

MEMORANDUM

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12 YEARS OF PUBLICATION

SUMMARY

Namibia considers scrapping black ownership requirements in mining	Page 2
Minister of Industry and Commerce calls for Chinese companies to set up in Mozambique	Page 2
Zimbabwe backtracks on its promise to clear the way for diaspora to vote	Page 3
Mozambican oil company seeks to raise US\$2 billion on international markets	Page 3
EUROMed Police hosts 1st Conference on Digital Evidence	Page 4
Team from China prepares Cabo Verde's Sao Vicente's Maritime SEZ	Page 4
Moody's downgrades Angola's risk rating, but improves outlook	Page 5
Impatient Egypt calls for Ethiopian dam talks to speed up	Page 5
Mozambique: Hydrocarbon firm hires consultants to raise \$2 billion	Page 6
Zimbabwe to sign \$700m deal for coal-bed methane site	Page 7
Botswana: Ex-President opposes Sweden arms deal	Page 7
Kenya Forest Service accused of corruption and losing forest cover	Page 8
Report blames ineptitude for Kenya's depleted forests	Page 8
Zanu-PF supporters angry at Zimbabwe president's nephew being a candidate	Page 9
Brazzaville and Rabat sign 14 accords	Page 10
DRC plans to allow oil exploration in protected national parks	Page 10
Botswana diamond mine to be auctioned online	Page 11
Kenya registers huge decrease in cement consumption	Page 11

NAMIBIA CONSIDERS SCRAPPING BLACK OWNERSHIP REQUIREMENTS IN MINING

The country is looking to benefit from an upturn in the commodities cycle by easing investment rules — as Zimbabwe and Angola are doing

Diamond and uranium producer Namibia may scrap requirements for black ownership in the mining sector as it seeks to woo investors to an industry that is rebounding with the commodities cycle, its new mines minister said on Tuesday.

Regional peers such as Angola and Zimbabwe are also trying to kickstart their mining sectors by easing investment rules — at a time when other African countries such as Democratic Republic of Congo are embracing resource nationalism, and raising taxes and royalties.

"I am not going to withdraw them [black ownership requirements] unilaterally, obviously we first have to discuss and see if they are really serving the purpose of why they exist. If the answer is, they don't, then maybe we should change," Mines Minister Tom Alweendo said.

"To give exploration licences to many people who won't add value, I think we are just slowing down the [black] empowerment that we want to achieve at the end of the day," he said.

Under the current policy, there must be a minimum 20% representation of historically disadvantaged, or black, Namibians in the management structure of a company that applies for an exploration licence.

At least 5% of the company must be owned by Namibian persons or by a company wholly owned by Namibians.

Namibia gained its independence from SA in 1990. The former German colony had suffered from apartheid-style rule, with the white minority controlling most of the economy.

The disparities rooted in this state of affairs remain politically thorny issues in both countries. (Reuters 25-04-2018)

MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE CALLS FOR CHINESE COMPANIES TO SET UP IN MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique has a good geographic location, land, young population and natural resources, including minerals, which are excellent advantages for companies in China to establish themselves in the country, Industry and Commerce Minister Ragendra de Sousa told Macao magazine.

In the interview with Macao magazine, the minister also recalled that there is a lot of room for new investors in Mozambique in productive sectors focused on the domestic market and exports, but said that agriculture is one of the most important areas of development in the country and cannot be forgotten.

Ragendra de Sousa also said that Mozambique is prepared to receive industrial parks from China that want to set themselves up in the country, but recalled that companies that come to Mozambique "have to produce for the domestic market without forgetting the export market."

The minister recalled that China is in a process of transformation and displacement of industries and Mozambique can benefit from this strategy.

"Our location is an asset because it makes Mozambique a bridge between Asia, the rest of Africa and the world," said Minister Ragendra de Sousa.

Sousa noted that between Asia and Europe anyone not using the Suez Canal must pass through Mozambique.

The Minister of Industry and Commerce recalled that gas and coal mining could increase the per capita income of the population from US\$400 to US\$3,000.

"The fact that there are iron ore reserves with possibilities for exploration over the next 150 years could allow heavy industries to be created in Mozambique because we will have energy and gas besides ore," he said.

Referring to Mozambique's upcoming presence at the Macau International Fair in October this year, Ragendra de Sousa said that the goal, "is to showcase what we have and to increasingly internationalise our economy so that Mozambican entrepreneurs can conduct partnerships and do business." (30-04-2018)

ZIMBABWE BACKTRACKS ON ITS PROMISE TO CLEAR THE WAY FOR DIASPORA TO VOTE

Zimbabwe does not have enough time before its general election in July to make the constitutional changes necessary to allow people living outside the country to vote, Foreign Minister Sibusiso Moyo said, backtracking on a statement he made a week ago.

Zimbabweans living abroad should return home and register to vote in an election that will probably take place in July, Moyo told a conference in London on Tuesday.

Last week, he said in an interview with Bloomberg Television that the government was working on logistics to allow people outside Zimbabwe to vote in parliamentary and presidential elections, and that it was their constitutional right to do so.

"It is the desire of the current establishment to ensure everyone participates," Moyo said at the London conference. "Unfortunately, legally and logistically this is not possible."

The refusal of former president Robert Mugabe's government to allow members of the diaspora to vote sparked disputes with the opposition over the past two decades as the country's economic collapse prompted a quarter of its population to emigrate. Elections were marred regularly by violence and irregularities.

Moyo said that allowing Zimbabweans abroad to vote would require amending the constitution because only the president had the power to declare constituencies.

His statement was disputed by former finance minister Tendai Biti, the leader of the opposition People's Democratic Party and a constitutional lawyer.

"It's not correct," Biti said by phone from Harare. "The diaspora people, if they want to vote, could easily vote in the presidential election, which is not seated in any constituency. If government wanted to now, they could be allowed to register at any embassies as the registration process is still ongoing."

(Bloomberg24-04-2018)

MOZAMBICAN OIL COMPANY SEEKS TO RAISE US\$2 BILLION ON INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

Mozambique's national oil and gas company ENH has hired Lazard Frères SAS and Lion's Head Global Partners to raise US\$2.0 billion on international markets to be applied to two natural gas exploration projects in the north of the country, said the chairman of the state company in an interview with Bloomberg.

Omar Mithá said that the company will start contacts with potential investors in May, under a programme of meetings to be held in Asia, the Middle East and South Africa, adding that it is "extremely urgent."

Lazard Frères SAS will provide advice on the Area 4 project being developed by Italian group ENI, Lion's Head Global Partners will focus on the Area 1 project, operated by US group Anadarko Petroleum, and ENH will also hire French bank Société Générale for the latter project.

ENH has a 10% stake in the project operated by the ENI group and 15% in the Anadarko Petroleum project.

Lazard Frères SAS has been providing financial advice to the Mozambican Ministry of Finance on the restructuring of foreign debt, namely a US\$2 billion tranche contracted by three state-owned companies. (30-04-2018)

EUROMED POLICE HOSTS 1ST CONFERENCE ON DIGITAL EVIDENCE

During last week, about 70 professionals of law enforcement and judicial authorities of the EU and Euromed partner Countries participated in the 1st Euromed Conference on Digital Evidence, which took place in Lisbon in the premises of the Portuguese Judicial Police.

In a world where the use of internet is growing exponentially, the cost and the impact of cybercrime has nowadays a significant impact on our societies, ranging from terrorist use of social media, harvesting of personal information and data to child pornography, among others. Euromed countries are obviously affected by these phenomenon's when, as an example, Egypt gained more than 14 million Facebook users, Algeria 9.3 million and Morocco 5.5 million in 2016 (Arab Social Media Report 2017).

This joint initiative between Euromed Justice and Police is meeting a critical need while "Online publishing of reprehensive content only takes 5 seconds for a criminal. Convicting this same criminal can, in the opposite, take years" explained Mariusz Zurawek, founder of JustPasteit present in Lisbon. In this context, the gathering of electronic evidence can be important information to show where a suspect is located, who they are associating with and what they are communicating. To succeed in this task, law enforcement and justice professionals have to adapt to a constantly changing environment, learn new codes and techniques and often carry out their actions in a cross-border context. (EuroMed 30-04-2018)

[Euromed Police](#)

TEAM FROM CHINA PREPARES CABO VERDE'S SAO VICENTE'S MARITIME SEZ

The Chinese technical team, which together with its Cape Verdean counterpart will prepare the first phase of planning for São Vicente's Maritime Special Economic Zone (SEZ), is already in the city of Mindelo, the Minister of Maritime Economy announced on Friday.

Minister José Gonçalves, who said that Cesaria Évora International Airport could also benefit from the project, said he expected everything would be ready in September to move on to the execution phase, which should cover sectors such as shipyards, ports, a refinery and tourism.

Deputy Secretary of State for the Maritime Economy Paulo Veiga added that the two teams will "analyse everything and conduct the survey, put together a plan that will not leave anything out," including roads, sanitation and health infrastructure, for example.

The China team is made up of 17 experts, with representatives of "large companies" from China, according to the Inforpress news agency, adding that the Cabo Verde team is made up of technicians from the National Institute of Land Management, the Ministries of Finance, of Foreign Affairs, of the Maritime Economy, and of Tourism and Transport. (30-04-2018)

EU SUPPORTS MOROCCO IN HIGHER EDUCATION REFORMS

A new institutional twinning project in the field of higher education was launched last Friday in Rabat, Morocco. The project "Support to the higher education system in Morocco in the framework of a rapprochement with the European Higher Education Area" is funded by the European Union in the framework of the programme "Réussir le Statut Avancé". Its objective is to accompany the higher education system reform in Morocco in the framework of the Education Strategic Vision 2015-2030 and the rapprochement with the European Higher Education Area.

This project, which will last 24 months (2018-2020), includes several expertise missions of the involved Spanish institutions, as well as many study visits of Moroccan experts in Spain for the implementation of the six components of the project, which are:

- Rapprochement of the Moroccan legislative and regulatory framework with the EU standards;

- Diversification of the training offer;
- Diversification of the teaching methods (e-learning strategies);
- Implementation of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS);
- Recognition of diplomas;
- Consolidation of the steering tools.(EEAS 30-04-2018)

MOODY'S DOWNGRADES ANGOLA'S RISK RATING, BUT IMPROVES OUTLOOK

Moody's downgraded Angola's sovereign debt risk rating from "B2" to "B3", but changed the outlook from "Negative" to "Stable", completing the downward review process initiated last February, the agency said in a statement issued on Friday.

Both "B2" and "B3" are the lowest long-term credit ratings assigned by Moody's, which defines associated debts as "highly speculative" and below investment quality. The downward review was based on the increase in public debt, despite being partially covered by rising oil prices.

The outlook was increased to "Stable" a week after Angola signed a Policy Coordination Instrument with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) with no financial implications and the Standard & Poor's agency improved the country's rating as a result.

Moody's notes, however, that risks remain high, with government borrowing requirements remaining at an average of 20% of gross domestic product in 2018/2019, although some planned measures, if successfully implemented, may lead to its future decline.

Last week, Fitch Ratings kept its long-term rating of Angola's foreign debt unchanged at "B", below investment grade, but revised the economic outlook from "Negative" to "Stable" based on higher oil prices and the adoption of a set of reforms. (30-04-2018)

IMPATIENT EGYPT CALLS FOR ETHIOPIAN DAM TALKS TO SPEED UP



The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, under construction on the Blue Nile, will be the largest hydroelectric power plant in Africa

As work continues on Ethiopia's mega dam on the Nile, Egypt has called for an acceleration of talks aimed at soothing its fears over water shortages.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry complained to a news conference yesterday that talks have been frozen for three years.

"There's a need to accelerate the pace of negotiations after some three years or more have passed since the signing of the preliminary agreement in Khartoum and things have remained frozen," he said, [reports](#) Reuters.

Shoukry's statement is Egypt's first response since latest talks [ended without resolution](#) on 6 April.

Egypt is at loggerheads with Ethiopia and Sudan over the \$4bn Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), a hydroelectric scheme central to Ethiopia's ambitions to be a power exporter to the region.

Cairo fears it will cut the flow of the Nile, on which it depends for water.

Shoukry said the three African neighbours are set to meet again on 15 May for further talks, adding that Egypt had proposed several earlier dates for negotiations, but they were turned down by the two other parties.

The countries' technical committees will meet on 4 May, Shoukry said.

Reported to be at least 60% complete, the dam is being built by Italy's Salini Impregilo.

It has been a sore point in Egypt-Ethiopian relations since construction began in 2011.

It is not clear what leverage Egypt has in negotiations, since it signed a tripartite agreement assenting to GERD in 2015.

Tensions spiked in November last year when talks over the scope of impact studies broke down.

"We continue to show flexibility and continue in a positive direction, but taking into account that we must achieve the progress that leads to achieving common interests, and also that there is a time frame for all countries that must be taken into consideration," Shoukry said yesterday, reports Reuters. (GCR 30-04-2018)

MOZAMBIQUE: HYDROCARBON FIRM HIRES CONSULTANTS TO RAISE \$2 BILLION

Mozambique's National Hydrocarbons Company (ENH) says it has hired consultancy firms, Lazard Frères, Lion's Head Global and Societe Generale as advisers to help raise as much as \$2billion to refinance its portions of two gas-development projects, APA can report on Monday.

ENH's Chairman of the Board of Directors, Omar Mithá, is quoted by private Television Station, Stv on Monday as saying that his company will begin a roadshow next month to regions including Asia, the Middle East and South Africa for that purpose.

"Lazard is advising ENH on refinancing our portion of the project Eni SpA is developing, and Lion's Head for the project Anadarko Petroleum Corp. is building.

"It will engage Societe Generale SA to assist with refinancing for the Anadarko portion", Mitha reportedly said.

Mozambique is seeking to restructure \$2 billion of commercial external debt, which it hasn't made payments on since October 2016.

The country is counting on large gas projects that Anadarko and Eni are building to help it repay the loans, and started talks with creditors last month in London.

ENH has a 10 percent stake in Eni's Area 4 project and 15 percent of Anadarko's Area 1.

Lazard is also the government's financial adviser on the debt restructuring, and the company's role advising ENH will be complementary as it will give the firm "a clear sight of what's happening at the projects," said Mitha.

According to Mitha, Lazard, which is already legally advising the government of Mozambique on the renegotiation of hidden debts, will also provide legal assistance to finance its part of the US natural gas project Anadarko, and Societe Generale will also help in the financing.

Lion's Head will be the consultant responsible for ENH's advice on participating in the project that the Italian oil company Eni is developing in the country, he added.

ENH has a 10% share in the Eni project in Area 4 and 15% in the Anadarko project in Area 1, and the participation of the Mozambican state-owned company is seen as essential for the development of the projects.

Mozambique is seeking to restructure debt of more than \$ 2 billion in foreign debt, which it has been in default since October 2016, when the first payment failed.

ENH had initially depended on partners at the gas concessions to finance its portion of equity as it wasn't able to raise the money itself at the end of 2014 because of poor market conditions amid a gas-supply glut.

The market has since improved, and ENH is betting investors will see the projects as being less risky as progress has been made developing them and natural gas prices have rebounded.

Mitha said ENH received World Bank support to hire the financial advisers as part of the lender's Mozambique Mining and Gas Technical Assistance Project, (APA 30-04-2018)

ZIMBABWE TO SIGN \$700M DEAL FOR COAL-BED METHANE SITE

Zimbabwe's government plans to sign a \$700m deal with an investor that will develop a coal-bed methane site, mines minister Winston Chitando has said.

The accord comes as President Emmerson Mnangagwa, who took office in November, courts foreign investment to rebuild an economy that halved in size since 2000 under former president Robert Mugabe's rule. Two other similar agreements are expected in the next two months, Chitando said in a phone interview from Harare on Thursday.

"The coal-bed methane projects will be for power and other related products and by-products," he said, declining to identify any of the investors. Most of the output from the project to be signed this month will be "channeled towards the establishment of a power plant," Chitando said.

While Zimbabwe's leadership change has sparked a race for the nation's mineral riches among entrepreneurs and small explorers, big-name mining companies have taken a wait-and-see approach. Zimbabwe has the world's second-largest platinum reserves after SA, as well as large deposits of lithium, coal, gold, diamonds, chrome and nickel.

"You don't necessarily need the global players, you need investment," Chitando said. "As long as it's good-quality investment." (Bloomberg 03-05-2018)

BOTSWANA: EX-PRESIDENT OPPOSES SWEDEN ARMS DEAL

Botswana's former President Festus Mogae on Monday said he remains opposed to a potential multimillion dollar Gripen fighter jets deal with Sweden, saying his immediate successor's priorities should have been to other sectors.

Responding to media reports that he had criticized his immediate predecessor, former President Ian Khama for having been instrumental in the \$18 million deal, Mogae said "I would like to make this very clear that I have a difference of opinion on this, with (former) President Khama."

He added: "This is purely at the level of priority setting. My preference would have been to see the \$18 billion spent on critical areas in the domestic economy, for fighting youth unemployment. There should be nothing derogatory about disagreements about national priorities."

Regarding President Khama's penchant for flying, Mogae said he had made mention of the fact that he is a trained pilot, and therefore, the purchase of jets comes to his mind more easily than it would to someone who is not so trained.

"His preference is, thus, not surprising, but I disagree with it," Mogae maintained.

Regarding reference to Khama as "a ruler and not a president, Mogae said his successor consulted less than all his predecessors. (APA 30-04-2018)

KENYA FOREST SERVICE ACCUSED OF CORRUPTION AND LOSING FOREST COVER

A government task force in Kenya has called for the management of the Kenya Forest Service to be sacked and some of its staff investigated for alleged corruption, which it said has allowed for illegal logging and significant destruction to forests.

Kenya has forest cover of 7.4% of its land area, compared with about 12% 50 years ago. Experts have long warned that the continued destruction of Kenya's forests will lead to a water crisis that could extend far beyond its borders.

The task force, which was appointed to study the extent of deforestation in Kenya, said the Kenya Forest Service was largely responsible for the reduction in forest cover due to its opaque processes for licensing loggers and allowing outright illegal logging.

"The board and management of the Kenya Forest Service has been unable to stem, and in some instances have directly participated in, abetted and systemised, rampant corruption and abuse of office," the task force said in its report published this week.

"By so doing, they have overseen wanton destruction of our forests, have systematically executed plunder and pillaging of our water towers, and bear the responsibility for the bringing our environment to the precipice."

It added that despite a 1986 ban on logging indigenous tree species, they were still being cut down. The report also recommended that any illegal squatters be evacuated from the forests and for communities who have traditionally lived there to be resettled in adjacent areas. (Reuters 03-05-2018)

REPORT BLAMES INEPTITUDE FOR KENYA'S DEPLETED FORESTS

Kenya Forest Service (KFS) management and the board should be held to account for the massive depletion of forest cover in the country, a task-force said on Monday.

Kenya is among countries of the world with a forest cover of less than 10 percent of total land mass. According to the Kenya Natural Resources Alliance (KeNRA), national forest cover currently stands at 7 percent against the recommended 10 percent.

The country is currently operating on 350 cubic meter per capita water deficit annually, studies putting the current water supply at 647 cubic meters per capita annually.

The globally recommended threshold is 1,000 cubic meters per capita.

The state of affairs is attributed to an alarming rate at which forest cover has been diminishing in the past forcing the government to launch a taskforce in March to help the country restore its depleted forest.

The team headed by the Green Belt Movement chairperson Marion Wakanyi noted that KFS is marred by corruption and incompetence.

"These have made it impossible for KFS to tame the destruction of the environment," Wakanyi said.

She spoke during a brief to the Deputy President William Ruto at his Karen office in Nairobi on Monday.

Moreover, the task force said the Kenya Forest Service is characterised by the lack accountability, unethical behaviours and limited capacity.

As a result of illegal settlement of squatters in some forests, the report said the country was fast losing its indigenous trees such as cedar.

While commending the team for coming up with the report, Ruto noted that environmental issues have not only become national but also an international concern.

He said the situation calls for "coherent and punitive measures" to tame degeneration further vowing that the report's recommendations will be implemented. (APA 30-04-2018)

ZANU-PF SUPPORTERS ANGRY AT ZIMBABWE PRESIDENT'S NEPHEW BEING A CANDIDATE

Hundreds of Zanu-PF supporters staged a demonstration on Thursday afternoon at the party's headquarters, the "Shake Shake" building, against the alleged imposition of President Emmerson Mnangagwa's nephew, Tongai, as a candidate in primary elections.

The demonstration came after one of Mnangagwa's key allies in the succession race to take over from former president Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans' Association (ZNLWVA) spokesperson Douglas Mahiya, claimed the nephew was being imposed as a candidate in Harare South to block his ascendance.

"[Tongai] was rejected by the province and the politburo, but suddenly, two days before the elections, he appears from nowhere as a candidate," Mahiya said.

Taking to the streets, placard-carrying supporters suspected to be linked to Mahiya accused Tongai of vote-buying and warned they would end up removing Mnangagwa.

"Don't intimidate us and impose to us people we don't know. We won't vote for the party and if all fails, we will even remove his uncle," said one party member as others started chanting Nelson Chamisa's name. Chamisa is the presidential candidate for the MDC Alliance — the biggest coalition of opposition parties.

The primary elections, that saw many heavyweights fall by the wayside, have sown seeds of discord. Christopher Mutsvangwa, the special advisor to Mnangagwa, lost to Langton Mutendereki in Norton and did not take it kindly. In an interview with the independent daily News Day, he said Mnangagwa had been set up to fail through "weak" candidates.

Mutendereki also accused the party's national commissar, retired brigadier Engelbert Rugeje, of being too politically immature for the huge task of the political commissariat.

"The new national commissar, while he is a comrade, lacks the party's institutional memory and failed to handle this issue well, leading to the disenfranchisement of thousands of party members countrywide," said Mutendereki.

War veterans led from the front in the removal of Mugabe, and Mutsvangwa said they flowed with the will of the people. "So, as war veterans, just as we did during the Mugabe era, give choice between a party that has lost, through acts of omission or commission, its fiduciary role, then we will be left with no choice but to go with the people," he told News Day.

Another sore point in the primary elections was the use of the police and state apparatus in party politics. A Zanu-PF primary elections blueprint document leaked to the public revealed that 6,500 police officers and 420 fueled government vehicles were deployed.

However, losing candidates are now raising the issue as unconstitutional with allegations that police were used in vote-rigging. "The main reason [for rejecting the loss] being the unconstitutional use of the Zimbabwe Republic Police, a state agency, as election returning agents," read a letter to Rugeje.

Mnangagwa has since castigated the use of police officers, although it was a decision reached at the politburo — the central decision-making body of Zanu-PF. (BD 03-05-2018)

BRAZZAVILLE AND RABAT SIGN 14 ACCORDS

Congo and Morocco have signed a series of bilateral agreements, spanning several fields of human endeavour in a ceremony on Monday graced by the visiting King Mohammed VI and his Congolese host, President Denis Sassou Nguesso.

A total of 14 accords were signed during the ceremony in Brazzaville, in the presence of a delegation accompanying the monarch, the Congolese Prime Minister and members of the Congolese government, according to a report by the Maghreb Arab Press (MAP).

The first agreement relates to the reciprocal promotion and protection of investments, while the second is a convention to avoid double taxation and to prevent tax evasion, with respect to income taxes.

The third relates to the realization of a landing point laid out in the Republic of Congo.

The fourth covers cooperation in fishing and marine aquaculture, while the fifth is a framework accord for cooperation in agricultural and cattle breeding.

The other agreements include education, logistics, health training, and cooperation in the fields of energy, tourism, renewable energy development, science and technology, technical, professional training and professional development for the staff of the University Hospital Center of Brazzaville (CHUB).

The agreements are part of so-called "royal guidelines" aimed at "strengthening South-South partnership."

They ostensibly give fresh impetus to "mutually advantageous" cooperation between Rabat and Brazzaville and "reinforce the strategic vision of the Kingdom of Morocco towards its brotherly African countries." (APA 30-04-2018)

DRC PLANS TO ALLOW OIL EXPLORATION IN PROTECTED NATIONAL PARKS

Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) government is seeking to reclassify swathes of two Unesco-listed parks so that oil exploration can be carried out there, an investigative group said.

The London-based NGO Global Witness said it had seen documents about a scheme to "redraw the boundaries" of the fabled Salonga and Virunga national parks, home to many of the planet's endangered species. The move would remove protected status from areas for which oil licences have been awarded, thus enabling exploration there to go ahead, it said on Thursday.

A special commission of ministers and DRC public servants met on April 27 to push through the plan, it said. The group said documents signed by DRC's oil minister, Aimé Ngoi Muken, set out the legal framework for changing the areas' status.

"The proposals ride roughshod over Congo's Unesco commitments and are incompatible with the parks' World Heritage Status," Global Witness said, noting that more than a fifth of the Virunga National Park, the oldest wildlife reserve in Africa, would be affected by the reclassification.

The minister, asked to comment on the report by AFP, said he had "no knowledge about this scheme" but if it existed, "we are not afraid to embrace it". In February, said Global Witness, DRC President Joseph Kabila authorised oil blocks that partially overlap Salonga — home to up to 40% of the world's bonobo population.

Virunga's denizens include hippopotamus, elephant and some of the world's last remaining mountain gorillas. In 2015, a British-listed oil company, Soco International, gained a licence to operate in a block in Virunga. It later announced it had ceased to hold the block after an outcry, Global Witness said. (AFP 04-05-2018)

BOTSWANA DIAMOND MINE TO BE AUCTIONED ONLINE

Australian miner Kimberly Diamonds on Monday disclosed that its Lerela diamond mine in Botswana will be auctioned online on May 30 this year.

The Australian miner, through its auctioneers GoIndustry DoveBid, said in a statement that online bids for Lerela Diamond Mine would open on May 24 and run through to May 30.

The Botswana mine, which ceased operations last year, was placed under administration due to delays in sourcing the funding required to continue its work.

Lerela produced about 59,000 carats in the year leading up to its closure, compared with a target of 357,000 carats a year over a seven-year lifespan.

Some of the assets to be sold would include five kimberlite pipes ranging from 0.16 hectare to 2.35 hectares in area; mining rights; a 200-metric tonnes per hour processing plant; and a 4.2-megawatt diesel power generator.

The statement said bidders would be required to place a refundable deposit of 5 million pula (about US\$509,000). (APA 30-04-2018)

KENYA REGISTERS HUGE DECREASE IN CEMENT CONSUMPTION

Cement consumption in Kenya has hugely decreased for the first time in 17 years. Its use has gone down by a whopping 6.2 million tonnes and this is mainly due to the low demand that is currently being experienced in the construction sector; this is according to the Economic Survey 2018 released by [Kenya National Bureau of Statistics](#) (KNBS).

The last time there was such a decrease was in 2000 when it stood at 1.067 million tonnes compared to 1.111 million tonnes the preceding year.

The report explains that in 2016, about 6.7 million tonnes of cement was consumed, however, the volume dropped by 8.2% in 2017.

Decline in cement use

On the same note, the report also explained that last year's decline in cement use also came against the background of a decline in the growth of the construction sector. Confirming the reports was [KNBS](#) Director General Zachary Mwangi who said that the cement consumption decreased by 8.2% in 2017 "The sector revealed a slower growth of 8.6% in 2017 compared to a 9.8% growth in 2016. Cement consumption decreased by 8.2% in 2017," he said in his presentation on last year's economic growth. Apart from cement, the use of galvanized sheets in construction also decreased by a smaller margin of 2.2% to stand at 262,800 tonnes from 268,700 tonnes in the previous year. KNBS among other mandates act as the principal agency of the government for collecting, analyzing and disseminating statistical data in Kenya and is also the custodian of official statistics.(CRO 02-05-2018)

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