 partner countries bordering Europe. The ETF works closely with EU Delegations, providing expertise and support in the area of skills, vocational education and training and human capital development.(ETF 04-07-2017)

[European Training Foundation](#)

## **MOZAMBIQUE TO APPROVE \$9B WORTH OF PROJECTS BY YEAR END**



Mozambique's newly-created Investment and Export Promotion Agency (Apiex) says it plans to approve investment projects estimated at US\$9 billion by the end of the year, APA learned on Tuesday.

Apiex is the result of the merger of three institutions namely, the now defunct Investment Promotion Centre (CPI), the Office of Economic Zones for Accelerated Development (Gazeda) and the Institute for the Promotion of Exports (Ipex).

The creation of the new entity aims to boost the business environment, optimise resources and create greater synergies in areas that impact the country's economy.

Installing the head of the agency, its director-general Lourenço Sambo, Prime Minister Carlos Agostinho do Rosário hoped the new institution would be able to increase the amount of foreign direct investment, as well as expand and diversify the country's exports.

The Prime Minister also stressed the importance of promoting public-private partnerships as a means of supporting the country's economic development, as well as ensuring the attractiveness, promotion and retention of domestic and foreign investment.

"Apiex will promote and facilitate investment, bringing together the promotion of public and private investment and exports," Do Rosario said.

(APA 04-07-2017)

## CHINESE FIRM TO CONDUCT FEASIBILITY STUDIES FOR SGR EXPANSION IN KENYA

Kenya has allowed a Chinese firm to conduct feasibility studies with a view to expand the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) to [Jomo Kenyatta International Airport](#) and the city Centre via Syokimau.

Kenya Railways managing director Atana Maina says the [feasibility studies](#) and preliminary designs to be carried out by China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC) will help define the different issues which are relevant in determining whether or not the project is worthwhile.

The railway will serve people coming from the city going to JKIA and people leaving Syokimau train terminus into the city.

China's freight wagon manufacturer giant CRRC Qiqihar, has been contracted to service wagons and locomotives while another Chinese firm — the China Communications Construction Company will operate the new rail for five years.

The initial design visualized Syokimau as an exchange station where passengers would take another train to Nairobi's city centre or to the JKIA.

The plan is considered of great importance because the outcome would cut on the amount of time spent in traffic.

The original plan drafted in 2012 had indicated that the JKIA train would run to the CBD and would cover a 22km journey in only 25 minutes. This would save greatly on time on a journey that can last up to two hours during rush hour.

CRBC becomes the latest in a growing list of Chinese firms who have been involved in the Kenya's SGR project a move likely to cast doubt over the transparency of the process.

There was no public bidding for the Mombasa -Nairobi SGR line, a condition set by the Chinese lenders to help fund its construction process. The line cost a total of KSh447.5b including financing costs. (CRO 30-06-2017)

## NIGERIA SAVES \$2BN FROM RE-NEGOTIATED UPSTREAM CONTRACTS

The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has received \$2 billion discount from re-negotiated upstream contracts being executed by its various service providers.

The Group Managing Director of the NNPC, Dr. Maikanti Baru, who made this known in a message to mark one year of his headship of the organization, said that the discount was gotten in the quest to continually drive down the high cost of production in the oil industry.

He said that the corporation had successfully reduced the cost of producing a barrel of crude from \$27 per barrel to \$22 per barrel.



He explained that in the upstream segment of the sector, cost reduction and efficiency were key features that the corporation would focus attention on.

Baru said that there had been significant increase in crude oil reserves and production, averaging national daily production of 1.83 million barrels of oil and condensate.

He disclosed that currently, “the year-to-date 2017 average production hovers around 1.88 million barrels”.

With improvement in security and resumption of production on Forcados Oil Terminal (FOT) and Qua Iboe Terminal pipelines, average national production was expected to increase, he said.

According to him, it will surpass 2017 target of 2.2 million barrels of oil and condensate per day.

He also said that since he resumed office, resources had been deployed to the Benue Trough with exploration efforts commencing there in earnest.

“Seismic data acquisition is ongoing in the frontier region using the services of Integrated Data Services limited (IDSL) and her partners to pursue government’s aspiration to grow the reserves base of the country.

“Drilling activities are expected to commence in Benue Trough in the fourth quarter of this year.

“We are working with the security agencies for an early return to the Chad Basin,” he said. (APA 05-07-2017)

## **NEW EUROMED TRADE HELPDESK AIMS TO BOOST TRADE IN MEDITERRANEAN REGION**

The European Commission and the International Trade Centre (ITC) have launched the EuroMed Trade Helpdesk – a portal that provides businesses with essential information about markets, tariffs and import requirements. The Helpdesk aims to strengthen economic ties between the European Union and nine Mediterranean partners, as well as between Mediterranean countries themselves.

Funded by the EU and implemented by the ITC, the online portal will provide exporters with free information about potential markets, such as customs duties and product requirements. Its searchable database covers the EU as well as Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia



and Turkey. The project aims to foster economic integration and trade in the region by helping companies save costs on information gathering.



*"The EuroMed Helpdesk is good news for businesses and consumers around the Mediterranean," said EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström. "And by making it easier to trade it'll help the region's economy and integration."*

The EuroMed Trade Helpdesk provides an online one-stop-shop for country and product-specific information on tariffs and duties, import and export procedures, and market requirements. In addition, a network of national focal points in each participating Mediterranean country will respond to enquiries on intra-regional trade issues and ensure information is kept up to date.

The EuroMed Helpdesk is available in English, French, Arabic, and Turkish. It will complement the EU Export Helpdesk – on which it is modelled – that provides free information on EU market requirements. It differs, however, by also giving company-specific information.

The EuroMed Trade Helpdesk is part of the EuroMed [Trade and Investment Facilitation Mechanism](#) (TIFM), an initiative funded by the EU and implemented by the ITC. The Mechanism aims at facilitating closer economic ties between the European Union and Mediterranean countries as well as improving integration in the Mediterranean region. The ITC is a joint agency of the World Trade Organisation and the United Nations, which assists small and medium-sized enterprises in developing and transition economies to become more competitive in global markets. (EuroMed 04-07-2017)

[EuroMed Trade Helpdesk](#)

## MOZAMBIQUE'S PUBLIC DEBT HAS NO SOLUTION IN SIGHT

The public debt crisis in Mozambique will continue without a quick resolution, with the Mozambican state having been in financial default for some time now, the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) said in its latest country report.

The EIU analysts again said that the most likely scenario will be a merger of the three state-guaranteed commercial loans (one bond issue and two syndicated loans) into a single instrument, with borrowers being forced to accept a loss of invested capital and payment to be delayed until the middle/late 20's.

It is generally agreed that at that time the ENI and Anadarko Petroleum groups (which have not yet announced their final investment decision) are selling the natural gas extracted in the Rovuma basin, guaranteeing the Mozambican state tax revenues that are expected to be significant.

The timing for this whole process is unknown, and creditors are hoping that the report prepared by Kroll Associates UK will be fully disclosed by the Attorney General of the Republic of Mozambique and the International Monetary Fund is expected to return to negotiations with the Mozambican government for approval of an aid package.

The IMF and, at a later date, the international organisations and western countries that have been supporting the Mozambican State Budget, suspended all aid following the disclosure of two loans that were taken on illegally by two public companies.

The EIU analysts predict that Gross Domestic Product, after having reached the lowest point of the last 15 years in 2016 with a growth rate of 3.8%, this year will see growth of 4.2%, driven almost exclusively by mining resources.

This includes coal, exports of which are expected to grow, due to a rise in prices on international markets, demand from India, Mozambique's main market for this product, and the efforts of mining companies to increase efficiency.

After 2017, the EIU expects Mozambique's economic growth to accelerate, estimating an average rate of 5.3% in the 2018/2021 period, with the last three years recording rates ranging from 5.3% to 5.5%. (06-07-2017)

## **CAMEROON: 80 COMPANIES UPGRADED AS PART OF EPAS WITH EU**

Some 80 Cameroonian companies have been upgraded under the bilateral agreement signed between Cameroon and the European Union (EU) as part of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) which entered into force on 4 August 2016, reports said on Wednesday.



This figure is very low compared to the specifications of the Bureau of Upgrading (BMN) with an estimate of about 600 companies required to level up.

According to Chantal Elombat, the Director of the Bureau of Upgrading at the Cameroonian ministry of Economy, Planning and Urban and Rural Planning (MINEPAT) "these specifications are surrealistic in comparison to what happens elsewhere."

She added however that "it must be recognized that companies are not yet aware of the imperative need to prepare for competition with the entry into force of the Partnership Agreements with the European Union".

The suggested upgrade is based on an overall diagnosis, since the equipment is evaluated to assess the production processes and control the quality of the products, the financial situation, the marketing policy to analyze the distribution circuit of the product and compliance with regulations, not to mention environmental impact analysis.

A range of elements that allow companies to compete effectively, especially since the removal of tariff barriers due to EPAs requires more professionalism from companies in order to compete in the international market.

It's been two years since the European Union had unleashed the funds to upgrade 60 companies. (APA 05-07-2017)

## **EGYPT SEEKS TO CONSTRUCT ZAHRAA NASR CITY SUBSTATION**

The Egyptian Electricity Transmission Company (EETC) has secured financing from the European Development Partners consisting of EIB, European Union, AFD, and KfW to finance the GIS S/S contract for Zahraa Nasr City 220/66/11kV GIS substation.

EETC is calling for sealed tenders from international bidders for the engineering, design, manufacturing, factory testing, site delivery, civil works, erection, testing at site, commissioning, putting in operation, insurance till provisional acceptance, warranty, training and assistance during warranty period for Zahraa Nasr City 220/66/11kV GIS Substation (package A) and the specified fire-fighting systems.

The scope of works includes foundations and erection of power transformers 220/66/11 & 66/11kV supplied by package B.

Bidders may obtain further information from, and inspect and acquire the tender documents, at the office of EETC:

Egyptian Electricity Transmission Company,  
Abbassia, Cairo,  
Egypt,

Attention: Head of Purchasing and Stores Sector

Tender information and submission

A complete set of tendering documentation may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written application in one original and two copies, accompanied by payment receipt of \$2,000 (only the amount of two thousands US Dollars) from National Bank of Egypt-Nasr City Branch – Cairo, Egypt. (Account No. 11001007177).

All Tenders must be submitted in two envelopes clearly marked "Zahraa Nasr City 220/66/11 kV GIS S/S (Package A)" and be accompanied by tender security of \$300,000, and must be delivered by hand to the same address as indicated above on or before the 11 July 2017 at 12:00 noon Cairo local time. (CRO 30-06-2017)

## **GHANA: VP CLARIFIES \$19 BILLION FINANCING FROM CHINESE**

The Vice President of Ghana, Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, has said that the US\$19bn to be given to the Government of Ghana by the Republic of China is not a loan, but a joint venture investment between the two countries.



Bawumia explained that the over \$15 billion Memorandum of Understanding investment financing reached with the Chinese government on his recent visit to Beijing is not a loan, but a new financing model, which will not add a cent to Ghana's current debt.

Speaking at the first Ghana-China Relations Conference, organized by the Institute of Democratic Governance (IDEG) in Accra on Tuesday, Bawumia said the new financing model was designed to leverage on Ghana's natural resources, especially bauxite to unlock the potential of the country's natural resources. (APA 05-07-2017)

## EUROPE OPENS UP TO LIBYAN STUDENTS

Libya's brightest academic stars share their experiences of studying in Europe to encourage the next generation to embark on the adventure of a lifetime.

Taking the step to leave family and country is a leap into the unknown for any student, but the rewards are immeasurable. To encourage young Libyans to participate in future programmes, students and academics who have benefitted from EU scholarships grants shared their experiences at the EU-Libya Inter-ministerial meeting held in April in Tunis.

### Erasmus Mundus Grantees

Thirty-year-old Rafa Rejeibi, an alumnus of the Young Mediterranean Leaders Programmes – an initiative of the European Training Foundation in 2012 – spoke of her delight at being selected along with one other student from Libya. The programme offers places for just 16 students from the whole Southern Mediterranean region to work on public policies at the European Training Foundation at Torino University in Italy.

"There was a call for proposals and at that time I thought it's a great opportunity to learn about public policies, especially because I teach at Tripoli University," she said.

Following this programme, Rafa was then selected to stay with the foundation for three months to work on entrepreneurship and small to medium-sized business action plans for Libya. The focus was on Libyan stakeholders including the Ministry of Economy that had a programme to invest in incubators to help more young people get support for their projects. She was also part of an evidence-based study that focused on the Libyan labour market to help as many students as possible to integrate in the job markets.

"The relationship between what we teach and the labour market should be invested in our students. As a university professor, I have always believed that we should help our students to obtain the skills that would enable them to enter the labour market with confidence".

Rafa hopes that both the Libyan and the European sides carry on working together to create better synergies and communicate on their ambitions and challenges to overcome them. "As a Libyan living in Tripoli, no matter how difficult the situation is, there is still potential to find solutions."

Dr. Rania Elemam, 38, was granted an Erasmus Mundus scholarship, one of the fortunate ones to be given fully funded PhD scholarships for three years. She said: "I gained a lot of knowledge, excelled academically and was able to travel to many different countries where I participated with my articles and published eight scientific papers."

Thanks to the support from her supervisors, professors and the scholarship team, Dr. Elemam gained her doctoral degree in a surprisingly short period of time, which is why she encourages everyone to apply for these scholarships and not let the political conflicts hinder their willingness to try these opportunities.

Although faced with personal challenges, such as not being able to see her family for the whole three years, Rania found the experience to be very enriching as it opened her mind to exciting new horizons. She found a new appreciation for cultural exchange and international relations. As well as her academic achievements, Rania was able to achieve some personal goals too: "I learnt Portuguese and the violin, I also managed to keep good relations with friends and professionals on national and international levels including scientists and professors."

As a professor, Rania pledges to benefit her students with new ways of teaching, introducing new technologies and encouraging them to be part of such mind-opening programmes to discover their talents and skills and value personal development.

Anas Mohammed Iwida, 23, an engineering student at Misrata University, and an Erasmus Mundus Alumnus from the University of Padova emphasised the importance of personal growth, as he met friends from many countries and managed to have an enriching exchange of life experiences to learn about other's lives and visions. Anas welcomed the promises made by the EU during the meeting to facilitate the procedures for future students to access such scholarships.

### **Culture of debate as a way to leadership**

Mohamed Ali Abdellatif, 25 has been an active participant in national and regional debates with the EU-co-funded Young Arab Voices debating programme. Ali suggested that a national initiative aimed at empowering the Libyan youth through debate trainings be developed. With the support of EU national offices, this project could be sustainable and more Libyan students would benefit and gain leadership skills.

### **EU funds for Libyans**

In 2015-2016 there were six Erasmus projects running with total funding of €143,000, planning 32 mobility flows to Europe. The Libyan Universities involved in the scheme were Misurata, Tripoli, and Zawia, and their European partners are the universities of Grenada, Riga, and Talin. Unfortunately, to date only nine mobility flows have taken place. In fact, there are short-term academic mobility programmes for students (3-12 months) and staff (5-60 days) and long-term programmes for all levels of education, namely BA, MA, PhD, which are fully funded, according to Annemie Cumps from the Libya Desk at EU HQ.

In 2017, a further six projects will involve Libya with a budget of €157,858, and 52 available mobility flows.

All these Erasmus+ programmes are paving the way for a brighter future of higher education in Libya, with modern ways and developments being introduced to students through their individual experiences. (Erasmus 04-07-2017)

[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/introduction-international-dimension-erasmus-plus\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/introduction-international-dimension-erasmus-plus_en)

## **ETHIOPIA'S YEAR-ON-YEAR INFLATION UP TO 8.8 PERCENT**

Ethiopia's year-on-year headline inflation crept up to 8.8 percent in June, up from 8.7 percent the previous month, the East African country's Central Statistics Agency said on Wednesday.



According to a press release issued by the Agency, food inflation slowed to 11.2 percent in June from 12.3 percent the previous month.

Vegetables, pulses, potatoes and other tubers showed a decline in their prices.

However, there was a rise in the prices of fruits during the month under review.

Similarly, non-food inflation was at 6.7 percent in June, up from 4.7 percent in May, mainly because of the rise in the prices of clothing and footwear, and household goods and furnishings, the statement said.

(APA 05-07-2017)



## EGYPT: GREEN STARTUPS MEET INVESTORS FOR COACHING AND PITCHING SESSIONS



Thirteen Green start-ups in Egypt will this month take part in the EU-funded SwitchMed Programme's 'Green Startups Meet Investors' coaching and pitching sessions – one of 8 such activities to improve access to finance for Green Entrepreneurs in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan.

The selected start-ups in Egypt come from sectors ranging from energy efficiency to waste segregation and recycling, mobile solar solutions, distribution and production of dried fruit peel, sustainable clothing production, aquaponics clean farming, sustainability training and education and producing fertilizers from kitchen waste.

Founders of selected start-ups will be attending two coaching sessions in July. The first will help them optimise their business model, company profile and pitch deck. The second will focus on practicing and perfecting the delivery of their elevator pitch.

Based on performance during the coaching period, 8 start-ups will be shortlisted to deliver a 5-minute pitch to a panel of investors during the final 'Green Start-ups Meet Investors' event in August.

The **SwitchMed** sustainable consumption and production programme aims to promote a switch by the Mediterranean economies towards sustainable consumption and production patterns and green economy, including low-emission development, through demonstration and dissemination of methods that improve resource and energy efficiency. It also seeks to minimise the environmental impacts associated with the life cycle of products and services and, where possible, to promote renewable energy. (SwitchMed 04-07-2017)

## NIGERIA TO EXPORT PROCESSED YAM PRODUCTS SOON

Nigeria's Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Audu Ogbeh says that the Federal Government is planning to export processed yam products to Britain, the U.S. and the European Union (EU).



Ogbe told journalists on Tuesday in Lagos that the target markets for the export of fresh yams, which had started, was millions of Africans, especially Nigerians in the Diaspora, who want to buy and eat fresh yam.

"For those who will prefer yam flour and pounded yam, the ministry has identified five companies to process yam tubers into those products. We will get the UK certified standards for the exportation of those yam value chains.

"We will also put in our own checks and balances to ensure that every export meets the set standard. This is to ensure that the processed products are not rejected, once we start to export," he said.

According to Ogbah, Nigeria is under great pressure to export roasted cashew nuts to Japan and all categories of beans and sesame seeds, among others, to India.

Local media reports quoted the minister as saying that the ministry is working with relevant agencies to facilitate exportation activities in the agricultural sector.

He assured that his ministry is putting modalities in place to ensure that all agricultural products for export meet the highest global standards. (APA 05-07-2017)

## **NIGERIA HIRES US TECH GIANTS TO SAVE COSTS AND FIGHT CORRUPTION**

Nigeria is hiring US technology giants such as Oracle and Microsoft as the government invests more to save costs and fight corruption.

An initiative led by California-based Oracle has enabled Nigerian authorities to remove 50,000 so-called ghost workers, or fake entries, from the payroll, according to a presidency statement June 29. This followed Oracle's decision to open an office in Abuja, the capital, in May.

Other companies interested in taking on more work in Nigeria include IBM and Sweden's Ericsson, according to Yusuf Kazaure, MD of state-owned Galaxy Backbone, which provides technology services to the government.

Galaxy Backbone's budget has increased by 30% this year to 4-billion naira (\$12.7m), Kazaure said in a phone interview last month. State funding for the company will probably increase at a similar annual rate for the foreseeable future, he said.

Nigeria is investing 50% more on information and communications technology infrastructure this year, totaling about 41-billion naira, according to budget data. Africa's most populous country is seeking to recover from its worst economic downturn in more than two decades and is using technology to improve government revenue collection and attract investment.

The continent's biggest oil producer is ranked 136 out of 167 countries on Transparency International's 2016 Corruption Perceptions Index, a placing that may improve if the government is able to simplify processes, such as the awarding of state permits, according to Hakeem Adeniji-Adele, director of public sector work at Microsoft Nigeria.

"The government's digitisation drive is imperative in cutting out the middle man," he said in an e-mailed response to questions on June 29. "The existence of middle-men has left room for corrupt and illegal practices to thrive in governance and [when] doing business in Nigeria. Microsoft sees an opportunity to advise and train users."

Nigeria's ministry of industry, trade and investment, Okey Enelamah, is in talks with Microsoft to improve e-services, which ties into the government's objective to improve its World Bank's ease of doing business ranking, Constance Ikokwu, communication adviser to the minister, said in an e-mailed response to questions. (Bloomberg 04-07-2017)

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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), CIP, HTTC, NABC (by posting selected news) and SwissCham-Africa to their Members.



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