

MEMORANDUM

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Publication is resumed from today

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EU AND EGYPT COOPERATION: TOWARDS A STRONGER PARTNERSHIP

The EU adopted a multiannual framework defining the priorities for the financial and technical cooperation with Egypt for the period 2017-2020, with a special focus on youth and women.

Following the adoption of [Partnership Priorities](#) with [Egypt](#) in July 2017, the EU adopted the Single Support Framework (SSF) which sets the priorities and the financial allocation in key strategic areas of bilateral cooperation with the country. Across different sectors, particular attention will be given to youth, on which the long-term stability of our societies lies, and to women empowerment, essential for progress in any society.

Johannes **Hahn**, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, currently in Cairo, signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the EU Single Support Framework with the Egyptian authorities. Commissioner **Hahn** also signed two financial agreements supporting the sectors of health, environment and transport as well as a €60 million programme to support Egypt in addressing migration challenges.

High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** said: *"With the new EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities, we are focussing on the future of the Egyptian people. We believe that social development and social protection, especially when it comes to young people and women, are key towards sustainable growth and stability in Egypt and in the region. That is why we put them at the basis of our partnership".*

Commenting the signature together with Sahar Nasr, Minister of Investment and International Cooperation, Commissioner Johannes **Hahn** said: *"The EU is fully committed to support Egypt's efforts to reform its economy to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth, and to tackle key socio-economic challenges, such as the high population growth and the impact of economic reforms on the most vulnerable."*

Background

Single Support Framework

This Single Support Framework (SSF) defines the areas of focus for EU assistance. It is based on the EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities for the years 2017-2020 and, in defining the priorities, takes into account the Egypt's Economic Reform Programme, being also aligned with Egypt's "Sustainable Development Strategy – Vision 2030".

The three sectors of intervention identified in the SSF are:

Sector 1: Economic modernisation, energy sustainability and environment (indicative 40% of total budget)

Sector 2: Social development and social protection (indicative 40% of total budget)

Sector 3: Governance, enhancing stability and modern democratic state (indicative 10% of total budget)

In addition, there will be complementary support for capacity development and civil society (indicative 10% of total budget)

The proposed indicative allocation for EU bilateral assistance to Egypt under the [European Neighbourhood Instrument](#) (ENI), for 2017-2020 is between EUR 432 and EUR 528 million.

The SSF is the result of intensive consultations with all relevant stakeholders in Cairo and in Brussels, including the civil society, local authorities and ministries, as well as EU Member States.

Financing agreements and new programme

Through the financing agreements, the EU will support the following strategic cooperation programmes in Egypt which will have direct benefits for its citizens:

1. **The 'Fayyoun Waste Water Expansion Programme'**: with an EU grant of €38 million, €360 million in soft loans from the EIB and the EBRD will be leveraged. This programme will provide access to improved sanitation services to nearly 1 million inhabitants and increase the coverage of sanitation services in the Fayyoun from just over 30% to almost 90%. It is also expected to create over 30,000 temporary and permanent jobs.
2. **The 'Rehabilitation of Alexandria's Raml Tram Programme'**: with an EU grant of €8 million, €237.7 million in soft loans from the EIB and the AFD will be leveraged to rehabilitate the Alexandria's Raml Tram. The rehabilitated tramway will have doubled capacity and will reduce

waiting times which will benefit more than 200,000 passengers per day.

New programme 'Enhancing the Response to Migration Challenges in Egypt'

With an EU grant of €60 million, the EU will support Egypt's efforts in enhancing migration management, addressing the root causes of irregular migration and sustaining Egyptian communities hosting migrants and refugees. The programme will cover seven projects in total and is adopted in the framework of the ['North of Africa Window' of the EU Emergency Trust Fund](#) (EC 30-10-2017)

[EU-Egypt cooperation](#)

NEW LUANDA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN ANGOLA EXPECTED TO START OPERATING IN 2019/2020

The new Luanda International Airport, under construction since 2004 by Chinese contractors on the outskirts of the Angolan capital, should only start operating in 2019, a two-year delay compared to the previous forecast, said the Minister of Transport.

Minister Augusto Tomás said at the end of a visit to the project by the new President of Angola, João Lourenço, that the cost of the construction of the airport, including access roads, already exceeds US\$6 billion.

The new airport is under construction in the municipality of Icolo e Bengo, 30 kilometres from the capital, with its inauguration initially announced for the first half of 2017.

The Minister of Transport, justifying the delay based on financial difficulties, said that just over half of the work had so far been completed and the airport should start operating at the end of 2019.

The construction of the airport is the responsibility of the China International Fund (CIF), hired by the Angolan government for US\$3.8 billion and the equipment was awarded to the China National Aero-Technology International Engineering Corporation for US\$1.4 billion.

The consortium of China Hyway Group Limited was chosen in 2015 to build the rail access to the airport, costing US\$255 million.

Additionally, the construction of the railroad branch line from the current Baía Station of the Luanda Railroad (CFL) to the new Luanda international airport (a total of 15 kilometres), will cost US\$162.4 million and the access roads to the new airport will cost US\$692.7 million, also involving Chinese companies.

The project is financed by the credit line opened by China for the reconstruction of Angola, after three decades of civil war. (31-10-2017)

LE PLAN JUNCKER S'ETEND AUX PAYS ET TERRITOIRES D'OUTRE-MER

Ce 30 octobre 2017, la Banque européenne d'investissement (BEI) et l'Agence Française de Développement (AFD) ont franchi une nouvelle étape dans l'accélération du financement de projets de développement dans les Pays et Territoires d'Outre-Mer.

Le Vice-président de la BEI, Ambroise Fayolle, a signé avec le directeur de l'AFD en Nouvelle-Calédonie, Philippe Renault, une extension de l'accord de partage de risque existant aux Pays et Territoires d'Outre-mer. Cet accord s'inscrit dans le cadre du plan d'investissement pour l'Europe, appelé plus communément « Plan Juncker », mis en œuvre par la BEI, et dont l'objectif est la relance de l'investissement dans les pays de l'Union européenne.

Conscients du rôle clef que pourraient jouer les financements « Juncker » dans les régions ultrapériphériques, l'AFD et la BEI avaient signé en décembre 2016 un programme cadre de 150 millions d'euros pour développer les financements dans les Départements d'Outre-Mer, grâce à la garantie européenne. La première concrétisation, autour d'un financement en Guyane d'infrastructures de tourisme et de résidence de retraités, a été signée à Cayenne, vendredi 27 octobre, en marge de la

conférence des Présidents des Régions Ultrapériphériques, en présence du président de la Commission européenne Jean-Claude Juncker.

Le concours de la BEI permet à l'AFD de prendre une part de risque plus élevée dans le financement de projets essentiels au développement économique et à la compétitivité des territoires ultrapériphériques comme à la vie quotidienne de ses habitants. L'extension signée aujourd'hui permettra pour la première fois d'étendre cette facilité aux Pays et Territoires d'Outre-Mer.

Le montant total des financements sous ce programme augmentera de 30 millions d'euros pour s'élever à 180 millions d'euros.

« Pour la deuxième fois en quelques jours, la Banque européenne d'investissement et l'Agence Française de Développement peuvent annoncer une initiative commune en faveur des Outre-Mer français, grâce à l'Europe et plus particulièrement grâce au plan Juncker. L'extension signée aujourd'hui en faveur des Pays et Territoires d'Outre-Mer français est particulièrement importante dans la mesure où elle associe aux financements de la BEI, favorisés dans le cadre du plan Juncker, des territoires qui n'y avaient pas accès jusqu'à présent », a souligné le Vice-Président de la BEI, **Ambroise FAYOLLE** durant la cérémonie de signature.

Philippe RENAULT, directeur de l'agence régionale de l'AFD en Nouvelle-Calédonie a ajouté : *« L'extension de ce dispositif aux Pays et Territoires d'Outre-Mer, en particulier à la Nouvelle-Calédonie, est une bonne nouvelle, surtout dans un contexte de ralentissement de la croissance et de tensions budgétaires. Il permettra de favoriser les investissements en facilitant l'accès aux financements. L'AFD en assurera la mise en œuvre grâce à des garanties de la BEI. Cet accord est une très bonne illustration de la parfaite collaboration entre la BEI et l'AFD, reposant sur leurs atouts respectifs »*.

« La Commission européenne se réjouit de cet accord. L'extension des conditions d'éligibilité au plan d'investissement pour l'Europe se concrétise aujourd'hui en faveur des PTOM. Ce plan offre de nouvelles perspectives très intéressantes dans l'intérêt commun de l'Europe et des PTOM » a conclu **Tomas MATEO GOYET**, représentant de la Commission européenne à Nouméa.

En régions ultrapériphériques, le Groupe BEI a également financé en 2017 dans le cadre du plan Juncker, l'opérateur TELCO OI (25 M€) pour faciliter l'accès au très haut débit mobile à la Réunion et à Mayotte, et a signé un partenariat innovant avec la Région Réunion pour renforcer l'accès au financement des entreprises tout en développant leur croissance et leur compétitivité. (EC 30-10-2017)

NATIONAL BANK OF ANGOLA SHOULD MAKE BANKING SECTOR COMPLY WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

The new Governor of the National Bank of Angola (BNA), José de Lima Massano, is responsible for ensuring that the Angolan banking sector complies with the standards required by the international banking and financial institutions, said the President of Angola on Monday in Luanda.

President João Lourenço, during the inauguration ceremony of the new governor of the Angolan central bank, said that the choice of Massano was because of the confidence he had in his capacity to improve the level and the proper functioning of the National Bank of Angola as well as the country's banking system.

The new governor said he would work to strengthen the stability of the financial system in Angola, a strategy that also involves improving the internal capacity of the institution, and added he would "take great pride in being able to once again serve Angola in this function."

Massano said that the agenda of the BNA is defined, either by virtue of its statutes, and its political guidelines, which were publicly outlined by the President of the Republic in his speech on the state of the nation, on 16 October.

On Friday President João Lourenço, dismissed Walter Filipe Duarte da Silva, at his request, from the office of governor of the National Bank of Angola. (31-10-2017)

NEW HORIZONS FOR LIBYA'S HEALTH SECTOR

Six years of armed conflict and political instability have affected almost every part of Libya, claiming thousands of lives and leaving thousands more injured. Beyond the immediate casualties, the ongoing insecurity and violence has disrupted access to public utilities and services, with a dramatic impact on public health facilities.



According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) 2017 response plan for Libya, around 1.3 million people have limited access to health care services and resources. Forty-three out of 98 hospitals assessed by the WHO are either partially functional or not functional at all, due to an acute shortage of life-saving medicines, medical supplies and equipment, along with critical shortages of human resources. These shortages are more pronounced at the primary care level, says the WHO: “As a consequence, referral and tertiary hospitals are overloaded with patients seeking help for common illnesses, and are unable to meet the demand.”

This is the challenge that the EU is trying to meet, supporting Libya in its efforts to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of health service delivery across the country, with a series of ongoing programmes worth almost €15 million.

These programmes were at the heart of discussions held in Tunis on 5-6 April, as officials from Libya and the EU met to discuss improvements in primary and maternal child health care, psychological support services and mental health, and non-communicable disease management.

Doctors, specialists and medical students were given the chance to provide their opinion and discuss their vision through presentations about the challenges and proposed solutions to improve health delivery in Libya.

Primary health care, maternity and neonatal health

Salem Shenisheh, one of the young participants at the meeting, is a doctor, a PhD student and one of the beneficiaries of the EU’s reform of the health sector, and in particular a four-year project to strengthen strategic planning, financing and management of health service delivery and human resources through targeted reforms.

“This project will help us improve our daily performance as doctors and increase our knowledge, which will be a rewarding thing for the whole society” said Dr. Shenisheh.

Shenaisheh expressed his excitement at being a part of the project, saying it gave him the chance as a doctor and a student to participate in the process of raising the performance of the health sector. Through connecting different beneficiaries to the Ministry of Health, the project is able to set up priorities and put plans into action that will be implemented in the near future so that health services can reach all Libyan citizens.

Many lives could be saved by improving the quality of maternal and neonatal care and quality of services through a training of trainers, said Dr. Suhair Bek Derna, Chair of the Maternal Health Working Group of the Ministry of Health. And Dr. Muneera Aldughri, Head of Maternal and Child Health in the Primary Health Care Directorate, added that by focusing on the health of mothers and children, the number

of deaths could be limited, and care improved in all other health sectors. *“We will be able to provide medicine and health products in primary health centres, improve the quality of services provided by doctors and nurses through the trainings and capacity building, in order to provide better quality services to Libyans”* said Aldughri.

Another of the projects, which is being implemented by the World Health Organisation, is strengthening the Health Information System and Medicines Supply Chain Management. This project aims to sustain high quality health services in Libya. Through this project, the EU will rehabilitate warehouses that stock medicine across the country so that practitioners and patients can access medications in a timely fashion, according to Bettina Muscheidt, the Head of Delegation of the European Union to Libya.

Psychological support services and mental health

As for the psychological support services and mental health, Khaled Hamidi, executive manager of the Psychological Support Team NGO, explained the importance of giving more attention to the issue, highlighting the rise of armed conflict in Libya, which he says has harmed Libyans’ psychological health.

In 2011, there were only 12 psychiatrists in all of Libya, according to Hamidi, and at a time when the country was going through a dramatic rise in violence, depression, post-traumatic stress disorders and trauma. In fact, this sector faces a huge shortage of facilities, medication and human resources. Approximately one percent or less of total health expenditure is targeted on this sector. Therefore, there is a call for action for a multi-sectoral approach for mental health and psycho-social support in Libya, according to Dr. Amjad Shagrani, focal point for Mental Health at the National Centre for Disease Control.

The role of the EU is crucial in supporting mental health and wellbeing to overcome these challenges. *“The conflict has brought with it trauma,”* said Bettina Muscheidt. *“And trauma can only be addressed by improving services on the side of mental health care and psycho-social care.”*

Non-communicable disease management

In terms of non-communicable diseases, cancer is the third-leading killer in Libya with 6,000 cases diagnosed in 2016, according to Dr. Ismail Siala. A large factor in the prominence of cancer-related deaths is late diagnosis and lifestyle changes linked to limited physical activity and weight gain. The answer to the challenge lies in early detection and diagnosis, effective treatment, adherence to standards and protocols, and availability of cancer medicines. Nearly 45 percent of deaths in Libya are related to cardiovascular diseases. Therefore, by improving health services, there is a chance of a better quality of life.

As for EU support and ongoing projects, the overall objective is to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of health service delivery in Libya.

“We, as EU, will make sure on our side that there is no health intervention in Libya happening outside of coordination mechanisms led by the Ministry of Health. As co-chair of the Health Sector Committee we will continue to strengthen coordination and pursue meaningful dialogue with our Libyan counterparts creating synergies between the different coordination platforms established in Tunisia and Libya.”
(EEAS 9-1-2017)

CHINA HYWAY GROUP MAKES FINAL DELIVERY OF MOÇÂMEDES RAILROAD

The China Hyway Group has made the final delivery of the rail infrastructure of the Moçâmedes Railroad to the president of the company, Daniel Quipaxe, at a ceremony held on Tuesday in the city of Lubango, in Angola’s Huila province.

Angolan state news agency Angop reported the works that began in 2006 were completed in 2012, and the final delivery has only now taken place because of the need to finish some work in order to make rail traffic safer.

The work consisted of laying 967 kilometres of rails, from Namibe to Kwando Kubango, passing through Huila, the replacement of wooden sleepers with concrete ones and construction of a 105-kilometre branch line between Dongo and Tchamutete (municipality of Jamba) to ensure iron ore transport.

The project also included building 57 stations along the line, as well as the installation of a new and modern optic fibre telecommunications system and complete signalling, as well as building a new professional training centre, which is now being equipped.

The Minister of Transport, Augusto da Silva Tomás, who attended the ceremony, said the act marks the beginning of a new cycle in the history of the Moçâmedes Railroad, which first began to be built in 1905, was opened to traffic in 1910, and continued to be increased until it reached Menongue (formerly Serpa Pinto) in December 1961. (31-10-2017)

CIVIL SOCIETY FACILITY SOUTH TO ORGANIZE WORKSHOP IN TUNIS



The EU-funded **Civil Society Facility South** is organizing a two-day workshop and graduation ceremony for its regional training programme “**Training of Trainers-TOTs**” in Tunis on 1-2 November 2017. This workshop will gather 23 young leaders from the southern Neighbourhood region that have been trained throughout past six months, via both online LAB and on face to face regional meetings. During which they gained skills on different themes such as: skills of policy dialogue, how to draft policy papers, legal advocacy, participative strategic planning, communication skills, etc.

To conclude successfully and to implement the received skills and knowledge in practice, the TOTs graduates were given the opportunity to submit their own training projects. Those carried out trainings were conducted at local and national levels by the TOTs and with and for their networks of CSOs in their countries. This last gathering will be the closure of the TOTs 2017 programme with a graduation ceremony, during which the TOTs will present their projects, network, share experiences and lessons learnt with their TOT peers.(CSFS 25-10-2017)

[Civil Society Facility South](#)

INDIA CONSIDERS COAL GAS PROJECT IN MOZAMBIQUE

The Indian government is studying the economic viability of building a coal gas factory at the Mozambican mine of state consortium Indian Coal Ventures Limited (ICVL), announced the Ministry of steel, in a statement issued in Kolkata.

The statement added that the idea to build the factory came after the ICVL consortium launched a public tender to select a company to operate the coal mine in Mozambique's Tete province.

The gasification of coal would allow the consortium, if it is economically viable, to use the low-quality coal extracted in the mine, which is not expected to find many buyers, said a government official quoted by the Indian press.

The official said estimates pointed to just 35% of the Tete mine's production being coking or thermal coal of enough quality to be exported to India in order to feed the country's steel plants.

The remaining coal in the mine will not be of sufficient quality to justify exporting it to India and attempts made so far to find a buyer in the region have been unsuccessful.

The idea of building a coal-fired thermal power plant with private capital was abandoned due to the difficulty in transporting the electricity produced there to the Mozambican national grid, which meant the consortium would have a large amount of coal without a specific use for it.

The ICVL consortium is a partnership of five Indian state groups – Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC), National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC) and Coal India Limited (CIL) – which was formed to acquire stakes in mines abroad and ensure the supply of both thermal and coking coal.

In 2014, the consortium paid US\$50 million for the coal assets of the Rio Tinto Group in Mozambique, and the Benga mine is the only one of these assets currently under exploration. (31-10-2017)

SOUTH AFRICA: ANC HAS BECOME RAPACIOUS AND PREDATORY, SAYS THABO MBEKI

Former president Thabo Mbeki delivered the OR Tambo memorial lecture on Friday in which he said the ANC culture has become rapacious and predatory. File Picture: SOWETAN

The historic value system of the ANC serving the people with honesty, sacrifice and selflessness has been replaced by a rapacious and predatory value system.

Former president Thabo Mbeki was speaking at the OR Tambo Memorial Lecture at Wits University on Friday night.

Tambo, the longest-serving ANC leader who died in 1993, would have been 100 on Friday.

Mbeki said since the ANC acquired political power in 1994, there had been members of the party who saw the ANC as a stepladder to use for self-enrichment.

"These are card-carrying members of the ANC who have repudiated the ANC value system. The ANC recognised this as early as 1994."

Mbeki said former president Nelson Mandela, in an address to the ANC in 1997, recognised a number of negative factors that had emerged in the organisation, including "careerism within our ranks".

Mandela also said these people worked to manipulate the movement for their personal interests.

Mbeki also said ANC secretary-general Gwede Mantashe had declared in a diagnostic organisational report three months ago that "ANC members fight for deployment as if there is no tomorrow".

During the last two decades, the ANC had failed to purge itself of these mercenaries, Mbeki said.

"What was seen to be abnormal 20 years ago is a norm in 2017. The historic value system has been so corrupted that its replacement has become the norm within the organisation."

He said this could be seen in the jockeying for municipal councillor positions, which has resulted in the murder of municipal councillors.

There was an ascendance of negative elements that Mandela had called on the organisation to purge, Mbeki said.

Mbeki said the ANC had required its members to serve the people not for personal gain.

At the ANC conference in Mahikeng in 1997, the ANC resolved that there was no requirement that the ANC chairman in the province should become the premier in that province.

Mbeki said in the build-up to the ANC Polokwane conference in 2007, there were concerns from some that this arrangement of a chairman not being required to be premier resulted in two centres of power.

He said the 1997 resolution was replaced in 2007 with the one which said the provincial chairman of the ANC should be premier.

"It meant the occupation of positions in the ANC was a guaranteed route to state power. This is what the movement sought to discourage among the membership," Mbeki said.

This had resulted in corruption, weakening of the democratic institutions, state capture and virtual abandonment of the historical Pan Africanist perspective of the ANC.

"Those who remain genuine members of the ANC ... should take the necessary steps to change the self-destructive course that the ANC has embarked upon."

This course had manifested itself in the ANC losing support in the elections from 2009 to date.

Mbeki said as a first step, members must genuinely accept that the movement was immersed in a deep crisis.

They should then proceed to characterise the source and the nature of the problem.

Mbeki said they should then implement what Mandela said in 1997: They should take necessary steps to purge themselves of corrupt members and organise themselves in a way that would make it difficult for corrupt elements to be part of the movement.

Mbeki said the best way to honour Tambo would be to live up to the example he set, which included being loyal to the truth and value system of the ANC.

Mbeki also said Tambo had been essential in ensuring that the ANC remained strong from 1940, through its banning in 1960 and through its exile period. (Times LIVE 28-10-2017)

MOGADISHU MAYOR BANS TRUCKS AT DAYTIME

The mayor of Mogadishu has imposed an indefinite ban on trucks driving around the city in a bid to tackle the spate of suicide bombings.



Mayor Thabit Abdi, on Tuesday said the new security regulations include forbidding trucks and other heavy-duty vehicles from plying the roads of the Somali capital between 7am and 8pm local time.

Abdi warned that offenders will be fined \$1,000 for flouting the ban.

The ban comes as over 400 people are killed by car bombs in Mogadishu over the past two weeks.

The Somali militant sect Al-Shabaab had claimed responsibility for the blasts. (APA 31-10-2017)

AID GROUP HALTS SEA RESCUES IN MEDITERRANEAN

The international aid group Save the Children is suspending its efforts to rescue migrants making the dangerous Mediterranean Sea crossing from Libya.

Tuesday, the organization said the combination of falling numbers of crossings and worsening security forced it to stop sending its ship, the Vos Hestia, out from its port in Italy.

Save the Children said the ship rescued as many as 10,000 migrants over the past year after the smugglers' vessels they were in foundered at sea.

The announcement comes just a day after Italian authorities searched the Vos Hestia as part of Rome's efforts to deter people smuggling across the Mediterranean. Save the Children said the decision to suspend operations wasn't related to the search and it told journalists that Italian prosecutors had given assurances it is not under investigation. It seems the search might be linked, however, to crew members on the boat.

In August, police seized a boat operated by a German aid organization, saying there was evidence some people smugglers escorted migrants to that boat. Save the Children says it has nothing to do with that case.

Save the Children was one of the first aid groups to sign a voluntary code of conduct with the Italian government to ensure they aren't colluding with or encouraging smuggling.

The number of arriving migrants is down about 25 percent so far this year from last year, to around 110,000. And the drop will get worse as the winter closes in. Very few rescue boats are heading out into the Mediterranean now because of falling need.

Tens of thousands of migrants from Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere have struggled to sail from Libya to Italy over the past few years. Hundreds of thousands of migrants have also trekked through Turkey to Europe.

Thousands have died in the sea crossing, prompting both rescue efforts by private aid groups and efforts by the Italian government to staunch the flow.

Rome, with the EU's backing, has helped Libya with efforts to police its vast desert land borders and to patrol its coast to prevent migrants from entering. (DEV 24-10-2017)

NIGERIAN LEADER PROMISES TO APPOINT MORE MINISTERS

President Muhammadu Buhari has met with the National Executive of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and promises to appoint more ministers.



Buhari, who did not disclose the number of ministers to join the existing 36, said that he would make board appointments to replace those dissolved early in 2016.

The President explained that he was responding to the demands by his party members over the months since many of them had been aggrieved that Buhari abandoned them after they worked for his victory in the March 2015 presidential election.

In a speech at the meeting, the second since he came into power, Buhari said: "The cabinet will be expanded to bring in more supporters at Federal Level, with fresh ideas to be injected into the government."

Buhari had in 2015 trimmed the cabinet to avoid waste, but he is now faced with demands by his party for more inclusiveness and patronage.

Similarly, the President also hinted he would be appointing more people into the boards of government agencies and corporations.

“Last year, I said we would re-constitute the Boards of Parastatals. I must regret the fact that we have not done so, for many reasons.

“Some of us in this meeting may know I had given instructions since October 2015 for this exercise to start. But there have been inordinate delays through several Committees in an attempt to get the balance right and to make sure all parts of the country are equitably represented.

“On the other hand. I am keenly aware that our supporters are very eager for these appointments to be announced. By the Grace of God, these appointments will be announced soon. Especially now that the economy is improving, we will have the resources to cater for the appointees,” he said.

In the last week, the President has stepped up consultations with the party bigwigs and supporters, who brought him to power in 2015, indications that he was preparing grounds for a run in the 2019 election.

On Monday night, he hosted a caucus of the party and held another meeting with the leaders of the National Assembly, Speaker Yakubu Dogara and Senate President, Bukola Saraki.

The President, who survived a serious ill-health that took him away for about six months, thanked his party men and women for their prayers and good wishes in the restoration of his health by Allah.

He thanked Party leaders for helping to keep the government running smoothly during his prolonged absence.

He commended the party chairman, chief Odigie Oyegun as well as Senate President Bukola Saraki and Speaker Mr. Yakubu Dogara for steering the party in the last two and a half years.

He listed some of his achievements in more than two years to include the defeat of Boko Haram, peace in Niger Delta, regular supply of petroleum products, improved electricity and the Treasury Single Account (TSA).

Others are in the area of boosting agriculture, fertilizer production, stemming corruption and reduction in food imports. (APA 31-10-2017)

AU CHIEF CALLS FOR SUPPORT TO FIGHT TERRORISM IN SAHEL REGION

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat has called for “predictable and sustainable support to fight terrorism in the Sahel region of Africa”.

His remarks were made on Monday, when he addressed via video-conference a ministerial meeting of the United Nations Security Council on a report of the UN Secretary-General on the G5 Sahel Joint Force.

The five Sahel states (G5) are Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad -- all former French colonies located in the semi-arid Sahel region stretching along the southern perimeter of the Sahara Desert.



“In the name of the solidarity that binds us together”, Mahamat said, “there is a clear imperative for the international community to help this initiative,” adding that “this is in our collective best interests, as what is at stake is not only the security of the Sahel countries, but also that of many other regions of our globe, as the scourge in question knows no borders.”

Recalling the communiqué of the AU Peace and Security Council meeting of 13 April 2017, which endorsed the Joint Force’s strategic concept of operations and authorized its deployment for an initial period of 12 months in the region, the AU chairperson called for full implementation of the measures to be taken by the UN Security Council.

“In the face of the terrorist threat and the risk it poses to the stability of the entire region, we cannot satisfy ourselves with half-measures,” he continued.

In his statement, Mahamat stressed that the UNSC’s meeting was testament to the increasing attention being paid to the situation prevailing in Africa’s Sahelo-Saharan region by the international community.

He paid tribute to the G5 countries, which despite the limited means available to them and the multiplicity of challenges facing them, have provided ample evidence of their willingness to lead the fight against terrorism and transnational organized crime.

The AU Commission Chairperson underscored the commitment of the African Union to continue working closely with the G5, including through sharing its experience in counter-insurgency in Somalia, the reactivation of the Nouakchott Process, and sustained advocacy to mobilize the required resources.

He stressed that the efforts of the G5 Joint Force must be accompanied by an acceleration of the implementation process of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, as well as by sustained steps towards development and governance.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, in his statement, said “strong political support for the G5 Sahel and material and operational support commensurate with the challenges are critical.”

He expressed grave concern over the situation in the Sahel region, where UN peacekeepers and civilian targets have been attacked by Islamist militants.

“Poverty, underdevelopment and climate change have contributed to humanitarian and security crises. Weak institutions, the exclusion and marginalization of some groups are exploited by extremists and terrorists. Porous borders facilitate the trafficking of human beings, drugs and arms, and other criminal activities,” Guterres was quoted as saying at the meeting.

The humanitarian crisis in the Sahel is getting worse, with nearly five million people displaced and 24 million needing humanitarian aid, the UN chief added. (APA 31-10-2017)

AFRICA’S TALLEST SKYSCRAPER TO BE CONSTRUCTED IN EGYPT’S NEW CAPITAL

Egypt will construct Africa’s tallest skyscraper as part of the new administrative capital project. The new building will be worth a whopping US\$ 3bn.

State-owned [China State Construction Engineering Corporation](#) (CSCEC) is the company behind the project. It will develop the 345m-high skyscraper and once complete it will replace South Africa's 223-meter-tall Carlton Centre.

Features of the skyscraper

The development will also comprise of 12 business complexes, five residential buildings and two hotels over half a square kilometer. In total, the new capital will cover an area of 50km.

The Chinese ambassador to Cairo, Song Aiguo, explained that the project comes in line with China's strategic One Belt One Road Initiative. The initiative carries on the vision of the ancient trade route of The Silk Road, with a bold plan to connect China to the entirety of Asia and the eastern parts of Africa and Europe through six routes.

Egypt and China's mutual cooperation

Additionally, the ambassador extensively said that the project will symbolize Egypt and China's mutual cooperation for future generations. It will also enhance their bilateral relationship. Earlier, Egypt sought to develop the project with a Dubai real estate company before reaching a deal with the Chinese developer.

China and Egypt who have raised the level of their ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership enjoy strong and growing ties. The ties are not only politically but also economically and culturally.

They recently celebrated the 60th anniversary of their diplomatic ties in 2016, which was marked as the China-Egypt Cultural Year.

About China State Construction Engineering Corporation

[CSCEC](#) is China's largest construction and real estate conglomerate and biggest building work contractor. It is the largest transnational construction company in the developing countries. Also, it is the top home builder in the world, taking the long lead of China's international contracting business.

China Construction is well known in the world for undertaking super high-rise, grand scale, cutting-edge and novel projects. They have built up a great number of landmark projects in China and around the world including Africa. (CRO 24-10-2017)

CONSTRUCTION OF UMHLANGA ARCH SOUTH AFRICA SET TO COMMENCE

Construction is set to commence on [Umhlanga Arch](#) in South Africa; this is after a successful launch of the residential phase and office spaces. Recently, there was an official ground breaking of A-grade catalytic development Umhlanga Arch in Durban.

"We are thrilled to get going with the construction of [Umhlanga Arch](#). The journey leading up to this moment has been nothing short of extraordinary, from record rate sales to the award as the best marketed development in South Africa for 2017," said Chris du Toit, Developer Representative of Umhlanga Arch.

Features in the Umhlanga Arch

The development has a division of four key components, namely; upmarket offices, first-class retail, a superior hotel and luxury apartments. Moreover, Umhlanga Arch has the benefit of everything in one location.

Boasting the ultimate live, work, play lifestyle, residents can enjoy having a state-of-the-art gym. It dedicates itself to a concierge service, a lively up market piazza, a barber and salon, and a cutting-edge business centre right on their doorstep.

Contractor and financier of the project

"As we take this step forward, we are delighted to share that we have appointed [Wilson Bailey Homes](#) (WBHO) as our contractor and can confirm that [Absa bank](#) will be financing our remarkable project," said Chris du Toit,

Prominently positioned on the slopes of Umhlanga's Ridgeside, its iconic sea-facing configuration, commanding unsurpassed views of KwaZulu-Natal's coastline, is the pinnacle of urban sophistication and a symbol of this exclusive area's enviable lifestyle.

Other partnerships

Leading up to this stage, the Multiply Group recently announced its strategic partnership with Rembrothers; where planning has already begun in creating an eclectic lifestyle offering that further enhances the bespoke development. (CRO 24-10-2017)

AFDB EXPRESSES CONFIDENCE IN NIGERIA'S ECONOMY

The African Development Bank (AfDB) has said it was encouraged by the economic recovery of Nigeria from recession, and has saluted the government's efforts toward diversification of the country's economy.



The bank on Tuesday said it strongly supported the Economic and Growth Recovery Plan of the government and efforts to stem corruption and strengthen fiscal consolidation and efficiency.

"The Bank assures the Nigerian Government of its full support for its continued reforms to diversify the economy and boost economic growth and development," it said.

The AfDB denied withdrawing approval for a US\$600 million loan for Nigeria, and praised the country's Economic and Growth Recovery Plan (EGRP). Reports trending say the bank had cancelled a proposed loan to Nigeria.

The loan was meant to assist Nigeria's macro-economic and fiscal policy which had been suffering following the slump in oil price.

The bank posted on its website on Tuesday Nigeria's efforts to stem corruption and strengthen fiscal consolidation and efficiency was in tandem with the direction of the bank.

According to the bank, the loan was approved in November 2016 by its board to support Nigeria's efforts to cope with macro-economic and fiscal shocks that arose from the massive decline in price of crude oil.

"An additional 400 million dollars in support could be considered, if requested and approved by the Board, as part of a larger coordinated effort with other development partners, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

"The African Development Bank wishes to categorically refute the statement that it has 'called off loans to Nigeria', as reported in Reuters and credited to AfDB Vice-President for Power, Energy, Climate and Green Growth." (APA 31-10-2017)

RWANDA SEEKS TO BOOST INVESTMENT IN LOCAL POWER AND ENERGY

In Rwanda, the Private Sector Federation is seeking ways to attract investors to the country's energy sector, which according to a PSF official has "enormous investment potential".

"Rwanda's energy sector has enormous investment potential but we are still planning how to attract more investors in the sector to satisfy the electricity demand, especially from manufacturers, and also make energy affordable," said Benjamin Gasamagera, the chairperson of the Private Sector Federation. The New Times reported that the country's current energy coverage stands at 40.7%, including 29.7% on-grid electricity and 11% off-grid energy, with private sector contribution standing at 52%.

Gasamagera revealed that commercial banks are reluctant to support the development of energy projects because they lack the expertise to determine the quality and potential of energy project proposals.

"We are trying to work with the local banks to develop their capacity to analyse proposals from the energy sector. We also plan to approach foreign banks on big energy projects. It is something that needs to be quickly addressed," he said.

Developing partnerships

The New Times reported, under the umbrella body, [Energy Private Developers](#), the industry players are seeking collaborations with international partners to make the most of the electrification targets.

The chairperson of the group, Dr Ivan Twagirashema, told media that among the areas where they are seeking partnerships include financing and technical capacities.

Twagirashema said this will see them address long-standing challenges that have held them back from making the most of the opportunities within the sector.

He stated that local firms would consider joint ventures as well as investment collaborations with international investors.

Currently, it is reported that there are 30 companies, both local and international, that are involved in hydropower projects, which is the largest source of energy in the country.

These have seen about seven privately owned plants with a total capacity of 16MW under different phases of construction with commercial operations dates planned for the near future, media stated.

About 32 projects with a total capacity of approximately 30MW are at early stage development with feasibility studies for about 40 sites taking place. (ESI 24-10-2017)

MOROCCAN, ECOWAS PARLIAMENTS STRIKE FRAMEWORK COOPERATION DEAL

The parliaments of Morocco and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on Monday signed in Rabat, a framework cooperation agreement aimed at strengthening relations and building strong cooperation in various areas.



It was signed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, MM. Habib El Malki, Speaker of the House of Councilors, Abdelhakim Benchamach, and Speaker of ECOWAS Parliament, Mustapha Cisse Lo.

The framework cooperation agreement concerns the establishment of a Joint Parliamentary Committee and the joint organization of an event on topics of common interest.

In a statement, El Malki described as “historic” his meeting with the ECOWAS Parliament Speaker, held on the sidelines of the African parliamentary consultation meeting on climate and sustainable development, pointing out that this was their first meeting with a political dimension between the two legislative institutions.

“Morocco has taken important steps toward integration within ECOWAS, and the signing of this framework agreement consolidates the Moroccan initiative,” he said, adding that this cooperation with ECOWAS parliament opens the way to new horizons of partnership.

Cisse Lo in reply said the meeting allowed them to discuss environmental issues in preparation for the UN climate conference (COP23), which will be held in Bonn, Germany, as well as Morocco’s request for ECOWAS membership, “much desired by the community”.

“Morocco is a heavyweight in Africa and a transit zone to Europe,” he said, and called for working together to put in place strategies and cooperation mechanisms to address the concerns of their populations, particularly in the area of free movement of persons and goods within the ECOWAS area, as well as economic cooperation with a view to setting up a common external tariff, and developing mechanisms to fight irregular migration together. (APA 31-10-2017)

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



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