

MEMORANDUM

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WILL THE NEW BRICS BANK BREAK WITH TRADITIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODELS, OR REPLICATE THEM?

Just days ahead of a summit of the BRICS group of emerging economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) in which the five countries are expected to formally launch their New Development Bank (NDB), 40 NGOs and civil society groups have penned an open letter to their respective governments urging transparency and accountability in the proposed banking process.

"In terms of the type of development the bank delivers, we don't have signs yet that the NDB will go in a qualitatively different direction than the Washington Consensus institutions." -- Gretchen Gordon, coordinator of Bank on Human Rights

The NDB is expected to finance infrastructure and sustainable development in the global South. With an initial capital of 100 billion dollars, it was born from a combination of circumstances including emerging economies' frustration with the largely Western-dominated World Bank Group (WBG) and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

According to a 2014 Oxfam Policy Brief, another factor leading to the creation of the BRICS Bank was a [major gap in financing for infrastructure projects](#), with official development assistance (ODA) and funding from multilateral institutions meeting just two to three percent of developing countries' needs.

Strained by economic sanctions as a result of the Ukrainian crisis, Moscow has been particularly keen to bring the fledgling lending institution to its feet and has been pushing international rating agencies to rate the bank's debt, as a necessary first step for it to begin operations.

Even without counting the contributions of its newest member – South Africa – the four BRIC nations represent 25 percent of global gross domestic product (GDP) and 41.4 percent of the world's population, or roughly three billion people.

In addition, the borders of these countries enclose a quarter of the planet's land area on three continents.

But even as the five political leaders prepare to take centre stage in the Russian city of Ufa on Jul. 9, citizens of their own countries are already expressing doubts that the nascent financial body will truly represent a break from traditional, Western-led development models.

"The existing development model in force in many emerging and developing countries is one that favors export-oriented, commodity driven strategies and policies that are socially harmful, environmentally unsustainable and have led to greater inequalities between and within countries," said the [statement](#), released on Jul. 7

"If the New Development Bank is going to break with this history, it must commit itself to the following four principles: 1) Promote development for all; 2) Be transparent and democratic; 3) Set strong standards and make sure they're followed; 4) Promote sustainable development," the signatories added. Gretchen Gordon, coordinator of Bank on Human Rights, a global network of social movements and grassroots organisations working to hold international financial institutions accountable to human rights obligations, told IPS, "[Although] the Bank's Articles of Agreement have an article on Transparency and Accountability [...] thus far we haven't seen any indication of operational policies on transparency or anything relating to accountability mechanisms."

"And unfortunately," she added, "there is no open engagement with civil society on these questions."

"In terms of the type of development the bank delivers, we don't have signs yet that the NDB will go in a qualitatively different direction than the Washington Consensus institutions," Gordon told IPS in an email.

"That is why civil society groups in BRICS countries are calling for a participative and transparent process to identify strategies and policies for the NDB that can set it on a different path and actually deliver development."

A primary concern among NGOs has been that the BRICS bank will replicate the old "mega-project" model of development, which has proven to be a [failure](#) both in terms of poverty eradication and increased access to basic services.

A recent international investigation [revealed](#) that in the course of a single decade, an estimated 3.4 million poor people – primarily from Asia, Africa and Latin America – were displaced by mega-projects funded by the World Bank and its private sector lending arm, the International Finance Corporation (IFC).

Though these projects were ostensibly aimed at strengthening transportation networks, expanding electric grids and improving water supply systems, they resulted in a worsening of poverty and inequality for millions of already marginalised people.

Following closely on the heels of this damning expose, a major report by the international watchdog Human Rights Watch (HRW) found that the Bank's lax safeguards and protocols [resulted in a range of rights violations](#) against those who spoke out against the economic, social and environmental fallout of Bank-funded projects.

Behind this track record, rights groups and NGOs are concerned that a new development bank operating on within a broken framework will contribute to the spiral of violence and poverty that has marked the age of mega-projects.

At a time when [one billion people](#) lack access to an all-weather road, 783 million people [live without clean water supplies](#) and [1.3 billion people](#) are not connected to an electricity grid, there is no doubt that the developing world stands to gain greatly from a Southern-led financial institution.

What remains to be seen is to what extent the new bank will move away from the old model of financing and truly set a standard for inclusive and pro-poor development.(IPS 07-07-2015)

AFREXIMBANK GRANTS 15M EURO TO AFRILAND FIRST BANK FOR SME SUPPORT

The African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) has signed on to provide a 15-million Euro financing facility to Afriland First Bank's Côte d'Ivoire subsidiary for the financing of transactions by SME's in that country's key growth sectors.

The signing of the term sheet for the facility was held as part of activities to mark a visit to the Afreximbank Headquarters in Cairo by a delegation of Afriland First Bank Group led by Dr. Paul Fokam, Chairman of the Board of the Group on Wednesday in Cairo, Egypt.

A statement by the Afreximbank on Wednesday said that the facility would support Afriland First Bank's clients engaged in the oil and gas, agribusiness and other key sectors by providing them with export development finance and by developing the capacities of local firms to service big international mining groups operating in the country.

The statement added that Afreximbank President Jean-Louis Ekra said in an address at the ceremony the Afreximbank approved the facility in the context of its commitment to transforming African economies by supporting the SME sector while also promoting intra-African trade.

According to him, the approval of the facility reflects Afreximbank's strong support for financing trade development in key sectors of its member countries and will enable Afriland First Bank to enhance value addition in the Ivorian economy.

Earlier, the President had commended the Afriland First Bank Group for its commitment to Africa's development at the continental level and for promoting the African private sector, saying that that approach complimented Afreximbank's determination to build up the indigenous African private sector

Responding, Dr. Fokam said that the Afriland First Bank Group shared the vision of achieving the transformation of the African economy and changing the continent.

Describing Afreximbank as a unique continental institution which had achieved enviable success in implementing its mandate, he announced that the Afriland First Bank Group would take up shareholding in Afreximbank.

One of the Group's national African subsidiaries would be designated to represent it as a shareholder, he said.(APA 09-07-2015)

BOTSWANA SEEKS BIDS TO BUILD SOLAR PLANTS FOR MINES

Botswana's government launched a bidding process on Tuesday to construct solar power plants near its huge Jwaneng diamond mine and for the nation's northwest, where copper assets are being developed.

"This invitation ... is a request for expression of interest to construct, operate, maintain and decommission at the end of its economic life, a scalable solar power plant," the government said in a notice in the state-owned Daily News.

The notice did not specify the capacity wanted but the minerals and energy ministry has previously stated the government wanted to place 100MW solar power tenders, which would be equally split between Jwaneng and the northwest mines.

Studies have identified Jwaneng as the most suitable place for a solar power plant in the country because of its abundant sunshine.

The Jwaneng diamond mine is operated by Debswana, a joint venture between Anglo American unit De Beers and the Botswana government. (Reuters 07-07-2015)

AFREXIMBANK CLOSES LARGEST EVER TERM LOAN FACILITY

The African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) has announced the closing of the general syndication stage of the largest ever term loan facility in the Bank's history, with the conclusion of a \$458 million and EUR406.5 million two-year, dual tranche facility.

A statement by the Afreximbank on Wednesday said that the facility, which closed on 6 July, attracted aggregate commitments totalling in excess of the equivalent of US\$1,000 million, with the final facility size being set at \$458 million and EUR406.5 million, after a scale-back by the initial mandated lead arrangers.

"This landmark facility positions Afreximbank's to strengthen its support to African businesses through much-needed new investments to help build value addition as we seek to move the continent away from primary products to intermediate manufacturing and to increased processing of export goods," said Jean Louis Ekra, President of Afreximbank.

He described that the large number of institutions participating in the syndication as a reflection of the strong confidence which Afreximbank enjoyed from its financing partners. A total of 34 banks joined the facility.

Launched into general syndication on 20 May 2015, the facility was initially supported by the Arab Banking Corporation (B.S.C.); The Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ, Ltd.; Commerzbank Aktiengesellschaft, Filiale Luxemburg; Credit Europe Bank N.V.; Emirates NBD Capital Limited and Rand Merchant Bank, a division of FirstRand Bank Limited (London Branch).

Others are HSBC Bank plc.; ICBC (London) plc.; Investec Bank plc.; The Korea Development Bank; Mizuho Bank Ltd.; National Bank of Abu Dhabi PJSC; The Standard Bank of South Africa Limited, Isle of Man Branch; and Standard Chartered Bank, as initial mandated lead arrangers and bookrunners.

They were subsequently joined by Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank PJSC; Bank Sohar S.A.O.G.; China Construction Bank Corporation, Johannesburg Branch; Commercial Bank of Kuwait K.P.S.C.; Doha Bank Q.S.C.; The Commercial Bank (Q.S.C.); Qatar National Bank Paris SAQ; and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation Europe Ltd., which came in as mandated lead arrangers.

According to Afreximbank, the facility will be used to repay existing debt, with further proceeds being used for trade finance and general corporate purposes. (APA 09-07-2015)

ANGOLA SPENDS MILLIONS OF DOLLARS TO MANUFACTURE ELECTRICITY METERS

The government of Angola plans to spend US\$432 million installing over 1 million electricity meters by 2017, said Tuesday in Luanda the minister of Energy and Water.

Minister João Baptista Borges, who was speaking at the end of the first ordinary meeting of the National Social Dialogue Council, said the sum already included the construction, within six months, of a factory that will start producing the electricity meters in Angola.

Baptista Borges, cited by Angolan news agency Angop, also said that to date around 170,000 meters had been installed in 12 of Angola's 18 provinces.

This project aims to replace most of the post-paid meters for prepaid meters, and the minister argued that the latter have the advantage of not allowing debts to build up as customers only pay for what they consume.

"The customer manages their consumption and does not accumulate debt and the companies build up revenues to ensure maintenance and operation of the systems," he said. (09-07-2015)

S/AFRICA, RUSSIA SIGN ENERGY MOUS AT BRICS SUMMIT

Pretoria and Moscow have signed two Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) aimed at strengthening efforts between the two countries in the field of nuclear energy, South Africa's Energy Ministry has announced.

The ministry said Thursday that the MoU were signed at the 7th BRICS Summit on Wednesday between the Energy Ministry and the Russian state-owned company, Rosatom, in Ufa, Russia, the venue of the gathering.

The first document signed is the memorandum on cooperation in training personnel for the South African nuclear power industry, followed by the memorandum on cooperation in enhancement of public awareness of nuclear energy in South Africa.

Regarding the training personnel of the South African nuclear power industry, the two countries intend to implement several joint projects for education in the nuclear power industry.

The countries will cooperate in order to provide training for five categories of specialists for the South African nuclear industry -- nuclear power plant (NPP) personnel, engineers and construction workers, staff for operations not related to the power industry, personnel for nuclear infrastructure, students and teachers, the ministry said.

In accordance with this memorandum, both parties will strive to realise education programs for 200 South African candidates at Russian universities and educational organisations, it added.

The memorandum also stipulates the development of educational materials and scientific literature on nuclear power, student exchange programmes for learners of various levels of training, the organisation of internships and summer courses, student competitions and teacher training. (APA 09-07-2015)

PUTIN HOSTS BRICS SUMMIT AMIDST STANDOFF WITH THE WEST

Russian President Vladimir Putin is to meet world leaders today (8 July) including China's Xi Jinping and India's Narendra Modi ahead of the start of a summit of the BRICS emerging economies.

Putin is to hold bilateral talks with leaders of the other BRICS countries - China, Brazil, South Africa and India - in the city of Ufa in the Ural mountains for a summit that Moscow hopes will show it is not cut off, despite its standoff with the West over Ukraine.

South African President Jacob Zuma arrived on Tuesday in Ufa, while Chinese President Xi Jinping was set to arrive Wednesday, as was Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, breaking off a visit to Central Asia. The BRICS summit itself is on Thursday.

Taking place at the same time in the provincial city about 1,100 kilometres from Moscow is a meeting of the regional security grouping, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), at which Putin will meet Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.

Iran has observer status in the SCO, which is made up of Russia, China and the ex-Soviet Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The high-profile gatherings come as Moscow is locked in a bitter standoff with the West over the Ukraine crisis that has seen Putin given the cold shoulder by the EU and the United States.

The hosting of the BRICS summit "emphasised that Russia's isolation is non-existent as before, despite the claims of some politicians in the United States and the European Union," political analyst Alexei Mukhin who heads the pro-Kremlin Centre for Political Information, told Kommersant FM radio.

BRICS "augurs the formation of a new world, in which the West will not dominate", Fyodor Lukyanov, the Kremlin-linked chairman of the Council on Foreign and Defence Policy, wrote in the *Rossiiskaya Gazeta* state daily.

"Behind closed doors and at a working lunch, the leaders will discuss all the current problems on the international agenda including Ukraine, including Greece, and the terrorist threat from the Islamic State group," Yury Ushakov, Putin's top foreign policy aide, told journalists ahead of the summit, quoted by RIA Novosti news agency.

Among the main items on the agenda will be the establishment of a BRICS bank to finance infrastructure projects in member states and developing countries.

"This will probably be one of the world's leading institutions, which will focus on infrastructure projects," Russia's economy minister Alexei Ulyukayev said. (BD 08-07-2015)

US LIFTS VISA PROCESSING BAN ON SUDAN

The United States has announced the lifting of a ban on the processing of immigration visas inside Sudan.

The American embassy in Khartoum released a statement confirming the resumption of immigration visa processing in Sudan for the first time in nearly 20 years.

Starting in July 2015, applicants for all categories of Immigrant Visas, including Immediate Relatives (IR) Non-Preference Family, Fiancee (K visas) and Diversity Visa Lottery winners will be able to interview and process their visas in Khartoum, Sudan" the statement said.

During the ban, residents of Sudan were required to travel to the US embassy in Cairo, Egypt to process their immigrant visas, which meant a great deal of time, expense, and effort.

Since 1993, the US has included Sudan on its list of state sponsors of terrorism and later imposed economic sanctions which Khartoum says has affected vital sectors such as aviation and rail transport aside from incurring losses exceeding \$40 billion.

Washington has called for a resolution of the conflicts raging in the Blue Nile, South Kordofan and Darfur as a prerequisite for normalizing ties with Khartoum.

The removal of the visa processing ban comes weeks before the arrival in Khartoum of U.S special envoy Donald Booth who will hold talks with Sudanese leaders on ways of normalizing relations.(APA 09-07-2015)

GOODS PRODUCED IN ANGOLA NOW REQUIRE BARCODES

Companies manufacturing in Angola will have to introduce barcodes to enable retail regulators to assess the quality and authenticity of their products, a director of the General Tax Administration (AGT) said in Luanda.

Member of the Board of Directors of the AGT, Hermenegildo Gaspar was speaking at a seminar on digital tax verification and goods tracking systems and noted that the General Tax Administration was seeking solutions to reduce tax evasion, reduce the bureaucracy of revenue collection processes and improve the service provided to the taxpayer.

“Prevention of the informal trade of local and imported products, real-time monitoring of goods from their origin, quality assurance and product integrity and automatic calculation of taxes are effective technological tools,” added Gaspar, cited by Jornal de Angola.

That director also said the solutions considered should be speedy as, he admitted, new technologies play a key role because it is important to have a timely and productive response when checking taxpayer records.

The modernisation of the AGT’s services requires investment in information technologies, Gaspar said. The General Tax Administration (AGT) resulted from the merger between the National Tax Directorate (DNI), National Customs Service (SNA) and the Executive Project for Tax Reform (PERT). (09-07-2015)

DEFORESTATION IN TANZANIA TO COST \$3.5B LOSS

Deforestation in Tanzania could cost the nation’s economy \$3.5 billion, based on between 2013 and 2033 on current trends, highlighting the importance of investing in the forestry sector to alleviate poverty and boost growth, according to a new report released Thursday by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Forest ecosystems in the transition to a green economy and the role of REDD+ in the United Republic of Tanzania took into account the market value of timber resources as benefits that arise from deforestation, and costs in terms of lost timber forest products in the future, as well as other forest ecosystem services that will be lost as a result of deforestation.

Forests provide a whole host of ecosystem services to national economies that are not captured in national development planning, and this latest assessment, from Tanzania, provides further evidence of the economic damage that can be wrought when we do not appreciate the full value of nature, said UN Under-Secretary-General and UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner.

Implementation of REDD+, which goes beyond deforestation and forest degradation to include the role of conservation, sustainable management and enhancement of forest carbon stocks, can be an important vehicle for Tanzania, and other nations, to transition to an economic model based on reduced deforestation and increased investment in the sustainable use of forest resources and significant benefits for local communities, he said in a statement issued in Nairobi.

The report by the Tanzania Forest Services, in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) under the UN-REDD Programme to reduce deforestation and forest degradation, and the Centre for Environmental Economics and Policy in Africa based its analyses on the annual deforestation rate of at 372,816 hectares per year between 1995 and 2010, an estimate provided by the National Forest Monitoring and Assessment 2014.(APA 09-07-2015)

DANGOTE TO INCREASE ITS \$150 M PLANT IN CAMEROON WITH NEW LINE

The President of Dangote Group, Aliko Dangote, at the weekend, disclosed the company’s fresh investment drive towards expanding the output from its Douala plant from the current 1.5 million metric tonnes per annum (mmtpa) to over 3 mmtpa by investing in a similar plant in the vicinity of Yaounde.

Dangote during his recent visit to Cameroon met the Prime Minister Philemon Yang , minister of industry , mines and technological development Emmanuel Bonde and the minister of trade Luc magloire Mbarga Atangana, thanked the government for creating an enabling environment for cement production in the country.

He said the company is already in the process of signing a contract for the construction of the additional cement production line, in anticipation of a growing demand for cement occasioned by massive investment in infrastructure.

According to him: “The successful completion of Dangote Cement’s 1.5 mmtpa plant in Douala, Cameroon, made the country self-sufficient in cement production, as plans have commenced for the export of the product to neighboring countries soon.” Aliko Dangote had also informed the prime Minister that the Group has already imported 220 trucks and trailers to resolve the present crisis of transport issues and now the cement can be delivered directly to the customers in the villages and the effects of it will be visible in respect of availability of cement at the right places and as a result may lead to a price stabilization. The importation of trucks will be creating jobs up to 5000 either directly or indirectly.

After Dangote’s foray into cement production in Cameroon, where other operators are also active, local production of the product is now set to outpace local consumption which presently stands at 3.2 mmtpa.

Dangote however urged the Cameroonian government to continue to formulate policies that make investments thrive, saying such investment-friendly policies encouraged him to bring investment into Cameroon in the first place.

While commending the government for attracting investors into Cameroon, Dangote also appealed to them to consider creating an environment that will help protect and sustain the investment in order to ensure viability and good returns.

He said: “In this direction, we want to inform you that today with the commissioning of our plant, the total local production capacity is now 3.2 mmtpa. This is now sufficient to meet local demand and continued importation of cement into the local market in Cameroon will need to be reviewed, especially as the imports come mainly from countries who seem to have policies that encourage dumping of their excess capacity in other countries at highly subsidised prices.

“If there is a conducive environment that allows investment to thrive, the investors will be encouraged to reinvest in output expansion to meet rising demand.

This is our policy everywhere we operate and Cameroon will not be an exception.”

He thanked the people and government for the warm welcome which was extended to his company when it first came seven years ago.

“We are proud to report to you, your excellency, that within the short period that we have been in the market, our 3x brand of cement is already recognised as the first choice for cement users in Cameroon because of its strength and high yield which translates to the best value for money,” he stated.

Prime Minister, expressed his happiness at the completion of the Dangote Cement plant within a record time and stressed that the plant helped his government’s agenda of massive job creation.

Prime Minister said his government would continue to support genuine investors and urged other African entrepreneurs to invest in Africa as Dangote has done.

It would be recalled that the Dangote cement plant in Ethiopia was commissioned last month amid fanfare with the government expressing its appreciation to Dangote for deeming it fit to come to Ethiopia. Dangote had requested the Prime Minister to grace the occasion of official commissioning of the plant within the next quarter.(Business Day 09-07-2015)

S/LEONE: SOFT DRINK PLANT ANNOUNCES TEMPORARY SHUTDOWN

The only company that produces Coca Cola, Vimto and other soft drink beverages in Sierra Leone, has announced a five-week shutdown amidst fears of a shortage of the commodities.

The Sierra Leone Bottling Company (SLBC) Limited said in a statement published on Thursday that it was installing a new state of the art bottling plant that will enable it increase production while ensuring quality products.

“In a bid to continue providing the best quality beverages to our customers, we are pleased to inform the

general public that we have acquired and brought into our premises a brand new state of the art bottling equipment,” the company said, adding that installation of the plant will last for five weeks.

It said, however, that drinks will continue to be packaged in cans, plastic bottles and Tetra Packs.

The problem is that most people in Sierra Leone prefer the bottled drinks, which are less expensive compared to the cans.(APA 09-07-2015)

ANGOLA'S REVENUES FALL BY 85 PCT IN MAY

Angola's revenues, both capital and current, last May totalled around 60 billion kwanzas (US\$485 million), which represents a year on year fall of 85 percent according to a budget implementation report from the Ministry of Finance.

In May 2014, before the fall in international oil prices, Angola's total revenues were in excess of 400 billion kwanzas (US\$3.2 billion).

“This negative variation was due to a decrease in current revenue and capital revenue of 77 percent and 97 percent, respectively,” said the document.

The same budget execution document also shows a cut of 66 percent in Angolan public spending in the month of May, against 2014, totalling 200 billion kwanzas (US\$1.6 billion).

Given these figures and in May alone Angola' budget execution showed a deficit of at least 140 billion kwanzas (US\$1.1 billion). (09-07-2017)

ZIMBABWE: SCORES OF VENDORS ARRESTED IN HARARE CLEAN-UP EXERCISE

Scores of illegal vendors in Harare were arrested on Thursday after clashes with municipal police officers in the Zimbabwean capital.

The clashes occurred when the vendors resisted relocation to new vending sites outside the central business district that were created by the Harare City Council.

Unconfirmed reports said around 30 vendors were arrested and taken to Harare Central Police Station.

The arrests are part of a government pledge to clean-up drive vendors from the capital's crowded pavements.

The Harare City Council said it has space for 6,000 vendors but about 20,000 are operating within the central business district.

Last month vendors asked the government to stop the evictions but Local Government Minister Saviour Kasukuwere announced this week that Harare and other local authorities should proceed with the operation.

At first, the government threatened to use army troops to evict the vendors, but a court ruled against the use of force.(APA 09-07-2015)

ZIMBABWE: ZINARA URGED TO MAINTAIN AIRPORT ROAD

The Institute of Project Management (IPM) yesterday told the Zimbabwe National Road Administration to effectively maintain the Harare International Airport road for it to reach its expected 20-year lifespan.

Speaking during a tour of the Airport Road project yesterday, IPM chief executive Mr Peter Banda commended ZINARA for a job well done in successfully implementing the fundamentals of project management. IPM were the project advisors.

"From an assessment point of view this is a flagship project and it should now be up to ZINARA to periodically maintain the road for it to withstand its 20-year lifespan. In terms of implementation of the project and initiation ZINARA was successful.

"We looked at all the documentations and the quality of the project and we have concluded that maintenance should be their top priority now," said Mr. Banda.

Phase one of the project has already been completed with some protection works of the road still outstanding.

Government last year directed that the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development through ZINARA take over the construction of the 15km stretch of the Harare International Airport road after a contractor had failed to execute the within the given timelines.(The Herald 09-07-2015)

MOZAMBIQUE UNVEILS INVENTORY OF STATE PROPERTY

Mozambican Prime Minister Carlos Agostinho has launched the government's campaign to draw up a complete inventory of state property as part of a drive to improve the management of public finances, state radio reported on Thursday.

According to Radio Mozambique, the government has vowed to undertake a complete inventory every five years and it would take six months to carry out the full inventory.

Rosario stressed that the property owned by the state was growing continually, thanks to public investment, including the building of more schools, hospitals, water, roads, bridges and other infrastructure.

"Valuing state assets requires individual and collective responsibility of all managers of the public administration, and of the country in general," he said.

According to the Maputo-based broadcaster, Rosario challenged public managers to contribute to the development of the public sector by guaranteeing the maintenance, conservation and responsible use of all existing state property and that which may be acquired in the future.

He said that the current campaign seeks to identify all state assets, in order to update the existing records of state property.

He hoped that this would lead to rationalization, better priorities for public expenditure, and an improvement in accountability.(APA 09-07-2015)

GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES CONSTRUCTION OF POWER STATION IN SOUTHERN GUINEA-BISSAU

The government of Guinea-Bissau plans to launch a public tender for the construction of a thermal power plant in Buba, in the region of Quinara, in the south of the country, which will also supply electricity to the Tombali region, the Prime Minister said recently.

Domingo Simoes Pereira, who spoke at a conference entitled "A year of governance," organised jointly by his office and the National Institute of Studies and Research (INEP), did not give details of when construction would begin, the investment involved or the name of the funding body.

At the same time, Simões Pereira gave assurances that the government would, in the near future, acquire three new ships to provide maritime links between the mainland and the island zone of the country and added that a tender had been launched.

The Guinean prime minister also mentioned a set of projects that were in the pipeline, including the country's connection to the submarine cable that allows access to the Internet and the expansion by the end of 2015, of the lighting network in more than 50 rural locations.

He also spoke about the need to create small processing units for agricultural products, the recovery of 6,000 hectares of arable land, of which 1,000 are already in production, creating 27 animal production models and the construction of livestock trading markets in Bissau and Bigene, in the north of Guinea-Bissau. (09-07-2015)

BOTSWANA RAKES IN MILLIONS FROM ALCOHOL LEVY

Local beverage company, Kgalagadi Breweries Limited has paid Botswana government P760 Million (about US\$7.6 million) under the alcohol levy since inception, APA learnt here on Thursday.

The levy was introduced by President Ian Khama in 2008 and currently it stands at 55 percent.

Responding to a question by Gaborone Central Member of Parliament Phenyio Butale, Deputy Minister of Health Alfred Madigele told Parliament that the money was levied on KBL products at the retail level.

Madigele said the government was not aware of any impending job losses at the brewer due to effects of the levy.

He however acknowledged that KBL and other industry players had approached government to raise concerns about the continued rise in the levy and the Ministry of Trade was currently looking at possible solutions.(APA 09-07-2015)

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