

MEMORANDUM

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'THREATS' LEAD ZIMBABWEAN EMBASSY TO STOP BID TO INTERVENE IN MUGABE-ENGELS MATTER

But AfriForum, representing Gabriella Engels, says this shows the embassy was just trying to frustrate the process and ensure justice was delayed, after Grace Mugabe allegedly attacked Engels at a hotel in Sandton

The Zimbabwean embassy has withdrawn an application to intervene in the matter between South African model Gabriella Engels and Zimbabwean first lady Grace Mugabe.

Advocate Simba Chitando, representing the Zimbabwean embassy, announced this on Friday in the High Court in Pretoria, after Acting Judge Harshilabhen Koovertjie delivered judgment.

The Zimbabwean consul-general alleged in his instructions to Chitando, which Chitando read out, that "various threats had been made against him [Chitando] while representing the Zimbabwean embassy".

"The conduct of various individuals in this matter has made the Zimbabwean embassy's future involvement in this matter undesirable. The Zimbabwean embassy, regardless of the outcome of these proceedings, shall no longer participate in these hearings."

AfriForum's lawyer, Willie Spies, representing Engels, said those allegations were "absolute nonsense". "I think it is just an effort to taint the process to put them in a position to attack the process later."

Spies said if the allegations were true, they needed to be investigated and reported to the police.

In her judgment, Koovertjie referred the matter to the opposed motion court.

She ordered the Zimbabwean embassy to file an affidavit within seven days to confirm if they represented Mugabe, or what the basis for their intervention was. AfriForum then has seven days to file an answering affidavit.

Spies was surprised by the Zimbabwean embassy's withdrawing its application.

"To me it actually shows that they were just showing delaying tactics. The mere purpose of the involvement of the embassy from the outset was to frustrate the process, to delay the process and to ensure that justice is delayed."

AfriForum wanted to add Mugabe as a respondent to the case, as the first step in reviewing the decision by the South African government to grant diplomatic immunity to Mugabe.

Engels has accused Mugabe of assaulting her and two friends at the Capital West 20 Hotel in Sandton, on August 13.

In her founding affidavit, Engels details how she and her friends visited "acquaintances", when Mugabe burst in with her bodyguards. Engels and her friends were visiting Mugabe's sons, Chatunga and Robert jnr.

Engels alleges Mugabe hit her on the forehead with an electric cord with a plug attached. She also had bruising on her thighs.

In a statement, Mugabe denied assaulting Engels, saying an "intoxicated and unhinged" Engels had attacked her with a knife.

Mugabe said she had intervened on behalf of her sons, who were "in trouble with a drunken young woman".

Engels and her mother Debbie were not in court on Friday.(BD 06-10-2017)

LIBERIA: MAIN AIRPORT TO BE SHUT FOR RUNWAY REPAIRS

Liberia's main airport in Monrovia will be closed to air traffic on the eve of the country's landmark presidential and parliamentary elections for repair works on its runway.

The Liberia Airport Authority (LAA) said in a statement on Sunday that it will shut the Roberts International Airport on October 9, to resume second phase rehabilitation work on its runway.



According to the LAA, the rehabilitation will also include the installation of new aeronautical ground lighting systems.

“In view of this development, and in consultation with the airlines, the runway will be closed to air traffic on Monday through Thursday, beginning on October 9” the LAA statement said.

It said the alternative way to enter Liberia during the closure would be by the country’s land borders with Guinea, Cote d’Ivoire and Sierra Leone, with another options by sea. (APA 08-10-2017)

GHANA AIMS TO REGAIN TOP SPOT IN COCOA PRODUCTION



Professor of Food Science and Technology at the University of Ghana, Emmanuel Afoakwa, and other researchers at a cocoa farm

Ghana is home to the world’s favourite cocoa beans. They’re bigger in size, have a higher butter content and superior flavour – all qualities which make Ghana’s cocoa the world standard against which all cocoa is measured.

But while cocoa used to be the biggest foreign exchange earner for the West African country, contributing about 45 percent of the total foreign exchange earnings, now the commodity barely provides 25 percent.

“They [farmers who sell their lands] don’t know what they are doing because cocoa is a legacy that can be left to children, unlike one-time cash.” --Nana Kwasi Ofori of the Cocoa Farmers Association
Farmers in Ghana follow a strict routine in the planting, harvesting and drying of cocoa, supported and monitored by the government regulator, the Ghana Cocoa Board.

They employ natural drying of the beans in the sun (instead of heating), turning the beans at regular intervals for not less than a week. This natural and painstaking means of drying ensures the beans turn out their characteristic golden brown. The layers of monitoring at the time of purchase are all part of government's intervention.

The country is the second biggest supplier of cocoa worldwide, beaten only by its West African neighbour, Cote D'Ivoire. But Ghana was once the world champion. It lost the first spot to its neighbour in the 1970s after government reduced the price given to farmers, thereby discouraging many from going into the venture.

Exchanging Golden Pods for Golden Nuggets

Several factors have contributed to the shortfall. Distribution of free or subsidized farm inputs such as fertilizers or chemicals have been fraught with several challenges.

"Not all of us were given the free fertilizers. And they were politicizing it. Someone with a small farm of four acres could be given 50 bags of fertilizer while others with very big farms were given less," Abusuapanyin Kwabena Amankwaa, a cocoa farmer, told IPS.

Central Regional Chief Cocoa Farmer Nana Kwasi Ofori also said that "farmers who are not cultivating cocoa were given some of the inputs".

CEO of the Cocoa Board Joseph Baidoo has said his interactions with farmers revealed that Ghana's fertilizers – which are not supposed to be for sale – were in fact being sold in Nigeria, Gabon and other neighbouring African countries, adding that this meant the free fertilizers were given to political party loyalists who were not cocoa farmers.

Diseases such as black pod, swollen shoot, and capsids have had a field day as a result.

The new government decided to discontinue the free fertilizer programme following what it says were complaints from farmers. Instead, it wants to sell the fertilizer at subsidized prices.

Ghana has an annual cocoa production target of one million tonnes. That target was achieved in 2011. Since then government has struggled to maintain the target, with annual production hovering around 800,000 tonnes.

In previous years, government decided to absorb the cost and technical assistance needed to apply the right chemicals and fertilizers to cocoa farms nationwide – initiatives called the Mass Spraying Exercise and the Hi-tech Programme, respectively.

Government also created the Rehabilitation Programme where old, less productive trees were felled and replaced with new, more-yielding hybrid seedlings for free. This saw a big dividend in cocoa bean output, with the country recording its highest cocoa output of over 1 million tonnes in 2011. But government has not been able to sustain the programme.

Probably the biggest threat to hit the cocoa industry in recent times is illegal mining, locally called galamsey. The upsurge in the search for gold between 2012 and 2016 has threatened the livelihoods of several cocoa farmers as galamsey takes over cocoa farms.

"Some chiefs are part of the problem which we are facing. They sell the land to the miners and collect the money so sometimes farmers are not even compensated," said Nana Kwasi Ofori, an executive member of the Cocoa Farmers Association.

Most farmers are tenant farmers who work on lands owned by chiefs or families. Fifty-three-year-old Adwoa Oforiwaa, a cocoa farmer in the Central Region, says she was only given 500 cedis (about 112 dollars) as compensation when galamsey operators took over a good part of her farm.

"When they [galamsey operators] come, they tell you they have orders from the chiefs or even government, and they start the destruction," she added.

A journalist in the Western Region – the leading cocoa-producing region in Ghana – Yaw Obrempong says some farmers willingly sell off their cocoa farms for ready cash.

"If the galamsey operator is here with a bag full of cash, why won't I sell my land instead of staying in a queue for over two weeks only to be given a bag of fertilizer?" Obrempong noted.

He says some farmers claim they had to pay bribes in order to get farm inputs from the government. Other farmers sold their lands when the much-needed labour to work on the cocoa farms shifted into illegal mining.

But Nana Kwasi Ofori says, "They [farmers who sell their lands] don't know what they are doing because cocoa is a legacy that can be left to children, unlike one-time cash."

The galamsey invasion has affected a good part of the 1.7 million hectares of cocoa farms in the country. The Government has launched an anti-galamsey crusade to flush out illegal miners. With the

help of a taskforce including the military, several arrests and confiscation of galamsey equipment have been carried out.

The launch of the Media Coalition against Galamsey has also given government a shot in the arm. Government has moved the crusade a notch higher with the announcement by the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources of its intention to procure drones at the cost of 3 million dollars for surveillance.

Guaranteed Pricing

Nonetheless, cocoa remains the most important economic crop for Ghana, raking in about 2 billion dollars annually, contributing to some 4.22 percent of the country's GDP. Such a feat has been achieved through government interventions such as price stability. For instance, the world price of cocoa beans has plummeted from about 3,122 dollars per tonne last year to about 1,900 dollars this year, yet the Cocoa Board maintained a producer price of 7,600 cedis per tonne (1,700 dollars).

The Board is able to cushion farmers with a Stabilization Fund established some ten years ago, as well as other sources of funds. This presents a big advantage for cocoa farmers in Ghana over other cocoa-producing countries on the continent this year.

For instance, the Ivorian government has slashed the prices of cocoa almost by a third, to 700 CFA per kg (about 1,300 dollars per tonne). Some Ghanaians have expressed concern that the development is likely to reverse the dreaded cross-border smuggling of cocoa (Ghana has in the past seen a lot of its cocoa smuggled to their neighbor countries because of price differences).

But professor of Food Science and Technology at the University of Ghana, Emmanuel Afoakwa says "it is not likely because Ghana is bent on protecting its premium quality and so there is tight security to ensure cocoa does not move from Cote D'Ivoire and other countries into the country".

He adds that "farmers must cherish that government is interested in their welfare because government now loses about 500 dollars on every tonne of cocoa bought from them".

The Ghana Cocoa Board also has an arrangement to pay for the felling and replanting of old and diseased cocoa trees. The board has announced that it will be giving away about 60 million seedlings to farmers for replanting. The exercise, called rehabilitation, is meant to boost output.

The Government also has a programme to woo youth into the sector to replace aging cocoa farmers. The Board is providing support for all young cocoa farmers by giving them hybrid pods, improved seedlings, free fertilizer and inputs, a farmer business school programme, as well as extension support to boost cocoa production. Cocoa farmers are also pushing for a Cocoa Farmers Pension Scheme which they believe will help attract the youth.

Cocoa Processing

To maximize revenue from cocoa, the government has its eyes on adding value to the cocoa it exports. The global cocoa market has an estimated value of 9 billion dollars for unprocessed cocoa beans, about 28 billion dollars for semi-processed/intermediate products and a whopping 87 billion dollars for fully processed/final products. In an attempt to get its share of the 87-billion-dollar cake, government has set a target of processing 50 percent of its exported cocoa.

Currently, the seven processing companies operating at various levels of value-addition process about 25 percent of the county's exported cocoa. But most of the processed cocoa are exported in semi-processed form of cocoa paste.

Prof. Afoakwa says the huge capital requirement involved in processing cocoa into finished products fit for export could be a big hurdle for Ghana. Moreover, there are high tariff walls with regards to the export of processed products. For example, the European Union levies no duties on the import of raw cocoa beans, but levies a 7.7 percent and 15 percent duty on cocoa powder and cocoa cake, respectively.

He believes heightening the campaign on the consumption of cocoa products would be one way of tackling the issue.

"I'm working with Ghana Cocoa Board to conduct the cocoa product processing competition and we are bringing together ten different polytechnic institutions to develop new products using cocoa. We are going to invite high schools to come witness it. What we are trying to do is to advocate for higher consumption of cocoa products and this can be done when we know the kind of different products that we can make out of cocoa," he added.) (IPS 05-10-2017)

CAR CHASES CFAF38BN TO REVIVE LIVESTOCK SECTOR

The government of the Central African Republic on Monday adopted a five-year plan to upgrade its livestock sector, a project which will require over CFA38 billion in investment.



The plan, to be supported by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), aims to boost the livestock sector, alongside employment and economic development and food security.

Beside FAO, the government of CAR is yet to convince other donors to endorse the five-year plan.

The European Union is already funding a vaccination campaign against rinderpest since last year.

The security crisis plaguing the country has left a negative impact on the livestock sector.

The sector has suffered such seriously that a good part of the livestock is found either in Cameroon or in the two Congos.

Cattle breeders, most of them Fulani have lost their animals in reprisal after they were accused by anti-Balaka fighters of taking part in the conflict in CAR.

The plan therefore aims to revive the sector with the return of breeders. (APA 10-10-2017)

UFM AND GERMANY JOIN FORCES TO TACKLE UNEMPLOYMENT AND PROMOTE TRADE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN



The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) yesterday signed a joint declaration, entering into a stronger partnership that seeks to push forward regional integration, support the creation of a wide range of employment opportunities, in particular for young women and men, and boost trade within the region and beyond. To achieve these goals, the BMZ will support the UfM Secretariat with a €2 million advisory project for the years 2017-2019.

“The Union for the Mediterranean is an action-oriented organisation designed to build and operationalise a positive agenda for the region. The agreement with the BMZ is a concrete and substantial contribution to UfM activities and overall regional efforts towards the three strategic objectives of human development, stability and integration,” said Sudqi Al-Omouh, UfM Deputy Secretary General for Business Development.

[Union for the Mediterranean \(UfM\)](#)

NO ELECTRICITY FOR 50 MILLION NIGERIANS

Nigeria’s Vice President Yemi Osinbajo has said that 50 million people out of the country’s 180 million population have no access to electricity.



Speaking at the Financial Times Africa Summit in London on Monday, Osinbajo said that the present administration’s efforts to diversify power sources in order to improve access, it had started a programme of providing solar power in 20,000 homes in rural villages.

He said the fortune of residents of Wuna village, outside Abuja, where the project commenced from, had improved drastically with night life returning to the village, which hitherto shut down at about 7pm until daylight.

A Nigerian national newspaper, the Punch quoted Osinbajo as saying at the event that the Nigerian Government invested N1.3tn in infrastructure in 2016, making it the largest capital spending in the country’s history and that the government was ready to increase the figure in the 2018 budget.

“Strong visionary leadership committed to good governance has proved to be critical where our economies have recorded successes. Nigeria earning 60 percent less revenue than five years ago, last year invested N1.3tn in infrastructure, the largest capital spending in its history and will increase that in the 2018 budget.

“Good governance and prudent management of resources means that you can do more with less. Ethiopia delivered its light rail and within Addis Ababa ahead of schedule and with no cost overruns.

“Rwanda has shrugged off the tragedy of the genocide of barely 20 years ago, delivering on infrastructure and earned its place as the second easiest place to do business in Africa. Ghana is galloping away with GDP growth figures this year of nine percent,” the local newspaper, the Punch quoted Osinbajo as saying in London.

According to Osinbajo, there is a commitment to providing much-needed infrastructure in the form of power stations, ports, rail networks and roads that not only bring down the cost of doing business, but

also actively engage the private sector in funding, operation and or ownership across the entire continent.

Osinbajo said that Nigeria recently announced the commencement of the process for the concession of its major airports with a view to attracting world-class investors.

In addition to ongoing investments in production and infrastructure, the Nigerian Government was undertaking extensive ease of doing business reforms and that the government had worked assiduously to improve the macroeconomic conditions. (APA 10-10-2017)

CALL FOR CULTURE PROJECTS LAUNCHED IN TUNISIA



The EU-funded 'Tfanen - Tunisie Créative' project is launching the 2nd phase of its calls for proposals for three cultural funds with a total budget of €1.75 million (approximately 5 million TND). The deadlines for submission vary from 3 November to 2 December, depending on the funds.

The three funds are the '[Fund for local cultural involvement](#)', the '[Fund for support to creativity](#)' and the '[Fund for the sustainability of festivals and the valorisation of heritage](#)'.

The three calls for projects are open to various cultural operators, such as civil society actors, cultural entrepreneurs, public sector institutions and artists. Funding will range from €10,000 to €100,000 per project (depending on funding and lots), for projects ranging from 3 to 12 months.

Projects promoting access to culture at local level, particularly in disadvantaged areas, which will be developed and managed in networks by different types of partners (civil society organisation, state bodies, independent cultural actors, etc.) will be valued. Particular attention will be paid to projects benefiting young people and women.

"Culture is one of the engines of the democratic transition," said the Ambassador of the European Union to Tunisia, Patrice Bergamini: *"It unites and stimulates, it offers a unique space for sharing, and in Tunisia, it is one of the priorities of the European Union's action, which puts at the disposal of all the Tunisian cultural actors new financing opportunities and capacity-building activities in order to develop a quality cultural offering throughout the country."* (EEAS 06-10-2017)

[Tfanen - Tunisie Créative website](#)

ETHIOPIA TO DEVALUE CURRENCY BY 15 PERCENT

Ethiopia will be devaluing its currency by 15 percent as of Wednesday, a senior public official has said.



Accordingly, one dollar will be exchanged for 26.9303 Ethiopian Birr.

Dr Yohannes Ayalew, chief economist and vice Governor at the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) on Tuesday told journalists that the devaluation of the Ethiopian Birr is intended to boost earnings from exports, which he said has declined over the years.

The interest rate on deposits will increase by 7 percent from 5 percent now, he also disclosed.

Ethiopia's export volume has seen growth by 24.1 percent between 2003 and 2012 though the earnings have been deemed unsatisfactory, he continued.

The government blamed the decrease in prices of commodities on the global market for the poor export performance, mainly between 2011 and 2016.

For the past five years, the fluctuation of commodity price in international market and strength of USD relatively against other foreign exchanges, lead to the decline of Ethiopia's export commodities, especially coffee, oilseed, gold, and leather.

"The decrease in prices highly affected Ethiopia's main export commodities such as coffee, oil seeds, leather and leather products, as well as gold."

The World Bank has been suggesting that the Ethiopian government should devalue its currency by at least 10 percent, pointing out that in real terms it may lead to a five percent increase in export earnings and two percent increase in growth.

The government has, therefore, made this adjustment on exchange rates in a bid to attain the target set out for this fiscal year, which began on July 9, 2017 and to increased earnings from agricultural, mining and the service sector, he added.

Ethiopia last devaluated its currency in 2010 by 17 percent, but the value of Birr against international currencies has been depreciated from time to time due to floating exchange rate.

Yohannes said that the devaluation will not affect the inflation rate, as the government has been taking measures to control it.

The devaluation is expected to encourage companies to export huge amounts of commodities and could also help to suppress the black market. (APA 10-10-2017)

COTE D'IVOIRE : QUATRIEME SEMAINE DE GREVE A LA SOCIETE DES CIMENTS D'ABIDJAN

La moitié des employés de la Société des ciments d'Abidjan est en grève depuis le 12 septembre. Le Syndicat à l'origine du mouvement dénonce notamment un partage des charges salariales au profit des employés expatriés et au détriment des travailleurs locaux.

Depuis la mi-septembre et le début d'une grève du personnel, la Société des ciments d'Abidjan tourne au ralenti. « Le 12 septembre, nous avons lancé un débrayage d'avertissement de soixante-douze heures. Comme la direction ne réagissait pas, nous l'avons transformé en grève illimitée le 15 septembre », explique Kouacou Marc Adje, le secrétaire général du Syndicat du personnel de la Société des ciments d'Abidjan (Syptesca).



Les grévistes se rendent chaque matin sur le site de l'usine

Parmi les principales causes de la grogne des salariés, la répartition de la valeur ajoutée réalisée dans l'entreprise : « Nous créons 14 milliards de valeur ajoutée chaque année. Sur ces 14 milliards, seulement 2 servent à régler les charges du personnel, et la moitié de cette somme est accaparée par la rémunération des 5 expatriés de la société. Nous sommes 252, 150 permanents et une centaine de travailleurs temporaires à devoir nous partager le reste », poursuit le représentant du personnel. Inacceptable aussi, pour Kouacou Marc Adje, le montant des dividendes versés aux actionnaires « qui sont passées depuis 2014 de 3 milliards à 6 milliards de F CFA ».

Travailleurs précaires

Depuis le début de la grève, lui et ses collègues engagés dans le mouvement se présentent chaque matin dans l'enceinte de l'entreprise, aux heures normales d'ouverture. Si certains des 83 grévistes de la première heure ont fini par reprendre le travail, plus de la moitié des effectifs permanents tient bon et affiche sa détermination « à aller jusqu'au bout », selon les mots de Kouacou Marc Adje.

« Au départ, nous avons 12 points de revendication. Nous avons renoncé à 8 d'entre eux pour nous concentrer sur la classification et le déroulement de carrière, la rémunération, les avantages sociaux et les conditions de travail de la main d'œuvre occasionnelle. Mais nous ne lâcherons plus rien », assure ce dernier.

Selon lui, une cinquantaine de ces travailleurs en situation précaire participent au mouvement, mais n'entrent pas sur le site lors des rassemblements. « Eux mettent en jeu leur gagne-pain en se joignant à la grève, c'est dire leur niveau de désespoir », précise le syndicaliste en évoquant les cas de personnes employées de trois mois en trois mois depuis une dizaine d'années. Le représentant du personnel évoque aussi un paiement à l'heure plutôt qu'à la tonne, « ce qui fait qu'ils ne gagnent que 15 000 francs par semaine chez nous, alors qu'ailleurs le paiement à la tâche permet de gagner jusqu'à 50 000 francs », et les équipements de travail individuels « qui font l'objet d'une ponction sur leurs revenus ».

Tentative de conciliation

Le 19 septembre, une tentative de conciliation devant la Direction générale du travail, au Plateau, a échoué. « Normalement, c'est maintenant au ministère de l'Emploi de prendre en charge notre dossier, mais nous n'avons reçu aucune nouvelle officielle », indique Kouacou Marc Adje.

La Société des ciments d'Abidjan, dans laquelle [le français Vicat](#) détient 17,4% des parts, est le leader de la production de ciment en Côte d'Ivoire. Créée en 1965 par [le Français Pierre Amida](#), qui en est toujours le PDG, elle a produit 977 216 tonnes de ciment en 2016. Mais depuis le début du mouvement, sa production est tombée à 2 000 tonnes par jour, soit la moitié de sa capacité.

Contactée, la direction n'a pas donné suite aux demandes d'informations de la rédaction de *Jeune Afrique*. (JA 06-10-2017)

UGANDA LICENCES NIGERIAN COMPANY FOR OIL EXPLORATION

Nigerian oil firm Oranto Petroleum has been given two oil exploration licences on Uganda's Lake Albert.



The licences and power sharing agreements between the firm and Uganda government were signed Tuesday morning in Kampala.

Oranto Petroleum will become the first international oil company to explore and drill oil from Lake Albert. The firm boasts of owning more than 21 oil and gas acreages in 11 Africa countries, including Benin, Côte D'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Liberia, Namibia, Nigeria, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal and South Sudan.

Uganda's Energy Minister Eng. Irene Muloni signed on behalf of the Uganda government, while Prince Arthur Eze signed on behalf of Oranto Petroleum.

The production sharing agreements allows Oranto Petroleum four-year exploration period split in two years each.

The firm is also required to pay royalty based gross daily production and on barrels of oil per day. The rate of royalty, according to the Minister, ranges from 5.5 to 18 percent.

Muloni told journalists in Kampala on Tuesday that the Nigerian firm paid more than \$1,816,400 dollars being money accruing from the signature bonus, research and training fees per year. The payment also includes annual acreage rental fees for the two contract areas. (APA 10-10-2017)

GHANA TO HOST FIRST WORLD TOURISM FORUM AFRICA SUMMIT

Ghana has been selected to host the 2017 World Tourism Forum (WTF) Africa Summit.

The event, scheduled to take place from October 10-11 at the Kempinski Gold Coast Hotel in Accra, will bring together tourism experts and industry players from across the globe.

The World Tourism Forum Africa Summit is an international event that brings together, tourism industry players to shed light on Heritage Tourism, Tourism Investments, Adventure Tourism, Destination Management, and Online Tourism among others.

This is the first time any African country has been chosen to host the event.

Ghana was chosen ahead of South Africa, Kenya, and Morocco due to the peaceful political atmosphere, hospitality and security.

The Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Mrs Catherine Afeku who announced this at a press briefing in Accra Tuesday, said the event will afford the country the opportunity to showcase its rich culture to the world.

She said the Ministry has instituted measures to promote Ghana's tourism sector, noting that the development of the tourism sector would lead to the creation of jobs to help reduce unemployment

Mrs Afeku said over the years, the tourism industry has been one of the key revenue generation sectors of Ghana's economy.

Mrs Afeku said about 10 Tourism Ministers from sister African countries will be attending the event. She therefore called on the media to market the Ghana's tourism industry in order to attract more tourists to help boost revenue generation.

"This is a chance to put Ghana's tourism and hospitality on the global map and have the country on the minds of people", she said.

Mrs Afeku said the occasion, which will have President Akufo-Addo as one of the speakers will attract over 40 distinguished speakers and patrons from across the globe.

The Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Ghana Tourism Authority, Mr Akwasi Agyeman said a number of programmes have been instituted to entertain patrons of the programme.

He added that patrons will be taken to some tourist sites in Ghana, particularly in the Central Region.

Mr Agyeman said the government has initiated a number of programmes aimed at attracting more people into the tourism industry so as to help widen the tax net and create more jobs.

Founded in 2014, the World Tourism Forum has its headquarters in Istanbul and engages with civil society activities under the umbrella of the Young Tourism Leaders Association. (Graphiconline 03-10-2017)

NIGERIA: UNIONS DECLARE DISPUTE OVER PLANS BY GOV'T TO CONCESSION AIRPORTS

The three aviation unions in Nigeria have given the Federal Government a 15-days ultimatum to halt its planned concession of four viable airports in the country.



The unions, which gave the ultimatum in Lagos on Tuesday, threatened to shut down the aviation industry if government failed to accede to their demands.

The unions are the Air Transport Services Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (ATSSSAN), National Union of Air Transport Employees (NUATE) and the aviation wing of the Nigeria Union of Pensioners (NUP)

The Federal Government had initiated moves to concession the Lagos, Abuja, Kano and Port Harcourt Airports to enable them meet international standards.

The General Secretary of NUATE, Mr. Olayinka Abioye, said the ultimatum was the unions' last resolve to force government to resolve the issues surrounding the plan.

"Immediately at the expiration of the 15 days ultimatum, we are going to shut down the industry.

“We want the government to talk to us and share ideas with us on what they want to concession and how it will affect our members,” Abioye said.

He maintained that previous concession agreements had not been beneficial as they ended in series of litigations against the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN).

Abioye added that the revenue collection points of FAAN such as toll gate, car parks, bill boards, fuel surcharges, shops and VIP lounges were already under concession arrangements, adding that there was nothing left for the concession exercise.

According to him, the unions were yet to be assured of the fate of the 6,285 staff and 4,124 pensioners of FAAN if the concession of the viable airports was allowed to proceed.

He said the operations of the other 18 airports which depended on the four viable ones would also be in jeopardy as no concrete plan had been made for their survival after the completion of the concession process.

In his remarks, the General Secretary of ATSSSAN, Mr. Frances Akinjole, said the concession of the airports had safety and security implications which must be fully taken into consideration.

In the alternative, Akinjole advised the government to kick-start the plan with one or two underutilised airports as a pilot scheme, stressing that its success would give confidence to stakeholders for the concession of the major ones.

The Minister of State for Aviation, Mr. Hadi Sirika, had briefed the nation on plans to concession the four international airports to make them competitive globally. (APA 03-10-2017)

STATOIL EYES NIGERIA'S GROWING GAS MARKET WITH PLANNED \$10BN INVESTMENT



Statoil, an oil and gas multinational, is keen to further consolidate its position in the Nigerian oil and gas industry with a fresh investment of \$10 billion. It plans to invest heavily in oil and gas offshore fields in a bid to meet the growing demand for gas-powered energy.

“In another 10 years, I don’t think people will depend on petroleum anymore because we have gas. Because of the hazards of petroleum, people are now tilting towards gas, which deposits are in surplus

within our territorial waters,” Lars Christian Bacher, the Executive Vice President, Development and Production International, Statoil, stated.

Statoil revealed that it hopes to see significant progress in the development of Nnwa-Doro deep offshore field, raise more stakes in Agbami field and also investigate the potential of other oil and gas fields in the country.

Agbami field has an average daily equity production of 48,000 barrels of oil per day and total field reserves estimated at one billion barrels of oil equivalent, utilising one of the world’s largest floating production, storage and offloading vessels.(Footprint to Africa 27-09-2017)

SWAZI QUEEN MOTHER EXPLORES BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN KUWAIT

Swaziland’s Queen Mother is on a state visit to Kuwait during which she is expected to explore opportunities for the southern African country, APA learnt here on Tuesday.



According to a Swazi government statement, the Queen Mother arrived in the Persian Gulf country on Monday night and had a meeting with former Kuwaiti Prime Minister Sheik Nasser Al-Mohammed Ac-Ahmed Al-Jaber as part of her tour of Asia which started in Indonesia about six days ago.

“This is part of her state visit to strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries. On arrival the Queen Mother was welcomed by the Prince of the State of Kuwait Dr Rasha al Hamond al-Sabah,” the statement said.

Locally, the Queen Mother is actively involved in projects that seek to support the elderly people of Swaziland and also agricultural projects that will empower unemployed people and small- and medium-scale enterprises.

These include building homes for old people, establishing charity organisations that provide food aid to the elderly and projects that grow mushrooms, chillies and sweet potato for commercial purposes.

She is expected back in the country at the end of the week.

Queen Mother Ntfombi has been Joint Head of State of Swaziland since 1986. She is mother of King Mswati III. (APA 10-10-2017)

AFDB JOINS INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA



The African Development Bank has called for collaborative actions from all stakeholders for sustainable tourism development in Africa. The Bank recognizes that Africa's tourism and travel industry can serve as an engine of progress for socio-economic transformation.

The United Nations' World Tourism Day, with the theme 'Sustainable Tourism – a Tool for Development', presents a unique opportunity to raise awareness about the contribution of sustainable tourism among public and private sector decision-makers and the international community.

In addition to its investments in tourism infrastructure (ports, airports, roads and rail, among others), the AfDB is promoting the creative and cultural industries to diversify the economic base of African countries and attract tourism.

The Bank has, through various initiatives, given tourism development a new focus.

Through its Fashionomics Africa initiative, the AfDB is supporting the development of creative industries that utilize local products, especially cotton, in Africa. The Bank's Food Cuisine Africa platform connects key players and newcomers in the food industry in Africa.

Omoyemi Akerele, founder of Lagos Fashion and Design Week, stressed how the fashion industry fuels sustainable tourism.

"Fashion weeks [fashion industry events] generate considerable foot traffic for cities like Lagos, which hosts the annual Lagos Fashion and Design Week. But there needs to be a deliberate attempt on the part of African governments to tap into the potential that fashion has to grow the tourism industry," Akerele said.

AfDB's Visa Openness Index measures how open African countries are when it comes to visas by looking at what they ask of citizens from other countries in Africa when they travel.

Visa openness blends with AfDB's 'Integrate Africa' agenda, which seeks to make Africa more open, prosperous and interconnected.

After adopting a visa-on-arrival policy, Rwanda witnessed a 22 percent annual increase in the number of tourism arrivals for meetings, conferences and events. Many visitors, in turn, have become investors in the country.

"Of course, visa openness is not the solution to all problems, structural aspects such as the size of the market, infrastructure connectivity, and purchasing power are as important. Visa openness is really a quick-win," said Jean-Guy Afrika, Principal Policy Expert at the AfDB.

The 2017 Africa Tourism Monitor – an annual research publication by the African Development Bank in collaboration with New York University Africa House and the Africa Travel Association – highlights the importance of developing a sustainable and resilient tourism industry through innovation, entrepreneurship and technology.

The AfDB has for many years highlighted infrastructure development as one of its focal priorities to facilitate accessibility and trade across the continent.

The Bank is also supporting the construction of a new terminal at Ghana's Kotoka International Airport. The project is expected to make the country a destination of choice with a yearly target of 5 million passengers. (Footprint to Africa 28-09-2017)

AFRICA FORUM EMBRACES THE 'SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE'

Violence against women and girls is the root cause of discrimination and disempowerment, and this is not only about Africa, speakers insisted on Tuesday (26 September) at a conference on "Political Empowerment of Women in Africa and in Europe".

The conference was part of the "[S&D group Africa Week 2017](#)". This is the second year that the group of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament has organised a week-long conference on Africa-EU relations. This year the initiative is dedicated to the "youth and future of Africa".

S&D group leader Gianni Pittella said he was proud his political force was spearheading the initiative to build a more mature partnership between the EU and Africa.

As an Italian, he did not overlook the tragedy in the Mediterranean, saying that instead of building a "fortress Europe", legal channels for migrants should be made available, and real links between young Africans and Europeans should be created, including "visas for start-ups".

An Erasmus for young Africans and Europeans

On 29 and 30 September in Abidjan, Africa and Europe have a date with destiny. It may sound a rather audacious statement in the face of the international community's growing interest in the African continent, but it is not, writes Gianni Pittella.

European Commissioner for Development Neven Mimica said empowerment of women was a universal struggle as multiple economic, cultural and social barriers and gender stereotypes continue to hinder women's and girls' participation in all walks of life. No region or country in the world has truly triumphed in trying to solve the problem, he said.

"When women are elected to political office, policies are more varied and gender-sensitive. Health, education and social welfare improves, and there is also progress in terms of good governance and of the fight against corruption," the Commissioner said.

During a recent election campaign in Kenya, women candidates were hampered by hate speech and this is by no means an isolated example, as recent elections on both sides of the Atlantic have shown, he said.

General elections were held in Kenya on 8 August. The results were annulled and it was announced that fresh elections would be held on 17 October.

EU to send one of 'biggest ever' election monitoring teams to Kenya

EXCLUSIVE/ The EU is sending one of its "biggest missions ever" to monitor the upcoming election in Kenya, amid fears of a repeat of the ethnic clashes during the 2007 election, which left up to 1,500 people dead, and some 600,000 displaced.

"The political environment remains a highly hostile battlefield for many women today, in all of our societies. No female politician, or political activist, or mayor for that matter, should ever run the threat of violence or recrimination as a result of their political position or participation," Mimica said.

"No women or girls should suffer the threat of violence simply because of her sex. Sexual and gender-based violence is a stain on all of our societies and one of the greatest obstacles to the full realisation of women's and girls' rights," the Commissioner added.

He said he was particularly proud to have launched a major new €500-million initiative (named the "[Spotlight Initiative](#)"), together with the United Nations, to fight all forms of violence against women and girls. He voiced hope that this would become a truly global movement and reach every corner of every community.

Gender inequality is not a women's problem, it's one of the greatest examples of collective self-harm the world knows today, Mimica argued.

Letty Chivara, UN Women's representative to Ethiopia, the African Union and the UN Economic Commission to Africa, said it was impossible to de-link the issue of women participation in politics with violence against women and girls.

"Violence against women and girls is the root cause of discrimination, it is the root cause of disempowerment," she said, expressing her appreciation for the EU's role in spearheading the Spotlight initiative.

Grace Maria Theresa Maipambe Malila, the mayor of Chilanga, Zambia, shared her personal experience in Zambian politics in a speech repeatedly greeted by applause. Zambia has 109 districts with 109 mayors, only nine of whom are women.

She introduced herself as “a 44-year old woman with family and children” who did not want the children to grow up in a country where things were breaking down and needed fixing. “Instead I’m saying: if I don’t do it, who will?”

Jumping the fence

Malila explained that before entering politics she had worked with the UN and facilitated a lot of policies, but saw the limits of what she could achieve.

“I saw how far I could go. I could not implement. And that was the push factor. You could do policies for women, for children, but you could not implement. And I said, OK, it’s time to put on my gloves, it’s time to fight. I have to jump the fence.”

She said she entered politics the hard way, becoming affiliated with the United National Development Party, the biggest opposition force in Zambia.

Malila said she had often been the object of hate speech from men, who treated her as if she were “a sex object”. This, she said, should not be ignored and women should fight back.

“You need to tell them exactly how you feel about that, and that they are not bringing down only you, they are bringing down their own daughters, they are bringing down their own wives, they are bringing down their own mothers”, Malila said.

As a mayor, she said, there were several occasions when people come into her office and said nothing, “waiting for the mayor to come”. When she told them they were already with the mayor, they started listening when she used the magic word that she could solve their problems. “It is about saying yes, I can,” Malila said

Women in Zambia, Malila added, often had very low self-esteem, and that’s why she was trying to help them improve their speaking skills.

“Hit back when men deserve it. Not physically, with your voice,” she said (EurActiv 27-09-2017)

AID AGENCIES SCALE UP EFFORTS TO CURB SPREAD OF CHOLERA IN NIGERIA

Health authorities in northeast Nigeria have scaled up efforts to contain a cholera outbreak that is sweeping through refugee camps in the region.

The United Nations reports that there are about 4,000 suspected cases so far, with at least 54 deaths. A major vaccination campaign is underway to stop further spread of the killer disease.

UN officials say the aim of the vaccination campaign is to reach more than 900,000 people in Maiduguri this week.

Critical cases are transferred to a Medecins Sans Frontieres treatment centre for better treatment.

The aid workers however lament that they are struggling to contain the outbreak because people don’t seek treatment early enough.

The UN earlier this year urged Nigerian authorities to ensure Aid workers access all parts of the country to deliver much needed aid and services.

Hundreds of thousands are living in refugee camps in the northeast due after being forces out of their homes due to the war waged by Islamist militant group Boko Haram. (CGTN 27-09-2017)

ECOWAS PLANS US\$35 BN INVESTMENT IN NIGERIA’S POWER SECTOR

International communities, investors and experts in the energy sector have been urged to give Nigeria’s power sector priority when it comes to investing. According to Marcel de Souza the President of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) commission, this move would certainly contribute to improving access to electricity in the entire sub-region.

He also disclosed the Commission’s plans to invest US \$35 billion in electricity; which will also include grid, solar and other renewable energy sources, plus infrastructure projects until 2025.

According to him, despite the challenges facing the power sector, Nigeria is going to meet 50 per cent energy needs in Niger and Benin Republics. He added that Nigeria is the major provider of natural gas to other countries of the region through the West African gas pipeline.

Appeal to participants

He urged participants to focus on the Nigeria power sector by understanding the challenges and then offering solutions in line with the expectations of Nigeria and ECOWAS. "Resolving the energy challenges of Nigeria will stimulate economic recovery effort," he said.

Mr. De Souza stressed that investing in the Nigeria power sector not only provides electricity access to the vast ECOWAS market but also amounts to investing in the lives of over 350 million people of the region.

Mr. Babatunde Fashola who is Nigeria's Minister of Power, Works and Housing noted that the objective of the summit was consistent with the efforts of the Federal Government towards achieving incremental power .

According to him, the administration is working towards achieving steady power where many people have access to power. "Hopefully they will all have uninterrupted power eventually," he said.

Mr. Fashola also thanked Simon Gosling the Managing Director of Energy Net Limited for a donation to Pan Africa Solar Limited; which is currently involved in the implementation of solar projects in rural communities in Katsina State. (CRO 08-10-2017)

The Memorandum is supported by the ACP-African, Caribbean, Pacific Secretariat, Chamber of Commerce Tenerife, Corporate Council on Africa, CIP-Confederation of Portuguese Enterprises, Hellenic-African Chamber of Commerce and Development, HTTC - Hungarian Trade & Cultural Centre, NABC- Netherlands-African Business Council, SwissCham-Africa and other organisations. The Memorandum is also made available by AHEAD-GLOBAL, BCA, Chamber of Tenerife (by posting it at the Africa Info Market), CCA - Canadian Council on Africa, CCA - Corporate Council on Africa (USA), CIP,HTTC,NABC (by posting selected news) and SwissCham-Africa to their Members.



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26th of October: Investing in Africa's transition: how, not why

With our co-hosts Norfund and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs – are proud to welcome Nordic and African business people to the 7th Nordic-African Business Summit in Oslo, Thursday 26th of October.

Africa's real GDP growth slowed down to 2.2% in 2016, mainly due to the continued fall in commodity prices and weak global economic growth. With dynamic private sectors, entrepreneurial spirit and vast resources, Africa has the potential to grow faster and more inclusively. After focusing many years on why you should put African markets on the radar, this year's summit will tell you how to invest in Africa's transition.

500 business people, investors and ambassadors will gather in Oslo for the Nordic region's leading business conference focusing exclusively on African markets. Government officials includes Ghana's Vice President Mahamudu Bawumia, as well as distinguished ministers from Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan. More than 30 excellent speakers from the private sector from Africa/Nordic region will share their experiences and lessons learnt doing business on the continent.

-We are proud that the annual Nordic-African Business Summit has become the preferred meeting point for Nordic and African business people. We are also very happy with this year's programme – and can promise our guests valuable connections and lessons learnt. At this year's conference we will ask more how, in order to make the sessions as fruitful as possible, says Eivind Fjeldstad, Managing Director of NABA.

You can register and see the programme at the [Summit 2017 website](#)

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