

MEMORANDUM

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EU NAVAL OPERATION SIGNS AGREEMENT TO TRAIN LIBYAN COAST GUARD AND NAVY



A Memorandum of Understanding on the training of the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy was signed yesterday in Rome between EUNAVFOR Med Operation Sophia and the Libyan Coast Guard. The Operation will conduct a training programme of Libyan Coast Guards and Navy, in coordination with other EU agencies and international actors, in three consecutive phases - on the high sea on board of EUNAVFOR Med Operation Sophia units; ashore in a Member State or Libya; and on Libyan Coastguard and patrol boats.

The training programme will help improve the security of Libyan territorial waters, enhance the capacity of the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy to perform law enforcement actions to tackle human traffickers and smugglers and contribute to prevent further loss of life at sea.

EUNAVFOR Med Operation Sophia has been active in International waters since June 2015. Its core mandate is to disrupt the business model of human traffickers and smugglers in the Central Mediterranean. (EEAS 25-08-2016)

[EU NAVFOR Med](#)

\$2.67B NEEDED TO FEED 40M STARVING SADC CITIZENS

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) requires about \$2.67 billion to fight hunger that has affected over 40 million people in the region, an official said on Thursday.

The situation is worsening by the day as records show that the number of people at risk of food insecurity has increased by 28 percent in a period of one year.

Margaret Nyirenda, the SADC Director of Food Agriculture and Natural Resources, said most countries experienced a drop in agricultural production in 2015 such that cereal and maize dropped by five and nine million tonnes respectively.

The region has received overwhelming financial assistance from the international community as the United States has pledged \$300 million while the United Kingdom and the European Union pledged 72 million and 60 million respectively, Nyirenda said.

The region has been advised to invest the money as a long-term solution to food insecurity.

In Swaziland alone, over 300,000 people or a third of the total population of 1.1 million, are starving due to drought El Nino and over 38,000 cattle out of 630 000 died due to drought within a period of six months. (APA 25-08-2016)

GLOBAL FUND REPLENISHMENT FIRST BIG TEST FOR NEW DFID CHIEF

The development community is eyeing the [Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria replenishment](#) on Sept. 17 as a litmus test for aid under U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May and the new head of the country's [Department for International Development](#), Priti Patel.

A number of civil society groups have focused their post-Brexit advocacy on the Global Fund and are pushing for London to remove a self-imposed cap of donating 10 percent of the total request. Yet many worry May's trade-driven agenda and Patel's track record as an aid skeptic could mean a funding cut, even as pressure for a generous contribution mounts from the aid community and other top donors, including the European Commission and Canada.

"Now, more than ever, we need to be demonstrating that we are an outward looking nation, which is determined to keep its commitments to the world's poorest," Ali Louis, political affairs adviser for [Bond](#) — a consortium of international aid groups in the U.K. — told Devex, speaking about the upcoming replenishment in Montreal, Canada.

As a founding member of the Global Fund, the U.K. shocked many in 2013 when it cut support from \$1.4 billion to \$1 billion and introduced a cap on contributions, limiting future pledges to 10 percent of the total request.

"It has been done precisely to incentivise others and to make it clear that the fund will work best if it is supported by a broad donor base," Justine Greening, the previous head of DfID said of the cap during a parliamentary [hearing](#).

"Although we are a strong supporter of development and can be proud of our work, we want other countries to follow our lead, not lag behind," she said.

The Global Fund, an international grant-making instrument founded by the Group of Eight in 2002, received less than \$11 billion from donors worldwide for the 2014-2016 period, including \$1 billion from the U.K. government. This year, the Global Fund is seeking \$13 billion. Civil society groups are calling on the U.K. government to increase its pledge to \$1.5 billion, about 14 percent of the total funding request.

A push for more support

When May was elected, many organizations published [calls to action](#) asking the new DfID chief to increase the U.K.'s contribution to the Global Fund to \$1.5 billion and featured the pledge as a centerpiece in their lobbying strategies.

But some advocacy groups reported that DfID contacts have since advised them to reign it in. As she gets her bearings, the new DfID chief is "not keen on intense public advocacy at the moment" from civil society, as one government relations advocacy expert told Devex.

"We hope she's just getting her feet under her, I'm sure there is a lot to take in and we can understand the pressure, I mean it's going to be the first major announcement that DfID makes that will have May and Patel's names on it," they said.

DfID previously [told aid groups](#) it would announce its contribution to the Global Fund after the release of the [Multilateral Aid Review](#). The MAR was originally due out in October 2015 but is currently "still pending," a DfID spokesperson told Devex.

"We were quite confident the MAR would help our argument, if we had a good review for the Global Fund in the new MAR to point to," the source said. DfID awarded the Global Fund positive reviews in the previous [2013 MAR](#), namely for its value for money and delivery in fragile states. Transparency organization [Publish What You Fund](#) also ranked the Global Fund in the top five in its [2016 Aid Transparency Index](#).

The introduction of the Ross Fund, a new 1 billion pounds (\$1.32 billion) fund in the [new U.K. aid strategy](#), which focuses on tackling malaria and developing vaccines "tropical diseases with epidemic potential" also has many wondering whether the new mechanism will affect the U.K.'s commitment to the Global Fund.

Asked how civil society might respond if the U.K. falls short of last year's pledge of \$800 million, the source said, "it would mean the Global Fund doesn't hit [the goal] of \$13 billion, and that would be extremely disappointing."

"It's hard to say how we would respond to DfID after that," the source said. "I mean, we have to continue working with them, so we have to keep that in mind in our response."

A last minute call

Sources working directly with DfID say the donor is putting off announcing its pledge until the replenishment event itself. The U.K. plans to be among the last major donors to contribute, they said. "DfID told us the delay is because the G-20 [meetings] will play a role in the decision, so they're going to wait until the very last minute," one U.K. nonprofit executive told Devex on condition of anonymity because of the same pressure from DfID to limit comments on the replenishment.

"The [G-20] meetings will give them a chance to mull over the other [country] contributions," they said. Some other large donors are already urging the U.K. to give generously. Several sources told Devex Justin Trudeau, the prime minister of Canada, is rumored to have highlighted the Global Fund replenishment as a priority in his first phone call with May in June.

Neither the prime ministers of the U.K. or Canada responded to requests for comment, and a spokesperson for the Global Fund said they could not confirm the claims, "However, we can say that Prime Minister Trudeau is actively leading the replenishment effort, and encouraging broad support from all partners."

The nonprofit executive added, "Canada has put themselves on the line by hosting the pledging conference, they do not want host a summit that doesn't reach the replenishment target."

[Canada](#), the [European Commission](#) and [Italy](#) have announced increases of more than 20 percent in their contributions this year. This mounting international pressure, coupled with [enthusiastic and star-studded lobbying](#) from civil society has resulted in more consultation between DfID the Home Office, the source added.

"The replenishment this year is very tied up with No. 10," the executive said, referencing the prime minister's residence on No. 10 Downing St. She added that the pledge has been "much more political" than in previous rounds. (Devex 25-08-2016)

CAR LEADER OPENS NINTH DONOR MEETING

President Faustin Archange Touadera, on Thursday, opened, the 9th meeting of the International Contact Group (ICG) on the Central African Republic (CAR) in Bangui. The ICG groups the country's eight main development partners.

The meeting will specifically discuss issues pertaining to Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), reforms in the security sector, as well as reconciliation and justice, humanitarian funds against the backdrop of the return of IDPs, economic rehabilitation and the establishment of a new political framework with the restoration of constitutional order.

The purpose of the meeting is to define ways of ensuring the return of lasting peace to the CAR.

In his opening speech, President Touadera said he wanted the meeting to lead to the setting up of a new framework for continued dialogue, to ensure greater international support and solidarity in favor of CAR, which remains a fragile and precarious country.

The International Contact Group for CAR was established after the coming to power of a coalition of rebels called Selekas in 2013, at the initiative of the African Union, to help the then war-torn country find a way out of violence.

Each semester, this group of CAR's partners meets to assess and find solutions to the multitude of problems plaguing the country.

This ninth meeting is the first of President Faustin Archange Touadera's era. (APA 25-08-2016)

MOZAMBIQUE PEACE BROKERS TABLE PROPOSAL FOR IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE

Foreign mediators into the peace negotiations in Mozambique have submitted a proposal to the Mozambican government and opposition Renamo delegations for an immediate cessation of military hostilities as part of efforts to bring effect peace to the southern African country where a full-scale war has been looming, APA learnt on Thursday.

According to local media reports, at the end of a meeting of the Joint Commission on Wednesday, government spokesperson Mario Raffaelli said the proposal has been delivered to President Filipe Nyusi and Afonso Dhlakama, leader of the main opposition Renamo party.

He said the parties are reviewing the document but refused to reveal the exact contents. It is a proposal that takes into account what was discussed in the separate meetings we held with the two parties, Rafaelling is quoted as saying.

The Mozambican authorities have accused Renamo of a series of ambushes on the roads and other attacks in locations in central and northern Mozambique in recent weeks, targetting police stations and civilian facilities such as health centres and economic targets such as the train of Brazilian mining company Vale.(APA 25-08-2016)

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK BACKS INTEGRATION OF CAPITAL MARKETS



African nations are working to bolster cooperation among their stock exchanges, with the goal of better utilizing the region's financial wealth for the development of its economy and infrastructure.

The initiative, backed by the African Development Bank, began with an agreement in July between the bank and various bourses to carry out trials toward an eventual integration, said the bank's president, Akinwumi Adesina.

"We are piloting the integration (of stock exchanges in South Africa, Kenya, Morocco and West Africa) to see how it goes," Adesina told The Nikkei in a recent interview.

Integrated stock exchanges "will make it easier to mobilize domestic savings" into infrastructure investment, he noted. Such steps will allow a "faster regional (economic) integration because capital can move more freely," he said.

For its part, the ADB will provide technical support to enable a company to list shares on multiple exchanges in the region. The bank will also help the bourses' efforts to modernize and standardize information systems.

Infrastructure key to economic development

The total market capitalization of listed African companies came to roughly \$1 trillion as of the end of 2015, of which shares trading on South Africa's Johannesburg Stock Exchange accounted for more than 75%.

Africa is home to a variety of pension funds, government-affiliated funds and mutual funds. But large portions of their assets are held in U.S. and European properties and bonds.

Channeling the continent's financial wealth to develop infrastructure is a high priority for Africa, since poor infrastructure is a major hurdle in the way of economic development.

"The biggest challenge is infrastructure. To diversify the economy, you need roads, you need ports, and you also need to have electricity," Adesina said.

Still growing despite challenges

Declines in commodity prices and an economic slowdown in China -- which is Africa's biggest trading partner -- are significantly impacting the region's economy, according to the ADB president.

"The growth in 2016 will be 3.7%," but figure will turn up to "about 4.5%" next year, he said. "The thing to keep in mind is that the African economy is still very resilient.

"Despite the economic headwind that you see, Africa is still the second fastest growing region in the world," Adesina said. "Africa is very diverse. Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Mozambique and the DRC [Democratic Republic of Congo] - they are all growing above 7%."

Some African countries have sought assistance from the International Monetary Fund as their fiscal conditions worsened amid falling commodity prices. But Adesina is adamant that there is no cause for concern in this regard.

"There is no debt crisis at all," he said. "What you have is an economic headwind challenging everybody." (Asian Review 25-08-2016)

SOUTH AFRICA'S INFLATION SLOWS TO 6%, INTEREST RATE HIKES POSSIBLE

The deceleration of South Africa's consumer inflation from 6.3 percent in June to six percent in July "stemmed mainly from a lower electricity price increase" last month, according to the Nedbank's Economic Unit.

The bank said on Wednesday that it had not "ruled out further interest rate hikes by the South African Reserve Bank as inflation was still expected to average above 6 percent for the remainder of the year."

"The rand currency will play an important role as to the trajectory level of interest rates.

"Factors that will impact the rand and the interest rate trajectory include whether the country's credit rating will be downgraded to below investment grade, the timing of US monetary policy tightening as well as the domestic political situation," the bank added in a statement.

The statement was made as the rand was sliding sharply to major currencies on news that Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan faces possible arrest by the Hawks over its probe into the South African Revenue Service's controversial rogue spy unit.

The Hawks, also known as the Directorate of Priority Crime Investigation, have summoned the minister to appear before it at its Pretoria offices.

Gordhan has publicly declined to do so, saying he was not legally obliged and had done nothing wrong.

"Let me do my work (as minister of the country)," he told the Hawks in response to their summons. (APA 25-08-2016)

SADC AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS TO TAKE UP \$1.2M

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Regional Agricultural Investment and Implementation Plan (RAIP) will be rolled out at a cost of \$1.2 million, APA learns here on Thursday. SADC Ministers of Agriculture convened at Esibayeni Lodge in Matsapha proposed programmes including improved food and nutrition security, agricultural production, productivity and competitiveness and increased access to markets as focus areas.

SADC Regional Agricultural Policy Technical Coordinator Martin Muchero said the benefit of the plan will be the lowering of operational costs and that it will be flexible in the mix of measures to achieve individual country or programme requirements.

“By November 2016 we will have finalised the SADC African Development Fund (ADF) regulations followed by the development of the project’s Constitution and Institutional Management Sustainability Plan in December 2016,” said Muchero.

Other projects and timeframes are the domestication of the ADF regulations by March 2017, the development of the Facility Expenditure Frameworks in June 2017 and their approval and funding by December 2017.(APA 25-08-2016)

GHANA: RURAL BANK INTRODUCES INNOVATION IN ATMS



The board of directors of the bank decided to introduce them to ensure that customers have access to their money with ease, without the stress of having to keep passwords and the dangers of people cloning their cards.

Customers of the bank have now been making transactions with their ATM cards and can also use them to transact business with other banks.

Mr. Samuel Nuamah-Dankaw told the Daily Graphic that, “we want our customers to be bankers of universal banking in the country. Ours are biometric ATM machines, such that by pressing the machine, it recognises the users, beomes fully operational and allows customers to withdraw money”.

He explained that customers, who do not have the benefit of memorising their passwords, can still go ahead and transact business due to the biometric aspects.

Meanwhile, the industry watchers have commended the bank for making that move, saying it could boost security of ATM transactions in the country.(APA 25-08-2016)

GHANA EARNS OVER 18M EURO FROM WOOD EXPORTS IN FIVE MONTHS

Ghana’s wood products exports rose to 33,348 between January and May 2016 and earned the country 18.7 million Euros.

The figure represents 37 percent increase in volume and 23 percent increase in value.

An International Tropical Timber Organisation report, published by the Ghanaian Times, said teak, rosewood, wawa, papao/apa and cabia, all top tree species were exported from Ghana to 39 different markets in the world.

Five of the most notable markets are the United States of America, India, China, Vietnam and Germany, the report said.

It said Ghana also exported woods to African countries and these included plywood, sliced veneer, air and klin dry sanwood, among others.

Ghana has vast forest vegetation cover and contributes largely to timber exports in the world. (APA 25-08-2016)

SOUTH AFRICA: SAA IN LIQUIDATION DANGER, SAYS DIRECTOR



Yakhe Kwinana, the former head of South African Airways' (SAA's) audit and risk committee who resigned earlier this week, says she feared the damage to her reputation, as the possibility of the liquidation or business rescue of SAA came into sharp focus at the end of July.

Risks were heightened by a demand from Standard Bank to repay a R250m loan immediately and the September 6 deadline from the Hong Kong registrar of companies, which threatened to terminate routes to the city due to concerns about the airline's financial sustainability. The registrar wants SAA to submit its financial statements.

SAA urgently requires a R5bn loan guarantee from the Treasury in order to be considered a going concern and to assure lenders of its sustainability. Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan has refused to provide a new guarantee until a new board and management are installed.

Kwinana said on Thursday that the guarantee was now extremely urgent. "What was discussed in the audit committee was that the minister (Gordhan) must give us a report as to a definite answer as to whether he is giving us a guarantee or not. In the event he is giving a guarantee (we must receive it) ... in the event they don't give us the guarantee, then we must apply for business rescue," Kwinana said.

In the past, the airline had had a sense of what was happening with regard to guarantees it applied for, she said. But this time "it seems there is no movement at all on the prospect of the guarantee".

SAA chairwoman Dudu Myeni, who has clashed with Gordhan over her plans for the airline, had not been able to meet him. "She has been trying to get a meeting with the minister, but the minister is not giving her the opportunity," Kwinana said.

SAA referred all queries regarding Kwinana's departure to the Treasury. Spokeswoman Phumza Macanda did not respond to e-mails and calls to her cellphone on Thursday.

"You know we cannot issue the financials without the guarantee, it is creating a huge risk," Kwinana said.

News of Kwinana's unexpected departure has been met with scepticism by the Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse (Outa). It said Kwinana's resignation was an insincere and selfish move that "smacks of a self-preserving act by a person around whom the walls of an investigation are closing fast".

Ivan Herselman, Outa legal director, said he was firm in his belief that SAA directors would be found to be delinquent.

The lobby group has won a series of victories against SAA. In the past two months it has stopped a deal with a R256m kickback to BnP Capital for work the airline did not need.

Kwinana's role in the approval of the appointment of BnP to act as transaction adviser and funder for the refinancing of SAA's R15bn debt was just one "notable act of misconduct" that Outa said "we believe will prove her a delinquent director".

Outa said it would soon make announcements about its investigations into SAA's directors, detailing the action it planned to take, in particular against Kwinana and Myeni.

In the meantime Outa would ask the Treasury to blacklist Kwinana's auditing firm, Kwinana & Associates, and to restrict "all organs of state from entering into any new business which has Ms Kwinana as a director, as her alleged unlawful conduct renders her unfit to provide services to government".

Kwinana says she can rely on the minutes of board meetings to exonerate her.

"In respect of BnP Capital ... my issues are recorded, they are there in the minutes; the issues I raised at BnP, I made sure that they are properly recorded." (BD 26-08-2016)

KENYAN BANKERS REACT TO MOVE TO CAP INTEREST RATES

The Kenya Bankers Association has reacted to Wednesday's decision by President Uhuru Kenyatta to sign a bill into law capping the high interest rates charged by banks, saying that the move is not in the best decision of the majority of people and businesses.

The decision by the president means that Kenyan banks will offer their rates at 4 per cent above the Central Bank Benchmark Rate which currently stands at 10.5 per cent. The highest interest rate a bank could offer is now 14.5 per cent from a current 24 percent offered by some banks.

The banks faulted the action saying there is little evidence from other countries that such interventions have helped majority of citizens.

"The reality is that there is little evidence from other countries that such interventions helped the majority of citizens, and in a number of countries such laws have been reversed to promote financial inclusion," they said in a statement.

While signing bill into law the president noted that had consulted widely and concluded that Kenyans are disappointed and frustrated with the lack of sensitivity by the financial sector, particularly banks and called them insensitive.

"These frustrations are centred around the cost of credit and the applicable interest rates on their hard-earned deposits. I share these concerns," he said.

However, the move by the president has drawn approval from Kenyans who for a long time have a blamed commercial banks for stifling growth in the economy by keeping lending rates sky-high. (APA 25-08-2016)

BRUSSELS PREPARES EU-WIDE SCHEME FOR VISA-FREE TRAVEL AUTHORISATION



The European Commission is preparing a proposal inspired by France and Germany to introduce a “European ESTA” modelled on a US scheme requiring international travellers who do not need a visa to apply online – and pay a \$14 fee – before entering the territory, EurActiv.com can confirm.

A legislative draft will be tabled “in the autumn”, probably in November, EU sources told EurActiv. Paris and Berlin have been pushing for the scheme, which would introduce a pan-European system for international travellers wishing to enter EU territory.

The proposal comes amid heightened security concerns following deadly terrorist attacks in Paris last November and subsequent bombings in Brussels in March.

French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said the “European ESTA” would apply to “persons not subject to visa requirements before they enter the EU territory”, such as US citizens.

The idea was mentioned as part an initiative to “beef up controls at the external borders of the European Union,” unveiled by the French and German interior ministers on Tuesday (23 August).

European ESTA

Cazeneuve said the European system would be modelled on the [Electronic System for Travel Authorisation \(ESTA\)](#) in the United States, an automated system that determines the eligibility of visitors to travel to the country. Similar schemes exist in Canada and Australia.

A European ESTA would be “a way of ensuring you don’t have visa overstayers,” said Natasha Bertaud, spokesperson at the European Commission in charge of home affairs.

The idea was first floated in June when EU Commissioners Dimitris Avramopoulos and Frans Timmermans presented a series of visa liberalisation proposals for Georgia, Ukraine, Kosovo and Turkey, together with an entry/exit system.

It can be traced back to 2011 when consulting firm PWC performed a [study for the Commission](#), presenting a range of policy options on how to put a European ESTA system in place.

“We welcome [the Franco-German proposal] of course,” Bertaud told EurActiv in e-mailed comments. “That’s why we announced in June that we would be making proposals this autumn.”

Visa liberalisation

Earlier in May, Brussels proposed lifting visa requirements for Turkish citizens as a part of a controversial readmission deal allowing EU countries to send illegal migrants back to Turkey when they are not eligible for refugee status in Europe.

France has reintroduced internal border controls with other countries in the passport-free Schengen area after the November attacks. These will be maintained “as long as the threat will require,” Cazeneuve warned, saying Schengen rules “will have to evolve”.

The French and German ministers also called for the organisation of a “crisis simulation exercise” by the end of the year at the EU’s external borders to “test the effectiveness and speed of deployment” of the European Border and Coast guard, which will expand on the current Frontex agency.

Other proposals put forward by Paris and Berlin include new EU rules that to compel operators of mobile messaging services to provide access to encrypted content to terrorism investigations.

In a related move, EU countries have stepped up anti-terrorism coordination with a pilot project called ADEP, which enables automated transmission of judicial records between police services. “Finland, Spain, Hungary, Ireland, France and Germany are already part of this project,” Cazeneuve said.

“We now ask that this project works well, be extended to all Member States of the Union”.

The Franco-German proposals are being put forward ahead of an informal summit in Bratislava on 16 September where EU member states will discuss the way forward after Britain’s decision to leave the European Union. (EurActiv 25-08-2016)

MOZAMBICAN LEADER ENCOURAGES PRODUCTION OF PIGEON PEAS

President Filipe Nyusi of Mozambique has encouraged farmers in Sofala province to increase production of pigeon peas, a crop which now has a ready export market in India where it is a major source of protein for the population.

According to state-controlled Radio Mozambique, Nyusi made the call at a ceremony to open a pigeon pea processing plant and a cement factory in the port city of Beira late on Wednesday.

Nyusi said the two facilities can help solve the current economic crises facing the country, but they need combination with other measures to reach such a level.

Nyusi says the fiscal hardships require an assortment of activities, not isolated measures.

The head of state has been touring the central region when he opened the cement factory and the pigeon pea processing plant.

Nyusi said when Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Mozambique in July, they performed a symbolic exchange of pigeon pea seeds.

He said Mozambique is now delivering the product and farmers should increase production of the crop, since the Indians have pledged to buy for all that is produced.

The Mozambican leader also visited a fisheries processing plant at the port of Beira and inaugurated a truck-screening terminal. (APA 25-08-2016)

SAMSUNG AIMS TO DIGITISE CLASSROOMS IN WEST AFRICA



Samsung Electronics West Africa has commissioned the Samsung Smart School Project for teachers and students in Calabar. The initiative, which is an integral part of Samsung's 'Smart School Rollout' scheme, is aimed at digitising classrooms on the platform of mobile learning across unity schools in Nigeria. Samsung had opened similar Smart Schools in Abuja and Ogun state.

Launched across the country in partnership with the various state governments, the Samsung Smart School Project will ensure that secondary schools benefit from the Digital Classroom, which is equipped with mobile devices, electronic boards, thin client monitors, learning contents all from Samsung Electronics West Africa and her partner, Etiam Global, for more collaborative, engaging and interactive education.

The platform will focus on the training of 50 teachers in basic computer literacy, provision of access to tools teachers need for impactful teaching, empowering them to access digital content which can be shared with students at any location; facilitating better conduct and monitoring of student's progress, and also providing students with learning tools from any location through Samsung's mobile devices.

Speaking at the event, which held at Government Secondary School, State Housing Estate, Calabar, Managing Director of Samsung Electronics West Africa, Mr. Changwook Lee, represented by the Head, Enterprise Business solution/IT Business, Mr. Anu Rotimi Agboola, said that Samsung has decided to equip the country's teachers with the skills and motivation they need to lead their students towards a successful future in the 21st Century. He stated that, "the global initiative by the company is an indication of the value it places on people and its willingness to help them build and change the society the way they desire."

“In keeping with this aspiration, the Smart School for Teachers will focus on equipping and training teachers in basic computer literacy, as well as providing them access to the tools they need to use ICT for curriculum development and more impactful teaching. The aim is to empower teachers to access digital content, share it with their students, use it to conduct assessments and monitor their students’ progress continuously,” Lee added.

Cross Rivers State Governor, His Excellency, Prof. Benedict Ayade, who was represented by the Deputy Governor, Prof. Ivara Ejemot Esu, in his goodwill message, said, “Cross River and Samsung share a common belief that the Smart School/Mobile learning concept will make a positive impact on the lives of our student and the people. We need to work together to make quality education delivery a reality in Cross River State”.

The exposure of technology to the classroom, along with guidance from teachers, who understand the technology, will be the first step for students to gain the skills they need to flourish in the rapidly advancing and ICT-centric world.

The Samsung Smart School in Calabar is among the first three of nine ICT labs that Samsung plans to launch across Nigeria. It is estimated that over the next five years, a total of 5,000 teachers will receive training through the Samsung Train- the- Trainer approach, with a further 100,000 students impacted as secondary beneficiaries in Cross River State. This is line with the mission of the Cross River State government to use education to foster development of the people to their full potential in the promotion of a strong, democratic and prosperous state.(IT News Africa 25-08-2016)

SIERRA LEONE: MINING COMPANY IN TALKS FOR POSSIBLE MERGER

In what promises to be one of the biggest mergers in Sierra Leone's mining sector, leading diamond mining company OCTEA is said to be in talks for the sale of one its interests in the country.

According to sources on Wednesday, the London listed Stella Diamonds, which is already operating in Sierra Leone, is planning to take over OCTEA's operation in Tongo in the east of the country with the goal of forming the second largest diamond mine in the country.

OCTEA is currently the largest diamond miner in the country through its investment in the diamond-rich Kono district, also in the east.

The consolidated project will produce a combined 250, 000 carats per year of high value diamonds, a statement attributed to Stella on Wednesday said.

The resulting operation, according to the same statement, will be a separate new company with a total estimated resources of 5 million carats of the precious stone.

Stella is a diamond mining company that focuses on West Africa. Last Year, it applied for a large scale license in Sierra Leone after years engaging in small scale mining.(APA 25-08-2016)

JIM KIM TO SEEK 2ND TERM AT THE WORLD BANK

World Bank President Jim Yong Kim formally declared his intention to seek a second term, as the bank’s executive directors approved a new, three week process to select the institution’s next leader.

In a board meeting Tuesday, the bank’s executive directors expressed “unanimous support for an open, merit-based and transparent selection, with nominations open to all member countries and transparent consideration of all candidates by the board.” Countries will have until Sept. 14 to submit nominees to challenge Kim.

Although more open to outside input than in the past, the relatively short window for nominations seems to pave the way for Kim's reappointment. It has [disappointed critics](#) within the bank who had called for a more competitive selection process.

"I have informed the dean of the board that I would be honored to be considered for a second term as head of the World Bank and continue to work with its dedicated staff," Kim said in a statement.

[Reports surfaced](#) earlier this month that Kim asked the board to accelerate the appointment process, despite 10 months still remaining in his first term. That prompted a pointed letter from the World Bank's staff association, decrying the "crisis of leadership" at the bank and urging the board of directors to open the presidential appointment process to broader competition and greater transparency. Others have since followed suit in pressing for a bolder commitment to reform in this appointment cycle.

The timeline agreed by the board will likely mean that the World Bank president is appointed before the U.S. presidential elections — and well before the next U.S. administration takes office.

In an unofficial agreement between the institutions' largest shareholders, the World Bank president is chosen by the United States, while the Europeans select the managing director of the [International Monetary Fund](#). Christine Lagarde was reappointed to that post in February, running unopposed. The IMF's nomination window for that process was 20 days, compared to the World Bank's 21 days for this one.

In 2011, the World Bank's board signed onto an "open, merit-based, and transparent process," and the 2012 appointment saw the first semblance of global competition for the post in the institution's 70-year history.

Developing country candidates Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the former Nigerian finance minister, and José Antonio Ocampo, the former Colombian finance minister, entered the race. Ultimately Kim, with U.S. backing, became the 12th American male World Bank president in a row.

According to the bank's press release after Tuesday's board meeting, the 2012 appointment was in keeping with the board's commitment to opening up the process. "The principles were followed to conduct an open and transparent process in 2012, which resulted in the appointment of Dr. Kim," the statement reads.

The board, in its 2011 agreement, spelled out the criteria by which they would evaluate any nominees.

They are: "a proven track record of leadership; experience of managing large organizations with international exposure, and a familiarity with the public sector; the ability to articulate a clear vision of the World Bank Group's development mission; a firm commitment to and appreciation for multilateral cooperation; and, effective and diplomatic communication skills, impartiality and objectivity in the performance of the responsibilities of the position."

Kim's tenure has [not been a smooth one](#). He has undertaken a massive reorganization meant to help the institution's expertise move more freely across regions, simplify the bank's internal bureaucracy, and cut \$400 million in costs. That effort has generated significant "[noise](#)," including an anonymous "yellow flyer" campaign of staff dissent, multiple senior staff reshuffles, and protests over executive bonuses.

"The board is committed to an open, transparent process, and I fully respect the selection principles adopted by our executive directors in 2011 and followed in 2012," Kim said in his statement.

The nomination period opens on Aug. 25 and closes Sept. 14. At that time, the executive directors will publish the names of up to three shortlisted candidates, who will then be interviewed for the job.

Consideration of candidates will take two to three weeks, according to the bank's press release — which would suggest an announcement just ahead of the bank's annual meetings in early October. (Devex 24-08-2016)

GAMBIAN ENTERPRISES ARE NEGLIGIBLE EMPLOYERS

Enterprises in The Gambia's private sector are negligible employers, according to a report released by the country's economic think tank on Thursday.

Under one percent of local enterprises in the smallest country on mainland Africa employ a paltry ten people, the report from a five-year strategic study by The Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA) indicated.

It said the overwhelming majority of private sector employers in The Gambia are micro-enterprises tied to an informal economy which otherwise accounts for 60 percent of national GDP.

It said, more than half of micro enterprises have no employees and many of those which do employ only family members on an unpaid basis.

The report further emphasized that many owners or operators of these micro enterprises are reluctant businesspersons, noting that they are into business because the unpleasant alternative was unemployment and destitution.

"A significant number of micro enterprises in The Gambia can thus be described as survivalist rather than entrepreneurial" it observed.

The document also made suggestions for the way forward one of which is strengthening the business climate and shoring up the capacities of enterprises based on their ability and desire to grow and create significant wealth and employment. (APA 25-08-2016)

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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 - Corporate Council on Africa (USA), ELO, HTTC, NABA, NABC (by posting selected news) and SwissCham-Africa to their Members.



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