

MEMORANDUM

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FRAIL, MUMBLING ROBERT MUGABE LOOKS DEATH IN THE EYE



Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe speaks to supporters gathered to celebrate his 93rd birthday at Matopas near Bulawayo on February 25 2017

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe celebrated his 93rd birthday with a lavish party at the weekend, addressing his own mortality in a speech but showing no signs of stepping down.

Wearing a black cowboy hat and a blazer bearing images of himself, Mugabe, who is increasingly frail, paused for lengthy periods and mumbled at times as he spoke for more than an hour.

"It's not always easy to predict that, although you are alive this year, you will be alive next year," he said.

"It does not matter how healthy you might feel. The decision that you continue to live and enjoy life is that of one personality we call the Almighty God.

"We should thank the Almighty God that I was able to live from 92 years last year to 93, but much more than that I was able to live from childhood to this day — that's a long, long journey."

The birthday party, held in a large marquee outside Zimbabwe's second city Bulawayo, was attended by thousands of officials and Zanu (PF) party supporters.

Mugabe has held power since 1980 during a reign marked by repression of dissent, vote-rigging and the country's sharp economic decline.

Now the world's oldest national leader, his actual birthday on Tuesday has been honoured in a week-long extravaganza with state media filled with tributes and praise.

Saturday's party included a feast and several vast birthday cakes, angering some Zimbabweans as the country endures severe food shortages.

One of the cakes was shaped like Mugabe's official Mercedes-Benz limousine.

Holding the event at a school in Matobo has also riled locals as it is close to where many victims of Mugabe's crackdown on dissidents in the early 1980s are thought to be buried.

At least 20,000 people are believed to have been killed in the massacres by North Korean-trained Zimbabwean troops, according to rights groups.

"This should not be a place for celebration," Mbuso Fuzwayo, spokesman for the Bulawayo-based campaign group Ibhetshu Likazulu, told AFP.

"The whole area is a crime scene where the bones of victims of the massacres are buried."

The state-owned Herald newspaper on Tuesday published a 24-page supplement of gushing congratulatory messages from government departments and regime loyalists.

"It's written on earth and in heaven that our leader is RG Mugabe," Zanu (PF) national youth leader Kudzai Chipanga told the president in his speech.

"We find it hard and impossible to talk about any other leader except yourself."

Zanu (PF) has endorsed Mugabe as its candidate for general elections next year, and he remains widely respected as a liberation hero by other African leaders.

Party guests — many dressed in clothing printed with Mugabe's image — chanted "Long live the African icon".

"Some in their little groups are saying 'Mugabe must go' and I ask 'where must I go?'" Mugabe said.

"If Zanu (PF) says 'you should step down', I will step down."

He has avoided naming a successor, but his wife, Grace, is seen as a possible candidate along with vice-president Emmerson Mnangagwa.

A coalition of opposition activist groups said the event was "a mockery and a direct insult to the concerns of the citizens", alleging that poor farmers were forced to donate cattle to feed guests.

Mugabe cut the cakes with the help of Grace as the crowd sang Happy Birthday.

Born on February 21 1924, Mugabe trained as a teacher and taught in what was then Rhodesia and Ghana before returning home to join the guerrilla war against white-minority rule. He became prime minister on Zimbabwe's independence from Britain in 1980 and then president in 1987.

All schools around Bulawayo were closed on Thursday and Friday to prepare for the celebration, which was attended by some ambassadors and foreign dignitaries. "Our children were told their classrooms have been turned into boarding facilities, and they [were] frogmarched to join the birthday party," local poet and opposition activist Desire Moyo told AFP. (AFP 27-02-2017)

SHELL PETROLEUM COMMITS \$1 BILLION TO NIGER DELTA



Nigerian government has secured funding of over \$1 billion from Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) to develop the oil rich but restive Niger Delta region.

Acting President Yemi Osinbajo told the people in Port Harcourt in Rivers State capital, at a town hall meeting with governors, former governors, community leaders, women and various youth groups in the Niger Delta region that the government was taking action to ensure that the vicious circle of abandonment amidst plenty, paying lip service to the region should stop.

He assured that the government was giving priority to the clean-up of Ogoniland, which had been degraded by the activities of oil companies.

"Environmental remediation is important throughout the entire region," Osinbajo said.

He said that the inauguration of the governing council and board of trustees on August 4, 2016 and January 12, 2017, were some measures taken by the administration to ensure the clean-up of Ogoniland.

"A funding of 1 billion dollars at 200 million dollars per annum over five years has been provided by Shell to provide drinking water, conduct health impact assessment and demonstrate remediation technologies.

"A ground-breaking for the construction of Centre of Excellence in the region will be launched in a few days," he said.

He added that the training of 2,000 women from four local government areas in greenhouse, shrimp, poultry farming for empowerment would commence soon.

He said that fears being expressed that these projects would be abandoned should not be entertained as they were not being handled alone by the Federal Government.

Osinbajo assured that the Federal Government was interested with the continuation of the amnesty programme. (APA 14-09-2017)

CONSTRUCTION OF BUGESERA AIRPORT IN RWANDA KICKS OFF

The Aviation, Travel and Logistics Limited (ATL Ltd) has its work cut out for the coming two years as the new chief executive takes office and construction works of [Bugesera International Airport starts](#).

Lucky Cheong, the new chief executive of the holding firm, said, they are extremely involved in the design of Bugesera International Airport as well as construction.

He said as construction work for the new airport begins, the firm is eager on setting up systems that will see them deliver quality services.

Among the errands involved in the process, he said; involve identifying skill needs essential to develop the sector and ways to train their staff.

“We could do this by having skilled trainers and mentors which is where partners come in. We could also send our managers for bench marking to more qualified airports,” Cheong told The New Times.

He said towards the launch of the new airport, they will try to generate demand for the airport’s services mainly by making it a highly regarded name to industry players.

“We must be conscious of international standards, we want to put our expectations elevated from the beginning when the new airlines come in,” he said on the sidelines of the Aviation Africa 2017 summit.

Currently, [Kigali International Airport](#) deals with around 800,000 passengers yearly while the new facility will deal with around 1.7 million passengers.

He stated that, in upcoming years, other than the airport, they would also build up an airport city around Bugesera and an aviation ecosystem with several players.

Akagera Aviation, Cheong added, could in the course, be mostly concerned in the training of staff.

The holding company was created and approved by the Cabinet in 2015 to run aviation activities such as travel, logistics, ground, freight and cargo handling and charter services.

The company has subsidiaries in an effort to place the nation as a regional aviation hub for tourism, cargo and logistics-related activities. They include [RwandAir](#), airports and Akagera Aviation. (CRO 24-02-2017)

MOZAMBIQUE’S ECONOMY GROWS BY 3.3% IN 2016

Mozambique’s economy grew by 3.3% in real terms in 2016, precisely half the 6.6% growth registered in 2015, announced in Maputo the National Statistics Institute (INE).

INE, disclosing National Preliminary Accounts for 2016 reported that the evolution of the economy was primarily due to the performance of the secondary sector, which grew by 5.2%, including the stand out sub-sectors of the manufacturing industry (+7.3%) and construction (6.7%).

The tertiary sector comes second in terms of contribution to GDP with growth of 5.1%, which was driven by financial services whose production grew 25.4%.

The INE also said that the primary sector recorded positive growth of about 3.9%, driven by mining, which grew 10.9%. (13-02-2017)

PROGRESS ON US\$2.9B HOUSING SCHEME IN KENYA DERAILED

US \$ 2.9 billion housing scheme in Kenya that intended to build an extra 14,000 housing units in Nairobi has hit a snag.

City Hall confirmed a glitch in documentation at the [National Land Commission](#) offices and compensation issues had held up the progression.

“For the development to start there needs to be fiscal closure, which cannot come about unless documentation on compensation has been concluded,” said Urban Housing Renewal Executive Tom Odongo.

He said compensation claims, which last year amounted to US\$ 77 million, was a chief subject since the residents wanted to be paid to search for alternative accommodation with conditions akin to those of the units they presently reside in.

Mr. Odongo, nonetheless, revealed that not all tenants would have to move for the renewal to take place in regions such as Pangani. He said where relocation was a necessity; the county would pay tenants the equivalent of their rent for a year.

“This will, nonetheless, be less the sum they are paying us monthly and after the project is done, they will be given first precedence for the houses. They can, however, decide to come back as tenants or buy the houses,” added Odongo.

The first phase of the project in which 14,000 units are to be built for a huge Sh70 million, was to start in January last year but the date was changed to July. It was further moved forward due to holdups in documentation.

The houses will be in Old and New Ngara, Pangani, Jeevanjee-Bachelors, Ngong Road Inspectorate staff quarters, Uhuru and Suna Road. The project is likely to take 24 months. According to information relayed by City Hall, Ngong Road estate will be changed into 360 three-bedroom units, 1,440 two-bedroom and 720 one-bedroom units.

In addition, the 24-storey Old Ngara (Fort Jesus) estate will be altered into 120 three-bedroom units, 480 two-bedroom flats and 240 one-bedroom apartments. Older estates such as Bahati, Mbotela, Ziwani, Makongeni, Kaloleni, Jericho and Shauri Moyo will be pulled down and redeveloped to make room for more people.

Evans Kidero had last year said only 535 houses in the estates were targeted in the initial phase. Urban Planning and Renewal chief officer Rose Muema said the setting up of an economical housing scheme would help tackle the problem of budding slums and insecurity. “These houses are very old and were built horizontally, occupying a lot of space,” he said.(CRO 24-02-2017)

WATER SUPPLY BACKUP PLAN FOR S/LEONE CAPITAL



The Sierra Leone government is to deploy a rapid response team and introduce a hotline as a way of addressing an impending water crisis in the capital city, Freetown.

The ministry of Water Resources said Monday the move is part of its dry season water supply back up plan for the city.(APA 13-02-2017)

ZAMBIA, UK SIGN ENERGY AFRICA PARTNERSHIP DEAL

The UK and Zambia have signed an Energy Africa Partnership deal, announcing their commitment to speed up the expansion of the household solar market across Zambia.

Talking at the signing ceremony at the Ministry of Energy in Lusaka, Bruce Lawson-McDowall, head of the UK [Department for International Development](#) (DFID) Zambia said: “The signing of the Energy Africa Partnership Agreement shows the UK’s readiness to support the Government of Zambia as it prioritizes efforts to handle the energy disaster.

We recognize the challenges that Zambia is presently facing with the on-grid energy sector, and the opportunities this presents to open the potential of the household solar market.

“The Energy Africa campaign seeks to secure the policy dedications, technical assistance and financing needed to change the energy access landscape. I believe that Achievement of Global Goal 7 (of access to affordable and clean energy), in Zambia and Africa more largely, is important to eradicating poverty and nurturing sustainable and inclusive growth.”

The declining cost of solar panels, improvements in battery technology and energy efficiency, and the spread of mobile payment systems have jointly formed a new opportunity for the household solar market – as trades are already showing across the continent. This Agreement devotes both parties to work together to exploit this opportunity to boost access to electricity for all Zambians.

The Energy Africa campaign tries to secure the policy dedication, technical assistance and financing needed to change the energy access landscape.

Lawson-McDowall said that the UK is also supporting access to affordable clean energy through hydroelectric power projects such as the Western Power Ngonye Falls project in Western Province. He also strained the need to form the right environment for efficient private sector contribution in the energy sector.

Energy Africa is a movement to hasten the expansion of the household solar market in Africa, helping bring worldwide energy access in the continent forward from 2080 to 2030.

It was established by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) in October 2015, and to date 11 nations have signed Partnership Agreements, including Zambia. The next step will be to agree on the exact areas of support that will be covered under the Partnership Agreement.

Two out of three people in sub-Saharan Africa (600 million) have no access to electricity at home, even though it’s been 150 years since Edison invented the light bulb. On the present trajectory universal electricity access in Africa will not be attained until 2080; the Global Goal 7 is for this objective to be met by 2030.

Without affordable and dependable electricity, social and economic development is radically stifled.

The Energy Africa campaign will consist of the policy support, technical assistance and financing essential to shift off-grid solar in Africa – and in Zambia – from a emerging market to an industry that can help secure global electricity access(CRO 24-02-2017)

NUMBER OF ACTIVE COMPANIES IN CABO VERDE RISES IN 2015

The number of active companies in Cabo Verde (Cape Verde) in 2015 recorded an annual increase of 2.4% to 9,403, the archipelago’s National Statistics Institute (INE) said in Praia, which added the number of workers totalled 53,800.

INE also said that the increase in the number of registered companies was due to the contribution of hotels and catering, a sector that accounted for the largest number of companies (15.3% of the total) and workers (20.0%), and it is also the second largest contributor to total turnover (13.2%).

The turnover registered in the total economy exceeded 251 billion escudos, growing by 3.3% compared to 2014, with the hotel and catering sector once again contributing to the rise, which rose to just over 33 billion escudos in 2015.

Retail was the sector that had the largest number of companies (46.7%) and employed people (22.8%) and is also the sector that contributed most to total turnover (36.6%).

The INE also reported that there are clear differences between the islands in terms of business statistics, with a large number of companies in Santiago, São Vicente, Sal and Boa Vista.

The figures released show that the four islands accounted for 8.4% of total business activity, employing 91.8% of active adults and 97.2% of the registered turnover of the Cape Verdean economy. (13-02-2017)

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE IN KENYA GETS \$19M WORLD BANK FUNDING

Mombasa county is set to benefit from \$19m [World Bank](#) funding for the replacement of the rundown water infrastructure as part of the wider plan to boost Water infrastructure in Kenya.

The money will be used on phase one of the project. The funding will be coordinated through the Kenya Water Security and Climate Resilience Program.

The projection is the coverage of the pipeline network in Likoni, Kisauni, Changamwe, Jomvu, Nyali and on Mombasa Island.

The residents without access to piped water will also benefit from the funding as the project also involves the extension of the pipeline network. Mr. Kimanthi, managing director of Mombasa Water Supply and Sanitation Company says the upgrade will start in Likoni which has 10% of the county's piped water connections.

The total cost will be \$4m.

The replacement of the old pipes in Likoni that were laid in the 1930s and 1950s is to begin next month.

In overall, the entire project is expected to take 2 years.

Work in Changamwe, Jomvu, Port Reitz and Magongo will begin in July while Kisauni, Nyali Bombolulu and Shanzu the new pipes will be laid as from November. Replacements on Mombasa Island will commence mid next year.

Phase one of the project is going to cost an estimated \$116-145m. According to Mr. Kimanthi, the overhaul of the entire water infrastructure as well as the extension of services will take five year for completion.

The laying of new pipes throughout the service area is said to address the current water challenge in the area that are as a result of pipe bursts and leakages. It will also offer a solution to the water deficit situation of 186m litres against the daily 37m litres supply.

The water problem in the area has been attributed to lack of fresh water sources, leaving them to depend on supplier from neighboring counties. Unfortunately this strains them as they also have their residents' consumption demands to meet.

The completion of the first phase is said to address the water problem, with the second phase completed ensuring an additional 80m litres of water daily. (CRO 24-02-2017)

DANGOTE LAUNCHES RICE SCHEME IN NIGERIA



Dangote Rice, a subsidiary of Dangote Group, will launch its multi-million naira 25,000 hectares of rice outgrower scheme in Sokoto northeastern Nigeria.

The programme has a prospect of hundreds of thousands of employment opportunities for the rural community inhabitants in Sokoto state, Mr. Francis Awowole-Browne, Dangote media contact said on Monday.

President of the Group, Aliko Dangote, said that the company will on Wednesday flag off the pilot project beginning with 500 hectares by Gonroyo dam, in Gonroyo community.

Gonroyo dam is the second largest in the country, after Kainji.

The flag off will be performed by the governor of the state, Alhaji Aminu Tambuwa, and witness distribution of seedlings to the primary local farmers.

The farmers would plant the seed after which Dangote Rice would purchase yields from them for milling and final processing.

Sokoto state is the second after Jigawa State out of the 14 states spread across the country where Dangote Rice plans to operate outgrower schemes to empower local farmers and create job opportunities and reduce migration to the cities.

Dangote Rice projects in the 14 states, when, operational, will generate a significant number of jobs and increase take-home income for smallholder farmers, all while diversifying Nigeria's economy and reducing the nation's food import bill.

Statistics from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) estimates that rice demand in Nigeria reached 6.3 million metric tonnes in 2015, with only 2.3 million MT of that demand satisfied by local production.

This local production shortfall leaves a gap of 4.0 million MT that is currently being filled through formal importation of rice or illegal imports over land borders, the company said.

The company said that by the end 2017, Dangote Rice plans to produce 225,000 MT of parboiled, milled white rice.

Dangote Rice has a mandate to locally high-quality milled, parboiled rice for the Nigeria market.

This goal will be achieved by sourcing the raw material (paddy) required from the Dangote Rice Outgrower Scheme.

In the short-term, Dangote Rice will be responsible for importing all of the inputs needed for cultivation and making them available to the outgrowers.

By end of 2017, Dangote Rice will have 25,000 hectares under rice cultivation across 3 sites in Northern Nigeria having identified rice-growing communities in Jigawa State (5,000 Ha), Sokoto State (10,000 Ha) and Zamfara State (10,000 Ha). (APA 13-02-2017)

NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR VODAFONE ZAMBIA AND SHOPRITE



Internet provider rolls out shop-in-shop stores in selected Shoprite outlets

Vodafone Zambia has announced a partnership with South African food retail chain Shoprite, that allows the 4G internet provider to set up shop-in-shop stores at various Shoprite outlets. The move is a part of the company's latest attempt to reach out to its customers in different localities all while increasing convenience.

Vodafone Zambia CEO Lars Stork at the announcement of the partnership said he was extremely pleased that Vodafone had partnered with Shoprite to provide customers with a unique shopping experience at three Shoprite outlets namely Manda hill and Twin palm in Lusaka and Mukuba Mall in Kitwe as part of the first phase of the partnership.

"We are delighted to partner with Shoprite in offering this service that offers customers the convenience and flexibility to access our products and services within their preferred food retail outlet. Our strategy is

anchored on constantly providing innovative and superior products and services, because our customers are at the center of everything we do. As such, we want to ensure that we consistently provide our customers with a brand new shopping experience that is based around convenience, transparency, simplicity and speed.”

Vodafone Zambia launched its 4G TD-LTE high-speed data services on June 9, 2016. With an initial investment of approximately US\$40 million in the deployment of its network, Vodafone Zambia has committed to making customer experience the heart of its business and will continue to focus on expanding its coverage base within Lusaka and Copperbelt as part of Phase 1 of its operations. (ITNA 27-02-2017)

WFP OPTIMISTIC ABOUT ENDING HUNGER IN LIBERIA



The Special Representative and Country Director of the World Food Programme in Liberia, Mr. Bienvenu Djossa, has expressed strong optimism that the country can banish hunger by 2030.

Djossa said should this be achieved it will be in line with the objectives and targets of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Two, one of the seventeen SDGs that constitute the 2030 development agenda.

Liberia is currently conducting a strategic hunger review exercise nationwide to properly inform the government, people and partners of on the needs, constraints and steps that are to be taken to end hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition and improve food producers' productivity within the next 15 years.

According to a statement on Monday, regional consultations are being held in the counties to sensitize and gather the views, ideas and inputs of Liberians from all walks of life to engender a national roadmap for hunger solutions.

Speaking in Gbarnga, Bong County at the weekend during the fifth and final round of the regional consultations, Mr. Djossa urged participants to make strong contributions “so that your voices are heard regardless of who you are – pem-pem rider, marketer, farmer, student, everybody needs to participate – because the key answers to hunger challenges will come from you.”

He said through this strategic review, the government which leads the process will know the root causes of hunger and tackle them.

He then pledged WFP's fullest commitment to the Zero Hunger Review initiative in consonance with its UN mandate to help countries fight hunger, achieve food security and promote agriculture and nutrition.

“WFP is pleased to contribute to this process by playing the key role of facilitator in conjunction with other UN agencies, civil society organizations, government ministries and partners,” he added.

Participants at the Gbarnga meeting comprising delegates from Lofa, Nimba and Bong counties, spoke their hearts out. “Government doesn't have good price for farmers because they do not respect the food we produce in Liberia. As a result we lose all the time” said Nimba County farmer and trader Comfort K.

Kehleay. James Marwih, another farmer from Nimba County, said: “There are tons of rice stockpiled in Nimba for three years without government buying it thus; defeating our efforts. This has to change.”

President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and other heads of state and government approved the 17 interlinked Sustainable Development Goals in the UN General Assembly meeting held on 25 September 2015 in New York, so that by 2030 no one is left behind in terms of health, poverty alleviation, education, food security and partnership, to name a few. (APA 13-02-2017)

UK FIRM TO SET UP HI-TECH CONSTRUCTION COLLEGE IN NIGERIA



Cross River State Governor Ben Ayade

A British education company has been selected to establish a college for hi-tech construction skills in Nigeria, the first of its kind in Africa, officials say.

The so-called Royal Academy for Construction and Fabrication in the city of Calabar, Cross River State, will develop a “workforce that is skilful and intellectually equipped for the 21st century construction and fabrication,” said state Governor Ben Ayade (pictured), announcing the plan on 24 February.

Delivering the college is the London-headquartered education management firm, SchoolsCompany Ltd, which currently manages a number of [free schools and academies](#) in England.

“The Royal Academy will be the first of its kind in Africa that will focus mainly on hi-tech and heavy industrial fabrications and constructions,” said Governor Ayade, [reports](#) newspaper *The Nation*.

“This is the greatest thing that Cross Riverians have been waiting for because it is going to develop a new set of workforce that is skilful and intellectually equipped for the 21st century construction and fabrication,” Ayade said.

He added: “By setting up this great institution, Cross River State is preparing a background that will create a new story and a new narrative for the new Africa that all will be proud of,” assuring that, “in the next few years, the state shall be the leading light in construction.”

Elias Achilleos, chief executive of SchoolsCompany, said the design of the new college would follow UK standards.

“This is a great project to the people of Nigeria and Calabar in particular,” he said, reports *The Nation*, “and I sue for support from all the stakeholders for the successful implementation of these projects that will turn out the very best in construction and fabrication works for this country.”

The goal, he said, was to have the academy up and running “with the best equipment and best trainers” in the next 18 months.(CGR 27-02-2017)

KROLL ASSOCIATES UK PRESENTS REPORT ON MOZAMBIQUE’S DEBT ON 31 MARCH

The Kroll Associates UK consultancy will submit its report on the loans taken on by three public companies in Mozambique – Ematum, Proindicus and Mozambique Asset Management- by 31 March the Attorney General’s Office (PGR) said in a statement.

The completion and submission of this report, the costs of which will be covered by Sweden, is a condition for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the partners of the Group of 14 to resume financial support to Mozambique.

The Attorney General’s Office also said in a statement that Kroll Associates UK requested an additional month to complete the audit, which led to the new date being set.

The audit is to verify the existence of criminal offences in the process of the establishment, financing and operation of these companies, who took high value loans with government guarantees without the approval of the Mozambican parliament.

The PGR also said that the work done by the auditor includes analysis of extensive financial information and other available documentation, visits to the offices of the three companies, visits to facilities and equipment in various parts of the country, interviews with government members, public officials and employees of the three companies and other personalities.

Kroll also requested additional information and documents from suppliers, banks and other institutions, both domestic and foreign, to supplement or clarify the documentation provided by the three companies. The three companies obtained loans of more than US\$2 billion from European banks (mainly Credit Suisse and VTB Russia), including US\$850 million for Ematum, US\$622 million for Proindicus and US\$535 million for Mozambique Asset Management. (14-02-2017)

CONTINUE “UNTIL THE LAST BREATH”, EGYPTIAN CONTRACTORS TOLD



Cairo International Airport Terminal Building 2 under construction

Under severe strain caused by the devaluation of the national currency, building contractors in Egypt are being urged to continue working “until the last breath of their funding capabilities” or risk economic turmoil and social unrest.

The head of the Egyptian Federation of Construction and Building Contractors, Hassan Abdel Aziz, called on contractors to finish all government tendered projects after meeting with industry representatives this week to discuss the “catastrophic” impact of shutting those projects down, news site *Egypt Independent* [reported](#).

He warned of total economic stagnation, rising unemployment and social unrest if work were to stop.

In November 2016 Egypt [floated its pound](#) as a condition of getting a \$12bn bail-out from the International Monetary Fund, causing the pound to lose more than half its value against the dollar, which sparked a dramatic hike in the cost of imported materials and the decimation of expected profit margins.

Contractors have also been hit by other austerity measures, including a value added tax law, rising interest rates for project funding, and restricted fuel subsidies, according to Abdel Aziz.

Responding to industry calls, the government has set up an emergency committee to calculate how much more companies should be paid, since original contract prices reflected a currency pegged at 6.9 pounds to the dollar when it hovers now at around 16 pounds to the dollar.

Abdel Aziz pledged to continue efforts to speed up the discussion of a compensation bill for contractors. (CGR 23-02-2017)

NIGERIA: FORMER FIRST LADY'S \$15M LAWSUIT SET FOR MARCH 6 HEARING



The Federal High Court in Lagos has fixed March 6 for the hearing of a lawsuit filed by former first lady, Patience Jonathan, to de-freeze her \$15.5 million account domiciled with Skye Bank.

Patience in her lawsuit was urging the court to issue an order discharging the freezing order.

The fundamental rights enforcement suit was filed against the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) by the wife of former President Goodluck Jonathan to regain access to her account. The money was frozen by the bank on the directive of the EFCC in November.

The respondents in the lawsuit are the EFCC, Skye Bank, Warampo-Owei Dudafa, a former aide to ex-President Jonathan, and four companies.

The firms are Pluto Property and Investment Company Ltd, Seagate Property Development and Investment Company Ltd., Transocean Property and Investment Company Ltd., and Globus Integrated Service Ltd.

At the resumed hearing on Monday, counsel representing the companies, Mr. Jeff Kadiri, told the court that he had just been briefed and would need time to file the necessary processes.

In a response, counsel to Patience, Chief Ifedayo Adedipe (SAN), informed the court that he had served his processes on all parties in the matter and was prepared to proceed with the case.

He was, however, not opposed to Kadiri's request for adjournment.

In the absence of opposition by lawyers to the other respondents, Justice Mohammed Idris, adjourned further hearing in the matter to March 6.

The four companies which the EFCC claimed were used by Dudafa to launder the \$15.5 million had pleaded guilty in a criminal case before Justice Babs Kuewumi of the same court.

The sum involved in the criminal case was the same money the former first lady had claimed belonged to her as the sole signatory to the accounts of the companies.

She, however, denied ownership of the companies. (APA 13-02-2017)

SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN AND EU LOCAL LEADERS URGE FOR CONCERTED INTERNATIONAL ACTION TO STABILISE MEDITERRANEAN



Local and regional leaders from across the Mediterranean and the European Union have urged national governments and the international community to work more closely with mayors and governors to help stabilise North Africa and the Middle East. The conflict in Libya and the challenges of migration and climate change were of particular concerns for the mayors, governors and regional representatives at the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM), which met in Malta on 23 February. At their main meeting of the year, members of ARLEM, drawn from the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) and from non-EU states in the Mediterranean region, pointed to recent cooperation with Libyan cities as evidence that, even in difficult circumstances, cities can forge partnerships that contribute to stabilisation. In a resolution on Syria, they said they were "ready to support the Syrian people in their efforts to put an end to civil war and fight extremism and radicalisation", noting that "this help starts in neighbouring cities welcoming refugees and dealing with the humanitarian emergency". The co-chairman of ARLEM, Markku Markkula, President of the CoR, said: "We cannot truly have a secure and prosperous Europe if we have an unstable neighbourhood. The *Nicosia Initiative*, through which European and Mediterranean partners share their know-how and practical support with Libyan authorities, is just one example of how local and regional authorities can have a real added-value, through tools such as city diplomacy and decentralised cooperation. It is only by working together on the ground that the EU will be able to find sustainable responses to the migration crisis, human trafficking, existing wars and the threat of terrorism."

Syrian local authorities were not represented at the ARLEM meeting, but a delegation from Libya – led by Abdelrauf Beitelmal, mayor of Tripoli, and Mustafa al-Baroni, mayor of Zintan, and including representatives from Benghazi, Sebha, Sirte, and Tobruk – spoke at the ARLEM plenary session and also at conference focused on migration on 22 February.

Migration from Libya was a central topic at the conference on migration and at the plenary session. At the meeting, ARLEM adopted recommendations on energy and climate policy and on cross-border cooperation in the Mediterranean.

Among other decisions taken in Malta, ARLEM agreed to send members to Tunisia to monitor local elections this year, as part of a mission organised by the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.(EEAS 22-02-2017)

CHICKEN TRADE TOPS AGENDA IN S/AFRICA, EU TALKS IN PRETORIA



South Africa's Trade and Industry and Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries ministers have met with European Union (EU) ambassador Marcus Cornaro to discuss trade relations between the two sides, officials said on Monday.

The meeting took place in the context of the entry into force of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the EU and the Southern African Development Community (SADC)'s EPA group in October 2016.

Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies and his Agriculture counterpart Senzeni Zokwana agreed that the EPA marked the strengthening of investment relations between South Africa and the EU.

The ministers and the EU discussed the crisis in South Africa's poultry industry, with local producers having announced major retrenchment plans amid concerns of the cheap imports from other countries.

"The ministers emphasised the importance of the poultry sector to rural development and the revitalisation of the agriculture and agro-processing value chain.

"The ministers also highlighted the measures implemented by government to date, which aim to address the challenges facing the industry in totality," trade officials said.

Cornaro said the EU was of the view that the crisis was caused more by the structural challenges affecting the poultry sector rather than the low-priced EU imports into the country.

He also expressed the EU's support for the restructuring of the industry, saying exports of South African poultry to the European bloc were an opportunity which should be pursued as well. (APA 13-02-2017)

The Memorandum is supported by the ACP-African, Caribbean, Pacific Secretariat, Chamber of Commerce Tenerife, AHEAD-GLOBAL, Business Council for Africa, Corporate Council on Africa, ELO - Portuguese Association for Economic Development and Cooperation, Hellenic-African Chamber of Commerce and Development, HTCC - Hungarian Trade & Cultural Centre, NABA - Norwegian-African Business Association, NABC- Netherlands Africa 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), ELO,HTCC ,NABA,NABC (by posting selected news) and SwissCham-Africa to their Members.



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The Republic of the Sudan

Business Roundtable

The Embassy of the Republic of the Sudan,
in coordination with NABC, is honored to invite you to the

Sudan Business Roundtable

13 March 2017

10:00 - 12:00

Location:

**Embassy of the Republic of the Sudan
Koninginnegracht 63-64,
2514 AG The Hague**

The majority of the sanctions on Sudan have recently been lifted. The Embassy of the Republic would like to use this momentum to inform you on what this actually means, how it affects your business, and creates new business opportunities.

This roundtable is an opportunity to find answers to questions, exchange experiences and learn from others. The roundtable will also be used to discuss possibilities of going on a trade mission.

In addition, a light lunch will be offered.

* participation is **free** of charge

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