

MEMORANDUM

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CHINA PLEDGES \$60BN AID TO AFRICA

Chinese President Xi Jinping pledged on Friday in Johannesburg, South Africa, a \$60 billion aid to Africa.

China decided to donate a total of \$60 billion for financial assistance including \$5 billion at zero interest loans and \$35 billion in preferential loans, President Xi stated at the opening of the Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC).

Forty African leaders, including Nigeria's president Muhammadu Buhari and Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe are expected in Johannesburg, in the financial district of Sandton.

Only three African countries including Burkina Faso, Sao Tome and Swaziland have not been invited to Johannesburg, because of their diplomatic relations with Taiwan, an island that has been separated from mainland China since 1949.

The summit, the first to be held outside China, is under the theme of win-win cooperation and is presented as a new milestone in the history of China-Africa relations.

It stands in a context marked by a fall in Chinese investment in Africa of more than 40 percent during the first six months of 2015, compared to the same period last year. This drop is attributed to the slowdown in Chinese growth.

For a decade, China has been purchasing large quantities of oil, iron, copper and other raw materials from African countries, contributing to soaring prices.

But the slowdown in growth is having an opposite effect, plunging in deep crisis many commodity-dependent African countries, such as Zambia, the largest copper producer. (APA 04-12-2015)

ETHIOPIA: ECA TO DISCUSS AFRICA ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

The ninth session of the Economic Commission for Africa Committee on Regional Cooperation and Integration (CRCI) will convene in Addis Ababa from 7 to 9 December 2015 to discuss means of promoting and accelerating productive integration through trade and market integration.

The United Nation Economic Commission said on Sunday in a statement that the committee will also discuss economic diversification, competitiveness, infrastructure, regional and continental value chains development, and the financing and investments needed to meet implement these policies.

Studies, including the recent ECA Economic Report on Africa (ERA), suggest that to improve intra-African trade, the continent must address its overall weak productive capacities and lack of competitiveness and technological sophistication.

The studies cite infrastructure as one of the key impediments to productive integration in Africa.

An insufficient infrastructure has adverse effects on supply and value chain linkages, not only in the agriculture sector on which the majority of Africans depend, but also in manufacturing and other sectors of the economy.

It also affects growth, the creation of jobs and eventual elimination of widespread poverty.

Despite growth during the past decade and relatively good performance, African economies lack industrialization and integration.

Academic evidence from the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the African Union Commission (AUC) shows this recent growth has had no impact on the underlying structural design of these economies and to diversify its economies, the continent must

reverse its dependence on merchandise exports dominated by raw and unprocessed commodities.

With infrastructure in place, intra-African trade and regional value chains can effectively facilitate Africa's industrialization and eventual entry into global value chains, the report suggests.

Themed Enhancing Productive Integration for Africa's Structural Transformation, this ninth session of the Committee will meet to review several documents such as the report on Assessing Regional Integration in Africa VII: Innovation, Competitiveness and Regional Integration (ARIA VII) which recommend that Africa implement innovation-friendly policies if it is to achieve sustained economic growth and transformation.(APA 06-12-2015)

UGANDAN LEADER APPEALS FOR URGENT CONSTRUCTION OF EAC REGIONAL RAILWAY

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has told the Chinese government that there is an urgent need for them to look at the construction of the regional Standard Gauge Railway connecting the East African Community (EAC) partner states.

Speaking to his Chinese counterpart, President Xi Jinping on the sideline of the Forum on China-Africa Co-operation currently underway in South Africa, Museveni called for urgent construction of the railway which will link Uganda with Kenya at Malaba, Rwanda at Mirama Hills, South Sudan at Nimule and the Democratic Republic of Congo at Aruu.

"This will have the total length of 3000 kilometres but will however, be built in phases, starting with the Kampala-Malaba part of 273 kilometres" said Museveni.

He said the Uganda government has already signed contracts with a Chinese company known as China Harbour Engineering Company Ltd (CHEC) for the construction of the railway but noted that the project is just waiting for funding from Chinese financing agencies.(APA 04-12-2015)

SPANISH VESSELS MAY FISH IN MAURITANIA 'BEFORE CHRISTMAS'

The Secretary General of Fisheries, Andrés Hermida, confirmed that the Spanish fleet can resume fishing activities in Mauritanian waters before Christmas, following the entry into force of the fisheries agreement between the European Union (EU) and Mauritania.

Speaking to the agency *EFE*, Hermida explained that while the agreement must be ratified by the European Parliament so that it is "fully" implemented, including a "provisional implementation clause" that allows its launch. Consequently, he estimated that fifty vessels from Spain will be allowed to have access to the Mauritanian fishing ground in the first half of December, in "about ten or fifteen days."

As part of the agreement, Community vessels will be allowed to fish 281,500 tonnes per year in return for an annual compensation of EUR 55 million a year.

This agreement benefits the fishing fleets of Andalusia, Canary Islands and Galicia.

To Spain, the new protocol represents some improvement over the previous one. It will benefit the shellfish fleet, for example, because it has recovered one of the two fishing areas that had been closed in the previous agreement. In addition, given the good status of the shellfish resources, both parties have decided to eliminate biological stoppages for this fishing mode, which will allow the fleet to fish all year round.

Furthermore, fishing opportunities increased for the black hake trawl fleet and the bottom longline one for species other than hake.

And with regard to tuna fishing, the new protocol allows the fleet of highly migratory species to return to one of the best fishing grounds in the Atlantic. The purse seine and longline fleets will be able to operate

under similar conditions to those of other agreements for highly migratory species, after standardizing control measures and the access in this new protocol with those from the other tuna agreements. Hermida said the General Secretariat of Fisheries is already reviewing documentation of Spanish vessels to request permission to fish in these waters.(Fis 23-11-2015)

EGYPT GEARS UP TO HOST AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON SPACE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The Egyptian tourist resort town of Sharm al-Sheikh will host the African Leadership Conference on Space Science and Technology (ALC) on December 1-4, APA learns here Sunday.

According to the ALC web page, the conference aims to promote intra-African cooperation in the uses of space science and technology to support development, the first edition of the conference was held in 2005 in Nigeria.

Experts, scientists, researchers and policy makers from over 40 African countries are expected to participate in the conference to draw up a roadmap for space science and technology in Africa and their potential application to improve life of Africans. (APA 29-11-2015)

CABO VERDE CONSUMER CONFIDENCE FALLS

The consumer confidence indicator in Cabo Verde (Cape Verde) in the third quarter was the lowest in the series, having evolved negatively in the previous quarter, the National Statistics Institute (INE) reported Thursday.

INE also said that the indicator kept the downward trend of recent quarters, with the changes from the previous quarter meaning the negative assessment of the financial situation of households, economic situation of the country for the next 12 months and economic situation of each household with regard to same period of 2014.

The survey results revealed that the economic situation of Cape Verdean families and the country itself, developed negatively compared to the same quarter of 2014 and due to the economic situation families are unable to save.

For the next 12 months the economic situation of families and the country should evolve negatively year on year, said the Cape Verdean Institute. (27-11-2015)

EU-SOUTHERN AFRICA TRADE DEAL TO BE SIGNED IN BOTSWANA IN MAY

The European Union and five Southern African Development Community states will meet in Botswana in May to sign [a trade deal](#) that has taken at least 10 years to complete.

A date for formalizing the Economic Partnership Agreement was agreed during talks in Brussels, Botswana's Trade and Industry Ministry said in an e-mailed statement Wednesday. Legal processes around the deal were completed on Oct. 23, it said.

Botswana chairs the SADC Economic Partnership Agreement group, which also includes Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland. Negotiations between EU and SADC states on the EPA started in 2004. While an interim agreement was signed by some regional states in June 2009, a full accord was only reached in July last year.(Bloomberg 23-11-2015)

EGYPT'S POPULATION TO REACH 90 MILLION BY DECEMBER 6

Egypt's population will reach 90 million by Sunday December 6, the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) announced on Sunday.

According to CAPMAS, Cairo governorate registered the largest population that hit 9.43 million, followed by Giza which hit 7 million and then comes Sharqiah in the third place with 6 million people.

The census shows that Egypt has registered 89.9 million people. (APA 29-11-2015)

VENEZUELA SUPPORTS RICE PRODUCTION IN GUINEA-BISSAU

Venezuela will support the production of rice and other grains in Guinea-Bissau, said Wednesday in Bissau the Venezuelan ambassador to Guinea-Bissau, at the end of an audience granted by President José Mário Vaz.

Ambassador Eddy José Cordova Corcega gave assurances that Venezuela would find mechanisms, which he did not detail, to support the production of rice, maize and sorghum as well as other agricultural products, to improve the diet of the Guinean population.

Corcega said the issue of support to Guinea-Bissau would be discussed further at the next Africa/South America summit, to be held in May 2016 in Quito, the capital of Ecuador, which the Guinea-Bissau head of state will attend. (27-11-2015)

LES LIBYENS VEULENT REPREDRE LA MAIN SUR LEURS INVESTISSEMENTS EN AFRIQUE

C'est le leitmotiv de [Hassan Bouhadi](#) depuis quelques mois : reprendre la main sur les nombreux investissements réalisés par le fonds souverain libyen en Afrique durant le règne de Mouammar Kadhafi et qui, depuis la chute de ce dernier, sont en souffrance ou repris par certains États. Nommé en octobre 2014 à la tête de la Libyan Investment Authority (LIA) par le gouvernement de Tobrouk, reconnu par la communauté internationale mais dont le mandat a expiré le 20 octobre dernier, il est contesté par le gouvernement de Tripoli. Actuellement basé à Malte pour des raisons de sécurité, cet ingénieur formé à Londres est, selon son entourage, déterminé et prêt à prendre toutes les mesures nécessaires pour recouvrer les avoirs libyens.

Alors qu'une grande partie de l'ensemble des actifs détenus par la LIA, valorisés à 67 milliards de dollars (62,4 milliards d'euros), sont encore sous sanction, gelés par les Nations unies, les dirigeants du fonds assurent que ceux situés sur le continent sont toujours opérationnels. Les équipes de toutes ses filiales actives en Afrique sont ainsi mobilisées avec pour objectif de « revoir leur approche et de faire en sorte que leurs investissements soient gérés le plus efficacement possible », nous indique-t-on dans l'entourage de Hassan Bouhadi. Alors que [la Libye semble plongée dans le chaos politique et sécuritaire](#), *Jeune Afrique* fait le point sur ce que deviennent les investissements de son fonds souverain sur le continent, dans quatre secteurs-clés.

Télécoms

C'est notamment dans ce secteur que la LIA a récemment mené l'offensive. En juillet, elle a lancé des actions contre quatre pays africains – le Rwanda, le Tchad, la Zambie et le Niger – qui ont nationalisé ses filiales dans les télécoms. « Des procédures sont en cours », nous confie sans plus de détails une source proche du dossier qui soutient que ces procédures ont été soit lancées auprès de la justice des pays concernés, soit ouvertes sous forme de programmes de règlement de contentieux.

D'après nos informations, au Niger, le différend porte sur la reprise de [la Société nigérienne des télécommunications \(Sonitel\)](#) par l'opérateur libyen LAP GreenN et pour laquelle un accord avait été conclu en janvier 2011. La Libye devait payer un bonus de 31 milliards de F CFA (environ 47,3 millions

d'euros) au Niger dans les quarante-cinq jours suivant la signature de l'accord et mettre en place un programme d'investissement de 55 milliards de F CFA sur cinq ans.

Faisel Gergab, le président de LPTIC s'est rendu en Côte d'Ivoire pour régler une partie – 20 % – des dettes de l'opérateur, qui avoisinent en tout 9 milliards de F CFA

Mais, en février, [le soulèvement contre le régime de Kadhafi](#) a empêché la Libye de tenir ses engagements, obligeant le Niger à reprendre le contrôle de la société. « Aujourd'hui, les Libyens mettent en avant un cas de force majeure, comme le prévoit une clause de l'accord conclu en janvier 2011, pour réclamer la reprise de Sonitel », nous explique un conseiller à la présidence du Niger, qui avait participé aux négociations.

Depuis quelques mois, la LIA tente de relancer l'opérateur de téléphonie mobile LAP GreenN, aujourd'hui actif dans trois pays. En août, elle a ainsi cédé les actions détenues dans cette entreprise par sa filiale Libya Africa Investment Portfolio (LAP) à la Société libyenne des postes, des télécommunications et des technologies de l'information (LPTIC). Fin septembre, par exemple, Faisel Gergab, le président de LPTIC et par ailleurs membre du comité de direction de la LIA mené par Hassan Bouhadi, s'est rendu en Côte d'Ivoire pour régler une partie – 20 % – des dettes de l'opérateur, qui avoisinent en tout 9 milliards de F CFA.

[LAP GreenN, qui, pénalisé par les troubles politiques en Libye, n'a pas pu passer à la 3G en Côte d'Ivoire](#), cherche ainsi à se mettre en règle vis-à-vis des autorités du pays. Son objectif : se donner toutes les chances de décrocher la quatrième licence globale pour laquelle l'État a lancé un appel d'offres.

Hôtellerie & immobilier

D'après nos informations, Hassan Bouhadi et son équipe ont mis en place un groupe de travail pour revoir les investissements de la LIA dans certains pays, comme la Tunisie, où le fonds souverain détient des actifs dans le tourisme et l'immobilier. Sur le continent, c'est sans doute dans ces deux secteurs que la Libye de Kadhafi avait le plus investi via la Libyan Foreign Investment Company (Lafico), une autre filiale du fonds souverain.

Mais plus de quatre ans après la chute du dictateur, un nombre important de ces actifs connaissent des difficultés et de nombreux projets ont été gelés. Au Mali, autrefois considéré comme la principale terre d'accueil des investissements de Tripoli en Afrique subsaharienne, sur quatre établissements hôteliers libyens, seul l'hôtel de l'Amitié fonctionne aujourd'hui. Et ce grâce notamment à la Minusma, qui paie environ 800 000 millions de F CFA par mois pour y loger ses troupes.

Et, au Togo, [les autorités ont dû employer la manière forte pour reprendre le contrôle de l'hôtel du 2-Février](#), autrefois géré par Sofitel. Laico avait repris cet établissement en 2006 en transformant en actions un prêt de 15 millions de dollars accordé au gouvernement de ce pays quelques années plus tôt. Mais la filiale du fonds souverain libyen n'a pu respecter son engagement de rénover cet établissement de 36 étages et de relancer rapidement son exploitation. Les bouleversements en Libye et l'instabilité qui y règne depuis n'ont rien arrangé.

Après avoir confié une étude sur l'opportunité juridique de la manœuvre à des avocats locaux et français, le Togo fait voter une loi de nationalisation le 6 novembre 2014, qui prévoit néanmoins l'indemnisation des actionnaires libyens. Après des mois de négociations et parfois de descentes musclées des forces de l'ordre sur le site où étaient installés les bureaux locaux de Laico, les deux parties trouvent finalement un accord. L'hôtel du 2-Février est aujourd'hui à 100 % la propriété de l'État togolais, qui a confié sa rénovation au groupe sud-africain ZPC. Et son exploitation – à partir de décembre – au mauricien Kalyan Hospitality Development Limited, sous la marque Radisson Blu.

La chute du régime Kadhafi et les changements politiques n'ont absolument rien changé à notre relation avec la LIA, indique Abdellatif Kabbaj

Désormais, la LIA semble miser davantage sur l'Afrique du Nord, où la situation est plus favorable. « Cinq de nos dix hôtels appartiennent au fonds souverain libyen, avec qui nous travaillons depuis 2009 dans le cadre d'un partenariat signé pour quinze ans, indique [Abdellatif Kabbaj, président du groupe Kenzi Hotels](#), basé à Marrakech. La chute du régime Kadhafi et les changements politiques n'ont absolument rien changé à notre relation avec la LIA, qui consiste essentiellement à lui régler des loyers pour les établissements que nous gérons et dont elle est propriétaire. C'est la même équipe qui est en place depuis le début de notre collaboration. »

Énergie

Alors qu'une libéralisation des prix des produits pétroliers est en cours au Maroc, en Tunisie et au Sénégal, le fonds souverain libyen incite sa filiale OilLibya à se renforcer dans ces pays. Gérée depuis

Dubaï, cette dernière est l'une des rares entreprises libyennes qui se portent plutôt bien sur le continent. Au Maroc, l'un de ses principaux marchés (elle y est quatrième en termes de part de marché), la société a vu ses revenus passer de 4 milliards de dirhams (environ 355,8 millions d'euros) au cours de l'année précédant la révolution libyenne à 6 milliards en 2014.

Autrefois dénommé Tamoil, le groupe de distribution de carburants a commencé ses activités hors de la Libye dans des pays limitrophes, le Tchad et le Niger, puis au Burkina Faso

Entièrement détenu par OilInvest Group (qui lui-même est une filiale de la LIA), OilLibya est dirigé par le Franco-Libyen Ibrahim Bugaighis. Et est aujourd'hui présent dans 18 pays sur le continent, où il compte 1 022 stations-service et emploie plus de 1 500 personnes. Autrefois dénommé Tamoil, le groupe de distribution de carburants a commencé ses activités hors de la Libye dans des pays limitrophes, le Tchad et le Niger, puis au Burkina Faso, avant de poursuivre sa croissance par des acquisitions. Il a ainsi racheté successivement, entre 2004 et 2008, les filiales de Shell au Niger, au Tchad, à Djibouti, en Éthiopie et au Soudan, et celles d'ExxonMobil au Niger, au Sénégal, en Côte d'Ivoire, au Gabon, au Cameroun, au Kenya, en Tunisie et au Maroc.

Agriculture

Selon nos informations, dans le domaine de l'agriculture, l'Afrique du Nord semble être la priorité de Hassan Bouhadi et de ses équipes de la LIA. Et notamment l'Égypte, un des principaux exportateurs africains de fruits et légumes. La Libye y a fait des investissements dans ce secteur, en particulier dans l'une des plus grandes fermes du pays.

En Afrique subsaharienne, la plupart des projets sont en souffrance ou tout simplement abandonnés, comme le projet public-privé Malibya. Lancé en 2008 au Mali, il prévoyait l'aménagement, pour un coût d'environ 56 milliards de FCFA, de plus de 100 000 hectares de terres au sein des vastes périmètres rizicoles de l'Office du Niger, la rice belt malienne, située dans la région de Ségou, quatrième du pays.

Un fonds, deux patrons

Qui dirige vraiment le fonds souverain libyen ? La réponse à cette question est loin d'être évidente. À l'instar du pays lui-même, la Libyan Investment Authority est divisée entre deux patrons. Hassan Bouhadi, nommé par le gouvernement reconnu par la communauté internationale mais dont le mandat a expiré le 20 octobre, est certes le plus actif sur le front de la reprise du contrôle des investissements libyens à l'étranger. Mais sa légitimité est loin de faire l'unanimité.

Légitimité surtout contestée par [Abdulmagid Breish, son rival](#), basé à Tripoli mais qui revendique son indépendance vis-à-vis du gouvernement qui y est installé. Cet ancien banquier, qui a travaillé à la Libyan Arab Foreign Bank et à l'Arab Banking Corporation, avait été nommé à la tête du fonds souverain en juin 2013, lorsque le pays avait un seul gouvernement. Mais accusé d'avoir collaboré avec le régime de Kadhafi, il affirme avoir choisi de se retirer de ses fonctions dans le souci de respecter la loi sur l'isolation politique et administrative. Blanchi à la suite d'un procès en appel, il revendique ce poste depuis avril dernier.

En attendant que cette bataille des chefs soit résolue, les deux hommes ont accepté en juillet de mettre de côté leur différend et de donner la priorité aux intérêts du fonds libyen. Via leurs avocats respectifs, ils ont nommé BDO, le cabinet international d'audit et de conseil, en tant que récepteur et gestionnaire des dossiers litigieux du fonds souverain libyen concernant l'Europe.

En Afrique, les deux parties ne sont pas forcément d'accord. Tandis que Hassan Bouhari et ses équipes n'hésitent pas à engager des procès pour récupérer les actifs libyens, Mohsen Derregia, le patron de Libya Africa Investment Portfolio (LAP), proche de Abdulmagid Breish, soutient : « Une action en justice ne devrait pas être notre première approche. D'autant que dans certains cas les États nous ont restitué nos actifs après la révolution. »(JA 27-11-2015)

SOUTH AFRICA: AFRICAN URBANIZATION POISED FOR 50 PERCENT RISE

Africans have no choice but to adapt to new coping strategies to deal with the implications of rapid urbanization which is being projected to rise from 40 percent in 2010 to 50 percent by 2035, according to the Mayor of Johannesburg, Mpho Parks Tau.

Speaking at the start of the Africities Summit at the Sandton Convention Center in Johannesburg on Sunday, Mayor Tau declared: "Our cities are changing with extraordinary speed and complexity, requiring us to adapt and transform".

He warned that the implications will include accelerated environmental degradation, food insecurity, problems around access to limited services, poverty and unemployment among others.

"More than ever before, African cities are at the forefront of rapidly accelerating change. Africa's prospects in 2015 are markedly different from what they were in 2000: African economies have grown at rates rivaling those of East Asia, averaging 6% in 2013. Such growth is driven by natural resources, a vibrant services sector, rising private investment, increased exports and improved agricultural production" he pointed out.

He however observed that the rosy picture of African growth contrasts sharply with the story about individual well-being on the continent.

"Since 2000, Africa has lagged behind the rest of the world on MDG progress, particularly in terms of poverty, job creation and food security.

"Recent reports show that Africa's structural transformation has been limited, with little impact on the lives of the poorest" he added, quoting the 2014 Global Monitoring Report by the World Bank which estimates that sub-Saharan Africa is home to 41 percent of the world's poor at present.

"This could reach 81 percent by 2030 if we continue to do business-as-usual. This stark concentration of poverty demands a focused response from African governments" he further warned.

For the next five days beginning on Sunday, local government authority officials including mayors, councilors, social workers, politicians and opinion leaders will retreat to over 50 closed-door sessions to discuss, share notes, debate and make recommendations on diverse issues ranging from urban planning, resource management and environmental protection among others.

A meeting between ministers, mayors and international development partners is also planned as a special event intended to bring greater collaboration between local government authorities and the state. (APA 29-11-2015)

MAJORITY OF SWAZI WOMEN APPROVE OF WIFE-BEATING

A Swaziland demographic health survey released Sunday morning reveals that more Swazi women than men believe their husbands are justified in beating them and they see nothing wrong with gender-based violence, APA reports.

This was revealed in a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey Comparative report where reasons for wife-beating included; if she refused to have sex with him, if she argued with him, if she went out without telling him, if she neglected the children and if she had sex with other men.

The report states that four in 10 women believe that a husband is justified in beating his wife while at least two in five men believe that a husband is justified in beating his wife for at least one of the six specified reasons with explanation being that as the head of a household, a man is traditionally an important figure in Swazi family life.

Silindelo Nkosi, the Communication and Advocacy Officer for Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse (SWAGAA) said, "These beliefs of justifying abuse have increased to the worst rate resulting in more young women dying in the hands of their lovers or husbands.

Clinical Psychologist Ndo Mdlalose describes this as an abusive mentality where men also tend to claim they are correcting their women by beating them.

As a solution to this, Sibongile Mazibuko, former President of the Swaziland National Association of Teachers (SNAT) said spouses should engage in a dialogue and solve problems amicably because violence can even spread to children since they learn faster from what they see. (APA 29-11-2015)

TINY CAPE VERDE PICKS BIG FIGHT WITH DRUG GANGS

When Cape Verde police dismantled a drugs network preparing to smuggle tens of millions of dollars of cocaine to Europe in 2011, the operation was hailed as a rare victory against international crime by one of Africa's smallest states.

Within two years it had yielded a series of convictions as well as further seizures of cash and real estate. Soon after that, however, senior officials began receiving threats.

Then, in September last year, a gunman shot dead the 56-year-old mother of Katia Tavares, Cape Verde's top anti-drugs investigator, at her yellow two-storey house in the capital, Praia. The son of Prime Minister Jose Maria Neves was wounded in a separate shooting months later.

Both attacks have been linked to the drugs probe, testing the tiny country's determination to crack down on powerful smuggling gangs ahead of elections early in 2016.

A cluster of 10 volcanic islands 570km off Senegal, Cape Verde stands out both as a pocket of relative stability in West Africa and for its firm action against the networks channelling Latin American cocaine to Europe.

European and US law enforcement officials engaged in the same struggle view Cape Verde's efforts as a model for the region.

"They are much better than on the mainland," said one.

But the violence unleashed in the wake of the so-called Flying Boat case — a reference to the smugglers' high-powered motor launch — has pushed security concerns to the forefront of public debate.

"They're trying to threaten the authorities and the state as it fights organised crime," said Patricio Varela, head of the country's Judicial Police.

The Tavares killing sent shockwaves through the former Portuguese colony's population of 500,000. Prosecutor Oscar Tavares — no relation — described it as an attack on democracy.

Although accustomed to occasional bloodshed among traffickers, the state had never seen such a direct challenge to its authority. Cape Verde has suffered no coups or civil conflict in the four decades since independence, despite its scant resources and punishing drought cycles.

Several Western countries sent teams to support local police in the wake of the shootings, and a suspect was killed resisting arrest.

Slavery to cocaine

By the 1990s, Cape Verde had become a hub for fast-growing narcotics traffic, echoing its past importance as a trans-Atlantic staging post for the slave trade, ocean-going steamers and early commercial aviation. Its jagged coastlines and 300,000 square-mile maritime zone resemble a smugglers' paradise.

Weak law-enforcement resources, lax financial controls and a degree of official complicity allowed the drugs trade to flourish almost unchecked, with local proceeds laundered through a construction boom supported by expanding tourism.

In the past decade, however, Cape Verde has turned its Judicial Police into one of West Africa's strongest organised crime squads. Anti-money-laundering laws were introduced in 2002, improved in 2009 and are being tightened again. The postal service scans packages with state-of-the-art equipment, and airline passengers are greeted by sniffer dogs.

Radar and satellites are used to track suspect boats from an operations centre funded by the US — which used the archipelago to launch its own 2013 drugs sting against senior military officials in Guinea Bissau.

In the Flying Boat case, months of investigation led to the seizure of 1.5-tons of cocaine in the heart of Praia, as smugglers attempted to stash it in a basement near the state television building.

Among nine people jailed were the former head of the local stock exchange, Verissimo Monteiro Pinto, and prominent real estate investor Paulo Ivone Pereira. Police confiscated cash, vehicles and property worth tens of millions of dollars, including a glass-fronted office building that now serves as Cape Verde's armed forces headquarters.

Outmatched

Last November, authorities seized another 500kg of cocaine in an operation that led to the jailing of six people including Swiss, Spanish and Cuban nationals.

Although they have won some key battles, the 160-strong Judicial Police remain far outmatched in the war against traffickers. Cape Verde has five patrol boats, only one of which can operate beyond coastal waters, and its sole surveillance aircraft has been out of action for years, diplomats said. Few believe the flow of narcotics has been seriously curtailed.

Low drug prices suggest a significant trade is continuing, another Western security official said. Cocaine sells for \$10,000/kg-15,000/kg in Cape Verde, compared with \$20,000 or more on the mainland — a sign that traffickers are getting shipments through to European ports such as Lisbon and Rotterdam. "They took a hit from the authorities but have shown they are determined to continue their activities," said Pedro Pires, Cape Verde's last president.

Mr Pires, a member of the West African Commission on Drugs established by former United Nations chief Kofi Annan, told Reuters the violent response to the Flying Boat drugs bust was "an attempt to intimidate the state".

The control now exerted by drug gangs over large parts of Mexico offers a cautionary tale, he added. "The Mexicans lost vast swathes of territory to the criminals. We have to fight the groups swiftly, before they get installed."

In a pre-election year, the shootings have fuelled anxiety about a broader crime wave often blamed on US-style gang culture, imported by young citizens returning from Cape Verde's large diaspora.

Questions were asked about whether convicted criminals had been able to operate and order reprisals from jail. Judicial Police officers, already well paid by regional standards, have been striking to press for higher wages to reflect the increased dangers they face.

For the government of President Jorge Carlos Fonseca, who is expected to run again, the security worries add to problems including the knock-on effects of European austerity, faltering rains and debt amounting to almost a year of economic output.

While the government's handling of the organised crime crackdown is a subject of nervous discussion, those on its front line know they still command overwhelming public support.

"We don't feel intimidated," police chief Varela said. (Reuters 30-11-2015)

SWAZILAND: COMMONWEALTH MISSION REPORT RECOMMENDS POLITICAL REFORMS

The agenda of the proposed 'Democracy talks' between the G15 team (comprising political and civic groups) and the Swazi authorities which has been kept secret, has its traces found in a report compiled by a Commonwealth Observer Mission after the 2013 general elections, APA reports here Sunday.

The report, compiled by former Malawi President Bakili Muluzi who was chairperson of the Observer Mission, according to local media, makes a number of recommendations that touched upon the powers of King Mswati III.

Muluzi is also the one that has been appointed by the Commonwealth as special envoy to Swaziland and he is expected to chair the talks.

Pertaining to the monarch, Muluzi in his report feels the King has too many powers which need to be curtailed.

The report appears to be unhappy that King Mswati III has powers to appoint a 'significant number' of

members of both houses of parliament.

Also it seems concerned that the King has powers to appoint the Prime Minister, who may not necessarily be a member of parliament, and also appoint the Chief Justice; on the advice of the Judicial Service Commission, hence Muluzi's report feels there is a need to remove executive powers from the king 'into the hands of elected officials'.

"The office of the monarch possesses extensive discretionary powers to call and dissolve Parliament. The monarch also has the authority to hire and dismiss ministers of government, assent to and veto legislation. The respect for the principle of the separation of powers is observably a great challenge in the country's governance framework," states the report.

Muluzi and his team go on to say that the Kingdom of Swaziland's constitution should be 'revisited' to allow for the free operation and contesting of elections by political parties.

Political activist and a member of the G15 Wandile Dlodlu said, "We hope to engage on how the country can have a democratic system in place," expressing the hope that the dialogue would also touch on the institution of the monarchy. (APA 29-11-2015)

SWAZI MOBILE OPERATOR REDUCES ROAMING CHARGES BY 50%

The Swaziland branch of the South African mobile phone operator, MTN-Swaziland, has said they have lowered roaming charges with other MTN operations in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region by 50%, local media report here Sunday.

The company's head of Corporate Services Sibusiso Nhleko said they are also extending roaming for prepaid customers in the region and can now roam with operators such as Vodacom South Africa to allow for better consumer welfare as well as accelerate regional integration thereby facilitating the social and economic development of the region.

This follows the directive by SADC ministers communicated by the Swaziland Communications Commission that there should be changes in the roaming space in Swaziland, a directive through which operators are required to negotiate with roaming partners with the objective of reducing roaming rates in the region.

Nhleko said, "It is in this process that the company began negotiating with their partners in the region (bilateral negotiations) to lower wholesale rates.

"However, it is important to note that there are some impediments when it comes to charging for receiving calls," Nhleko said.

He said when a call is made from the home network and terminating on another network (roamer), they still incurred the interconnect costs locally and hence the reduction on the receiving end have remained relatively unchanged.

Nhleko added that the roaming rates varied according to the agreed wholesale rates with each roaming partner, as well as highlighted that the biggest reduction they had seen was on data charges.

The SADC secretariat said the strategic role of regional mobile telephone roaming had been recognized by SADC ministers responsible for Postal, Telecommunications and ICT.

The SADC Home and Away Roaming Project was being implemented in three phases, the first being Liberalisation, Transparency, Information and Data Collection, the second being 'Roam Like at Home (RLAH)' and the third being 'Cost-based Price Regulation.' (APA 29-1-2015)

BOTSWANA AND DE BEERS CAUGHT BETWEEN A ROCK AND ROUGH PLACE

Botswana and SA — endowed with mineral treasure troves — are both grappling with similar demands on the commodities that built their economies.

Unlike SA with its diverse minerals, Botswana's economic leap has come off a single commodity platform: diamonds.

This, arguably, is largely underpinned by expensively bought and fostered consumer sentiment rather than any practical industrial use.

During the past 12 years, De Beers has spent more than \$1.6bn on marketing diamonds.

"De Beers's partnership with Botswana is a remarkable story of careful stewardship, wise investment and shared prosperity," says De Beers CEO Philippe Mellier.

He says since the 1967 discovery of diamonds, Botswana has gone from being one of the poorest countries in Africa to "one of its biggest modern economic success stories".

As the second-largest producer of diamonds by value out of 22 diamond-producing countries, Botswana is regularly held up as an example of what can be done by a visionary, disciplined and thoughtful government when it comes to using its mineral treasure to the benefit of the country as a whole.

It has poured money into infrastructure and its people by spending on free education and healthcare rather than wasting its money, says Keith Jefferis, the former deputy governor of the Bank of Botswana and MD of Econsult.

"We are prosperous but we are not competitive. The reason is we have managed to reach upper middle-income status with what I call well managed good luck, but that's not going to keep us prosperous in the future. We need to move towards an economy based on competitiveness, productivity and efficiency," he says.

SA's economy, fuelled by gold, platinum, coal, iron ore, chrome, diamonds and manganese as major mineral outputs over the span of more than a century, has grown and diversified, gaining momentum in sectors independent of mining.

In Botswana, the prevailing downturn in rough diamond prices and weak demand is more keenly felt, hitting the government in the pocket and forcing it to dip into reserves to fund its programmes.

The direct contribution to Botswana's gross domestic product last year from just the De Beers partnership with the government was 25%, compared to SA's entire mining sector's contribution of 7.6% to the South African economy last year.

The partnership, mainly through the jointly owned Debswana company, contributed \$4bn, which was about the same as the next three largest sectors of Botswana's economy — wholesale and retail, construction and manufacturing.

Taxes, royalties and dividends paid from the partnership came to \$2.2bn last year and made up 39% of the government's revenue compared to SA's mineral sector's 6%-8% contribution to revenue.

A range of analysts and market commentators have forecast De Beers' diamond sales this year would fall to \$4.4bn-\$4bn, or lower, compared with \$6.8bn last year.

Understandably, the government used a meeting with De Beers tagged onto the end of the conference last week to discuss the partnership and, in the pointed words of Minerals, Energy and Water Resources Minister Onkokame Kitso Mokaila, decide how "something more sustainable needs to be done".

"Selling diamonds is critical to the country's finances, and holding goods in Debswana will impede the flow of cash to the fiscus. How the partners manage this in soft, rough markets will determine De Beers' sales policy to some extent since buying rough to hold at the De Beers's level would consume cash," RBC Capital Markets diamond analyst Des Kilalea said.

The meeting centred on the state of the market and plans by De Beers to clear blockages around oversupply in the cutting and polishing industry and in jewellery by using every lever at its disposal, De Beers head of strategy Bruce Cleaver says.

Against this difficult backdrop, De Beers has slowed production from mines in Botswana, SA, Namibia and Canada, and analysts speculate rough diamond purchases from the Debswana mining joint venture between the 85%-owned subsidiary of Anglo American and the Botswana government have fallen, lowering government revenues in a year of drought and power shortages.

Also, the number of cutters and polishers has halved to about 2,000, Jacob Thamage, Botswana Diamond Hub co-ordinator, says. (BD 30-11-2015)

SWAZILAND: SADC MULLS RAISING POWER TARIFFS

The National Energy Regulator of South Africa's (NERSA) says electricity tariffs in countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries could be raised by 100 percent in order to attract investors for the much needed infrastructure development., APA observes here on Monday.

A senior NERSA official Brian Sechotlho is quoted in the local media as saying the region is standing in a dilemma as they are caught between enabling electricity access to the poor, but at the same time they need to come up with tariffs that would attract investors in terms of returns on investment.

From the results of our assessment, it is clear that current prices are not sufficient to attract investments in much needed infrastructure, he is quoted as saying by Swaziland's daily newspaper, the Observer.

The official said as per the modelling, it looks like the tariff must be set at least at \$13 cents per kilowatt hour.

This means that for some countries, the tariffs will have to increase by more than 100 percent, he said.

However, he said a careful path should be chosen in moving towards cost-reflective tariffs as a careless decision might discourage investments in other developmental projects in the region.

There should be a thorough economy impact assessment and care must be given to ensure continued support to low income citizens, he said.

He even suggested that the tariff may be increased at a low rate over a certain period of time while analysing and monitoring the situation.

SADC still has a power supply shortfall of around 8, 200 Mega Watts.(APA 30-11-2015)

DETERIORATION IN EGYPT'S ECONOMIC OUTLOOK RAISES SOVEREIGN RISK PROFILE

Moody's Investors Service said in a statement on Monday that the recent deterioration of Egypt's economic outlook could increase the risks to sovereign credit ratings.

The five-year EDF measure corresponds to an implied rating of B1, which is comfortably noninvestment grade. The Moody's agency rating sits two notches lower, at B3, the statement reads.

The agency attributed this deterioration to Russian plane crashed in Central Sinai in on Oct. 31, adding Tourist numbers have dried up and are not expected to recover in the near term, Russia accounting for around 30 percent of all tourist arrivals. Egypt's economy, particularly its external account, will be affected by the decline.

Concerning the recent floating of the exchange rate operated by the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE), Moody's noted that the floating process came under pressure due to decline in the foreign exchange receipts.

According to Moody's, Egypt's foreign reserves fell to \$16.4 billion in September, which is sufficient to cover only three months' worth of imports, adding that the current account deficit is expected to hit 3.7 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2015. (APA 30-11-2015)

The Memorandum is supported by the Chamber of Commerce Tenerife, ELO - Portuguese Association for Economic Development and Cooperation, Hellenic-African Chamber of Commerce and Development, NABA - Norwegian-African Business Association and other organisations.


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www.helafrican-chamber.gr

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Fernando Matos Rosa

fernando.matos.rosa@sapo.pt
fernando.matos.rosa@skynet.be