

MEMORANDUM

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12 YEARS OF PUBLICATION

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TOP 10 FASTEST GROWING ECONOMIES IN AFRICA 2018



Africa's economy is projected to continue to rise to 3.2 percent in 2018 and to a further 3.5 in 2019, this is according to the latest [World Bank report](#) released early 2018.

According to the report, non-resource intensive countries are expected to expand at a solid pace, helped by robust investment growth. South Africa, Nigeria and Angola, the region's largest growing economies will be slightly weaker than expected, as the region is still experiencing negative per capita income growth, weak investment, and a decline in productivity growth, but the rest of Africa will be more favourable.

A significant number of 2018's top performers are non-commodity intensive economies. The list is led by Ghana, followed by Ethiopia and Côte d'Ivoire, with Senegal and Tanzania occupying the fifth and sixth spots respectively. Africa has six of the world's ten fastest growing economies this year, according to the World Bank.

The latest forecast places East African country, Ethiopia at 8.2 percent with the West African nation, Ghana leading the continent at 8.3 percent.

The low post-crisis increase in total-factor productivity (TFP) growth in Sub-Saharan Africa has been attributed to a slowdown in convergence to the technological frontier after a rapid catch-up in the decade preceding the crisis according to the World Bank.

IT News Africa has compiled a list of the top 10 African economies investors can watch in 2018 as forecasted by the World Bank.



Hilton built the first internationally branded hotel in Niger

10. Niger

Niger's economic growth, estimated at 5.2 percent in 2017, was driven largely by the secondary sector, particularly oil. In 2018, growth is projected to be 5.2 percent. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Niger expanded 5 percent in the fourth quarter of 2017. The economy of Niger, a landlocked sub-Saharan nation, is upheld by uranium exports and foreign financial assistance.



Kigali, Rwanda

9. Rwanda

Small and landlocked, Rwanda has a population of about 11.9 million people (2016). Rwanda's economic growth is predicted to be 5.9 percent in 2018. Between 2001 and 2015, real GDP growth averaged at about 8 percent per annum. The second Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS 2) outlines the country's overarching goal of growth acceleration and poverty reduction through four thematic areas: economic transformation, rural development, productivity and youth employment, and accountable governance.



Benin

8. Benin

This year, Benin's economy showed promise. This can be attributed to the 'Revealing Benin' programme which acts simultaneously in institutional, economic and social areas. Among other things, it comprises of 45 flagship projects in the economy's key sectors. The project is estimated to cost a total of \$16 billion and aims to be completed by 2021. Benin's economy relies heavily on its agriculture and its informal re-export and transit trade to Nigeria, which makes up roughly 20 percent of GDP. The economy in the country is projected to see a 6 percent growth in 2018.



Burkina Faso

7. Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso is a low-income, landlocked Sub-Saharan country with limited natural resources. The opening of new industrial mines, coupled with a slight rebound in gold and cotton prices and rising grain production, paved the way for an acceleration of economic growth in 2016. According to the World Bank, Burkina Faso continued to improve its external position in 2016, with a current account [deficit] of 6.8 percent of GDP, compared to 8 percent in 2015. The country's economic growth is projected to be 6 percent in 2018.



Sierra Leone

6. Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone's economic growth slowed to 4.3 percent in 2017 from 6.3 percent in 2016. Despite all of that, this West African country on the Atlantic Ocean is expected to expand by 6.3 percent in 2018. Total domestic revenue was 3 percent short of its 2017 target of 3.4 trillion, increasing only slightly to 12.3 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) from 11.9 percent of GDP in 2016.



Tanzania

5. Tanzania

In the last decade, Tanzania has seen a relatively high economic growth, averaging 6–7 percent. With an overall population of about 55 million in 2016, the East African country has seen a decline in poverty. Although the real gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate slowed in 2017, in 2018 economic growth is expected to hover around 6.8 percent. Private sector involvement in the country's development can help finance the government's ambitious investment plans, be a source of finance and innovation, and create jobs for new entrants into the job market.



Senegal (image: Wikimedia)

4. Senegal

In 2016, Senegal was termed by the World Bank as the second fastest growing economy in Africa, further validated with this past year's economic growth. In its third quarter in 2017, Senegal's economy grew at a rate of 7.1 percent, its strongest since the last quarter of 2015, when it was at an all-time high. Analysts expect overall growth to be as high as 6.8 percent in 2017 and the World Bank has predicted a growth of 6.9 percent for 2018.



Côte d'Ivoire

3. Côte d'Ivoire

The country's annual growth estimates hovered around 8 percent in 2017. The West African country remains among the fastest on the African continent. Côte d'Ivoire is forecast to expand by 7.2 percent in 2018. The economic outlook for this country for the next two to three years is positive due to several factors. Côte d'Ivoire is among the largest economies in the West African Economic and Monetary Union.



Ethiopia

2. Ethiopia

Ethiopia's economy is growing at 10 percent a year and is expected to double within the next seven years. According to the World Bank, this means that by 2025, it will have grown to a middle-income nation. Ethiopia's economy is concentrated in the services and agriculture sectors. The last 10 years has seen Ethiopia average around 10 percent economic growth. The East African country has the second highest growing economy and predicted to grow by 8.2 percent this year. Ethiopia's economy is boosted by a number of large-scale infrastructure projects, including the Grand Renaissance Dam and a railway network.



Ghana

1. Ghana

Ghana saw an improved performance in 2017 after a difficult 2016. The West African country is projected to see an 8.3 percent growth in 2018. According to the 3rd edition of the Ghana Economic Update, the service sector bounced back, and the fiscal consolidation is paying off. The inflation rate is also down to just 10 percent. In January, Ghana's benchmark stock index achieved the world's highest rate of growth at 19 percent. (ITNA 04-05-2018)

ETHIOPIA, EGYPT, SUDAN BEGIN TALKS ON CONTROVERSIAL DAM

The Water Ministers of Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan on Saturday began holding a joint meeting with the technical committee on the Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam being built on River Nile, about 20 kilometers west of Sudan's border.

The tripartite talks came after Egypt and Sudan have accepted Ethiopia's proposal to hold a high-level technical committee meeting on May 4, 2018.

It was recalled that the water ministers of the three countries in Khartoum weeks back agreed to implement the guideline given by the leaders' of the countries.

Later, a round of discussions over the controversial dam between the three countries in Khartoum were announced a failure.

Ethiopia claims that they did not reached on a consensus as Egypt had been calling for inclusion the 1959 agreement reached between Ethiopia and the then Egypt colonizer.

The Egyptian foreign minister had said no agreement was reached after 18 hours of talks; he added that officials touched on all the outstanding issues that led to such controversy.

Ethiopia's Water and Irrigation Minister Sileshi Bekele, Sudan's Minister of Water resources and Irrigation Muataz Musa; and Egyptian Water resources and Irrigation Minister Mohamed Abdel Ati have been attending the meeting.

It is recalled that Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Meles Alam had said earlier that Ethiopia won't accept the 1959 agreement, which totally ignored it.

The 1959 agreement signed between Sudan and Egypt, gives Cairo the lion's share of the Nile water, which is 55.5 billion cubic meters annually, while Khartoum allowed to use 18.5 billion cubic meters. (APA 05-05-2018)

WOODSIDE DISCOVERS NEW OIL AND GAS PROSPECTS IN GABON

Australia-based Woodside Petroleum, a prominent player in Africa's oil and gas exploration activities, has discovered a new oil prospect offshore Gabon



This is the second oil discovery of Woodside in Gabon.

In its first-quarter report, Woodside said that the Boudji-1 exploration well in the Likuale (F14) Block1 intersected a 90-metre gross oil and gas column in high-quality hydrocarbon-bearing pre-salt sands. The company further added that it is conducting a technical assessment of the oil and gas discovery. The Ivela-1 exploration well in the Luna Muetse (E13) Block was completed during the quarter. The well found a 78-metre gross oil column, with further assessment being underway.

The Boudji-1 reached a total depth of 5,440 metres and the Ivela-1 reached a total depth of 5,487 metres, said the company in its Q1 2018 report.

In March 2018, PC Gabon Upstream S.A. (PCGUSA), the subsidiary of the state-run oil company in Malaysia Petronas, discovered new oil and gas from Boudji-1 exploration well in Block F14 (Likuale) in South Gabon. Petronas holds a majority of 50 per cent stake in the block, with Woodside and Gabonese government holding 30 per cent and 20 per cent respectively.

Following African governments' ambitious plans to encourage and discover new oil and gas exploration wells throughout the continent, Woodside, along with other international oil and gas majors, have expressed interest in exploring Africa's oil and gas prospects. In March 2018, Woodside awarded engineering contracts to the oilfield services provider Wood for Senegal oilfields.

Woodside also has a significant presence in North Africa's oil and gas prospects. In Morocco, Woodside holds 25 per cent share in the Rabat Deep Offshore license, with Eni holding a stake of 40 per cent and ONHYM and Chariot holding stake of 25 per cent and 10 per cent respectively.

Speaking about exploring new oil and gas fields in Africa, Woodside said that it aims to support African governments in developing important deepwater oil and gas projects. (OR 25-04-2018)

KENYA: PRIVATE SECTOR PERFORMANCE BEST SINCE 2016

The performance of Kenya's private sector improved to the greatest extent since January 2016 in April 2018, Markit Stanbic Bank Kenya Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) survey revealed on Friday.

According to the PMI survey, the country's private sector has greatly improved following last year's volatile and prolonged electioneering period.

"The seasonally-adjusted PMI rose from 55.7 in March to 56.4 in April. This suggested that the health of the private sector improved to the strongest extent since January 2016. Notably, the latest reading outstripped the historical average of 52.8," the survey reported.

“The strength of the recovery in private sector activity continued last month. This shows that the underlying demand conditions in the economy are consistent with a solid recovery in economic activity. Thus far, this strength in activity has not been associated with any noticeable inflation pressures,” added the survey.

“The strength of the recovery in private sector activity continued last month. This shows that the underlying demand conditions in the economy are consistent with a solid recovery in economic activity,” said Jibrán Qureishi, Regional Economist EA at Stanbic Bank.

According to the survey, business activity rose at the start of the second quarter, thereby extending the period of expansion to five months, noting that stable economic conditions and greater volumes of incoming new business were the key factors behind output growth.

“In line with the trend seen for business activity, new orders rose for the fifth consecutive month during April. Moreover, the rate of expansion accelerated to the fastest since December 2016. Anecdotal evidence pointed to strong demand from both domestic and external markets. At the same time, despite softening from March’s survey-record, new export orders rose at a sharp pace,” the survey pointed out.

PMI is an indicator of the economic health of the manufacturing sector based on five major indicators which includes new orders, inventory levels, production, supplier and the employment environment.

Readings above 50.0 signal an improvement in business conditions on the previous month, while readings below 50.0 show a deterioration.

In Kenya, the CfC Stanbic Bank PMI measures the performance of agriculture, mining, manufacturing, services, construction and retail sectors and is derived from a survey of 400 companies. (APA 05-05-2018)

SDX ENERGY ANNOUNCES MAJOR GAS DISCOVERY IN MOROCCO

SDX Energy Inc, the North Africa-focused oil and gas company, has announced a conventional natural gas discovery at its LNB-1 exploration well in Morocco



The company aims to expand its oil and gas operations across Africa.

According to the oil and gas firm, the gas contained heavier hydrocarbon components throughout, which is indicative of a thermogenic hydrocarbon source rock.

“These types of shows have not been seen to date in other parts of the basin and indicate that a new petroleum system has been encountered in this area. Based on the mudlog shows, reservoir quality information from the formation cuttings, analogue fields (outside the Gharb basin), and the size of the feature as currently mapped, a preliminary recoverable gas volume has been estimated by management,” said the company reporting to the press.

This results in a mid-case volume of 10.2bn scf of conventional natural gas and 55 mbl of condensate.

SDX further added that the well is now being completed as a conventional gas producer in the Upper Dlalha, with the deeper Lafkerena section being suspended until the appropriate equipment can be mobilised, to test and produce from this over-pressured section.

Speaking about the North Africa country's gas discover, Paul Welch, president and CEO of SDX, said, "We are currently in the early planning phases of determining how best to complete and test this section. The estimated volume potential is very encouraging and I look forward to updating the market further on our activities in due course. Meanwhile, we have one more exploration well to drill on the permit in this campaign and I am looking forward to some more positive results based upon our success in LNB-1."

London-headquartered SDX has a significant presence in North Africa's oil and gas sector. In April 2018, SDX Energy announced to make a new gas discovery at its Ibn Yunus-IX exploration well at South Disouq, Egypt. In 2017, the company was awarded gas discovery at KSR-14 and KSR-15 well on the Sebou area in Morocco.

In 2016, SDX Energy and Dana Petroleum commenced drilling operations on its high-impact exploration well on Bakassi West in Cameroon, Central Africa's major oil and gas project.(OR 24-05-2018)

EU'S SWITCHMED PROVIDES RESOURCE EFFICIENT PRODUCTION OPPORTUNITIES TO ALGERIAN COMPANIES

On the 8th of May, 12 companies from the Algerian food industry will present their experience and results from SwitchMed's MED TEST II project in Algiers. This event will be an excellent opportunity for Algerian companies interested to see how a resource efficient production could help to give their business a competitive edge.

Since 2015, 12 Algerian companies have under the lead from UNIDO and CNTPP been focussing on how to adopt better and more sustainable production practices within their production. Initial results from other countries have demonstrated that the application of more resource efficient production standards brings significant savings, not only for the environment but also for the companies. ([SwitchMed](#) 25-04-2018)

ANGOLAN PUBLIC-PRIVATE CONSORTIUM BUYS PLANES FOR DOMESTIC FLIGHTS

Angolan public-private consortium Air Connection Express – Transporte Aéreo, the company that will operate domestic air transport in Angola, plans to buy six Bombardier Q400 aircraft, under a contract worth US\$198 million signed in Luanda, the local press reported.

The new Angolan airline is a consortium between TAAG, Bestfly, Air Jet, Air 26, Guicango, Dieximim, Sjl and Mavewa and national airport company Empresa Nacional de Aeroportos e Navegação Aérea (ENANA), and its representatives signed the agreement, which was signed by Bombardier's representative for Africa and the Middle East, Jean Paul.

Bombardier committed to training 25 cabin crew, 55 pilots, 40 mechanics, and to place a representative in Angola for a period of 36 months to ensure the start-up of Air Connection Express.

Transport Minister Augusto Tomás, who attended the ceremony, said that the choice of these aircraft took into account the need to correct errors in place for several years, which consisted of the use of Boeing 737-700 aircraft for short flights and low demand, which contributed to the negative financial results of the country's flagship carrier.

Tomás, quoted by state newspaper Jornal de Angola, also said that Air Connection Express was the result of a process that began with the restructuring of TAAG and ENANA, two public sector companies that are part of the consortium.

At TAAG – Linhas Aéreas de Angola, this process went through stages that allowed the company to be taken off the so-called European Union “blacklist” where it had been placed in 2007, and TAAG now has 14 weekly flights to Portugal.

The first two Bombardier Q400s are expected to arrive in Angola in the first quarter of 2019, two others to be delivered before the end of that year and the remaining two in 2020, on the eve of the opening of the New Luanda International Airport. (07-05-2018)

TUESDAY 22 MAY: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE GAMBIA

The International Conference for The Gambia takes place on 22 May in Brussels at the European Commission (Berlaymont).

The conference, jointly organised by the European Union and the Government of The Gambia, will focus on confirming support to The Gambia in its democratic transition, as well as raising additional financial support for the implementation of its National Development Plan. High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** and Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven **Mimica** will co-chair the conference together with the President of The Gambia, Adama **Barrow**. President **Barrow** will present the country's reform agenda to high-level attendees from the European Union Member States, the international community as well as international organisations.

In the margins of the conference, a **Business Forum** will take place on 23 May. The forum will bring together interested European, regional and Gambian business representatives for exchanges on sector specific strategies and projects during panel discussions on Energy & Infrastructure, Agricultural Value Chains, and Tourism.

EU support to The Gambia

- **Development assistance:** EU assistance for the period 2017-2020 currently amounts to a total of €225 million. With the establishment of a new government in 2016, development cooperation was immediately stepped up, and in early 2017 a €75 million aid package was released and further €150 million were subsequently allocated supporting governance through budget support, investment facilities for infrastructures and notably boosting job creation and youth empowerment for sustainable growth.

- **Political support:** The EU has provided strong political support to President **Barrow** ever since his election on 1 December 2016. [Commissioner Mimica visited The Gambia at a very early stage of the transition in February 2017](#) to open a new chapter in bilateral relations. An [EU Election Observation Mission for parliamentary elections in April 2017](#) contributed to foster trust in the democratic process. The EU pursues dialogue with the Gambian authorities on a broad range of subjects of mutual interest, including governance, human rights, security sector reform, transitional justice, trade, migration, agriculture, fisheries and environment. The EU is also supporting the West African standby force (ECOMIG) deployed to the country, which ensures security together with the Gambian security forces.

The background

After 22 years of authoritarian rule, former The Gambia President Yahya Jammeh lost presidential elections on 1 December 2016 to opposition candidate Adama Barrow. When President Jammeh refused to leave office during several weeks of political stalemate, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) showed strong political leadership to ensure that the election results were respected, paving the way for President Barrow take up power. The political situation has substantially improved since. However, his government has inherited a very difficult financial and economic situation. In order to meet the expectations of the population to see swift and tangible improvements in living conditions, and to consolidate the political progress achieved so far, the country needs strong international support.

The International Conference for The Gambia takes place on 22 May in Brussels at the European Commission (Berlaymont).

In the margins of the conference, a Business Forum takes place on 23 May in Brussels at the European Commission (Charlemagne). (EC 07-05-2018)

ANGOLA'S EUROBOND ISSUE EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS

The recent issue of Angolan debt with the placement of US\$3 billion in Eurobonds was a historic step towards extending the maturity curve, and exceeded expectation, according to the economic studies unit of Portuguese bank Banco Português de Investimento (BPI).

Analysts at Banco BPI said the positive news comes from the fact that a share of the US\$1.25 billion issue was placed at a 30-year maturity, "as the main expectation was that it would only issue 10-year debt."

This issue of Eurobonds was the second carried out by Angola, after it placed US\$1.5 billion of debt with international investors in 2015, with a maturity of 10 years.

The Angolan Finance Ministry reported last week that investors from the United States, Europe and Asia made 500 purchase bids, with a demand of around US\$9 billion outstripping supply three-fold. (07-05-2018)

ENI AND SONATRACH CONTINUE TO EXTEND OIL AND GAS OPERATIONS IN ALGERIA

Italy's Eni and Algeria's Sonatrach have signed a series of agreement to collaborate in a number of oilfield projects and ramp up the North Africa country's oil and gas production



Algeria aims to expand its exploration activities

Both the companies agreed to increase oil and gas exploration activities in Algeria, with an improved operational efficiency and in a cost-effective way.

According to Eni, a major player in Africa's oil and gas industry, the ambitious exploration programme in the Berkine basin is important in the context of booming oil and gas drilling activities in eastern Algeria. This is considered to meet the rising demand for petroleum products in the country. In addition, the Berkine basin is set to explore new gas reserves through the use and optimisation of existing infrastructures, said Eni reporting to the press.

Commenting on the new agreements, Claudio Descalzi, CEO of Eni, commented, "The renewed collaboration between our companies, enshrined in today's agreements, allows Eni to make a further important step forward in a key country like Algeria and to consolidate further our strategic partnership with Sonatrach."

"Furthermore, the forthcoming construction of a renewable energy laboratory and of a photovoltaic plant at the BRN production site is another step in Eni's decarbonisation process. This process includes the development of green businesses through incre. (Image source: Eni/Flickr)ased commitment to renewable energy sources and to scientific and technological research," he further added.

Both Eni and Sonatrach have strong footprints in Africa's oil and gas exploration and production landscape. Apart from its operational bases in Algeria, the state-run oil and gas company Sonatrach holds 45 per cent stakes in the 4,400km onshore Trans Saharan Gas pipeline, running from Nigeria to

Algeria, which is estimated as the longest planned gas pipeline in Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA), according to GlobalData.

Besides joining forces with Sonatrach, the Italian oil and gas giant has also announced a collaboration with Sonangol to start oil production from the deepwater Ochigufu field offshore Angola, a move which is in line with Eni's upstream strategy to expand oil and gas operations throughout Africa. (OR 18-04-2018)

EUROPEAN UNION SUPPORTS AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN CABINDA, ANGOLA

The European Union (EU) will support the agricultural sector in the Angolan enclave province of Cabinda as part of its new development aid plan, in partnership with the ministries of economy and planning, Angolan ambassador Tomas Ulicny said in the city of Cabinda.

The ambassador, who was in Cabinda for two days, stressed that this commitment to agriculture in the region "is very important because there is potential here to develop this activity," according to the Angop news agency.

He also pointed out that the provincial government projects, within the context of the promotion of agricultural activity, are "on the right path and could contribute to the achievement of the objectives," which can help in the growth of the economy, as well as the supply of rural products to the province, in response to the fight against hunger and poverty.

According to the ambassador, the private sector will be the top priority in the next phase of European support, given the diversification of the economy, as Angola can no longer depend on revenues from the sale of oil products to cover 95% of the State Budget. (07-05-2018)

EU CONTINUES TO SUPPORT ENERGY SECTOR IN EGYPT

Egypt and the European Union continue to share strong bilateral energy relations as well as an understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing the region. Partnership in the energy sector comes on top of the areas of common interest between Egypt and the EU in view of its importance as a driver of economic growth and development for both parties.

In continuation of the fruitful partnership between Egypt and the EU, the Government of Egypt welcomes the high profile visit of H.E. Mr. Miguel Arias Cañete, EU Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy, to Egypt during the period from 22-24 April 2018.

The visit's comprehensive agenda covers a number of key events, including the inauguration of first-ever Egypt - EU Sustainable Energy Business Forum & Exhibition, and a visit to the Zohr field onshore facilities. H.E. Eng. Sherif Ismail witnessed today the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for strategic partnership on energy between Egypt and the EU. This MoU culminates extensive discussions held at ministerial levels, a number of high-level reciprocal visits, and a series of coordination meetings and comprehensive deliberations. The signing of the MoU represents a major milestone and a step change in the fruitful relationship between Egypt and the EU. It also reflects a common understanding of the importance of enhancing energy bilateral cooperation between Egypt and the EU, which will contribute to fulfilling the EU's strategic objectives to enhance security of supply and diversification as well as furthering both parties' sustainable development and accelerated transition to a low-carbon economy. (EEAS 24-04-2018)

SMES FROM MOZAMBIQUE BENEFIT FROM UNITED ARAB EMIRATES FUNDING

Five of a total of 18 Mozambican small and medium-sized enterprises operating in the agricultural and industrial sectors meet the requirements to obtain funding from a United Arab Emirates development support fund, Ibraimo Khabir, vice president of the Confederation of Economic Associations (CTA) said in Maputo.

Khabir said that of the 18 projects submitted and analysed, five met the eligibility criteria, including audited and certified accounts of the last three financial years and an up-to-date economic and financial investment plan.

The vice-president of the CTA was speaking at the end of the First Cycle of Financing for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, an initiative that proposes to grant US\$20 million for each economically viable project that meets eligibility criteria.

Khabir said that the CTA and the United Arab Emirates fund had launched the second financing cycle, which will run until 30 May.

The CTA has established partnerships with Intellica, a company that will provide technical assistance in setting up the projects and Pricewaterhouse Cooper to certify SME accounts, which are the biggest challenges faced by Mozambican companies. (07-05-2018)

NIGERIA TO CONSTRUCT FOURTH MAINLAND BRIDGE

Lagos State government in Nigeria has revealed plans to construct the fourth Mainland Bridge. The construction work is set to commence before end of this year. This is according to Adebowale Akinsanya, the Commissioner for Works and Infrastructure. The revelation was made known to public during a press briefing marking the third anniversary of Governor Akinwunmi Ambode by the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure.

The anniversary was meant to celebrate the Ambode-led administration for completing 55km of roads out of the 129 km and 48 building projects between May 2017 and April this year. Meanwhile, 25 km of roads and 17 building projects are in progress across the various local government areas in the state. Almost 30 years after the delivery of the 3rd Mainland Bridge; the State has experienced phenomenal growth to become a megalopolis such that the 38km Mainland Bridge and expressway will become the longest bridge and expressway when completed. Additionally, the Bridge will decongest Lagos State traffic and serve as an alternative route to the Eastern axis.

Master plan

Operation of the 4th Mainland Bridge will be the insertion of a bypass; a bridge in Lagos State. On completion the bridge will connect people and improve their natural flow in large numbers through a reorganization of vehicular, waterways, and pedestrian modes of transportation.

The bridge construction will have two levels which will not only function as a means for vehicular traffic on its upper level, it will also stimulate and accommodate pedestrian, social, commercial and cultural interactions on its lower level. Additionally, in conjunction with existing road networks, the Fourth Mainland Bridge will establish a primary ring road around Lagos. The ring road is expected to provide alternative traffic routes from Lekki to Ikorodu, Ikeja to Ajah, relieving the 3rd Mainland bridge of its overstretched capacity.

With the improved flow of people across Lagos, the city will be relieved of traffic congestion, and rather maximize its great opportunities and grow better.(CRO 23-03-2018)

EGYPTIAN AND PORTUGUESE REGULATORS DEBATE CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS FOR NATURAL GAS MARKET LIBERALISATION

In the context of its key role to support energy regulatory authorities in the Southern Mediterranean, MEDREG facilitated the organisation of a technical study visit between the newly established Egyptian gas regulatory authority (GasReg), and Portugal's regulatory authority (ERSE), to address regulatory experiences regarding liberalisation of gas markets. The study visit, which took place in Lisbon on 17 April, was financed by the European Commission, under an instrument called Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX).

Composed of the Executive Chairman, Mr. Karem Mahmoud, and three colleagues, the GasReg delegation learnt from ERSE experts about Portugal's experience in opening up its gas markets, focusing on the handling of legacy contracts, the opportunities to align market liberalisation with price reform, the eligibility of consumers and the practical implementation of the liberalisation process.

Welcoming his Egyptian peers, Mr. Alexandre Santos, **MEDREG President** and ERSE Board Member, stated: *"Following the two previous technical workshops organised by MEDREG for GasReg, this study visit is an invaluable occasion to exchange experiences in person. The gas sector is relatively young in Portugal, so we are pleased to share our recent knowhow with GasReg as a way to support the liberalisation of its gas market."*

GasReg and ERSE colleagues held lively and concrete discussions on how the Egyptian market can evolve towards a liberalised and cost-effective framework, exchanging in particular on the elements that should be considered when developing a tariff methodology for non-discriminatory network access.

After the workshop, Mr. Karem Mahmoud declared: *"This sharing of experience has made us more equipped to accompany and sustain the transition towards an open and efficient gas market. Thanks to the rich exchange we had with ERSE today, we know the pitfalls to avoid and some key principles to follow for a smooth liberalisation of our gas market in Egypt."* (MedReg 23-04-2018)

[MedReg](#)

UN LAUNCHES BIGGEST CHOLERA VACCINE DRIVE IN AFRICA

The biggest cholera vaccine drive in history is under way in Africa aimed at reining in a spate of outbreaks across the continent, the UN and charity alliance Gavi said Monday.

More than 2-million people will receive the oral cholera vaccine as part of five major campaigns in Malawi, Nigeria, South Sudan, Uganda and Zambia, Gavi said, adding that the campaigns should be complete by mid-June.

"This is an unprecedented response to a spike in cholera outbreaks across Africa," Gavi chief Seth Berkley said in a statement.

At least 12 regions or countries in sub-Saharan Africa are facing cholera outbreaks, according to Gavi and the World Health Organisation.

According to the UN health agency, cholera infects 1.3-million to four million people every year and kills an estimated 21,000-143,000 — mainly in poor countries.

Ongoing campaigns

The ongoing campaigns in Africa are being implemented by the health ministries in the five countries, where thousands of cases of the disease have been reported.

The vaccines themselves come from a global stockpile, which has grown substantially in recent years, in step with the recognition of the role the vaccine can play in halting the spread of the bacterial disease.

"Oral cholera vaccines are a key weapon in our fight against cholera," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in the statement, stressing though the need also to improve access to clean water and sanitation, train health workers and work with communities on prevention.

Cholera, which causes potentially deadly diarrhoea, is contracted by ingesting food or water contaminated with a bacterium carried in human faeces and spread through poor sanitation and dirty drinking water.

Left untreated, it can kill within hours.

WHO recommends giving the oral cholera vaccine in two doses, the first offering protection for six months and the second for three to five years.

"We have worked hard to ensure there is now enough vaccine supply to keep the global stockpile topped up and ready for most eventualities," Berkley said.

Vaccine protection

The campaign in Nigeria, where 1,700 cases have been reported, aims to provide 600,000 people with two vaccine doses each, while the campaign in Malawi, where more than 900 people have been infected, aims to provide vaccine protection to 500,000 people.

About 360,000 doses of the vaccine have, meanwhile, been shipped to Uganda, where the Kyangwali camp housing Congolese refugees is facing a cholera outbreak that has killed dozens and left more than 900 in hospital. In this campaign, only one dose is being provided per person to increase the spread. The country is also planning to vaccinate 1.7-million more people in coming months.

Another 113,800 doses have also been shipped to South Sudan as a prevention measure ahead of the war-torn country's rainy season.

And 667,100 doses are being delivered to Zambia as part of a second round of vaccination after a major outbreak infected more than 5,700 people and killed more than 100.

"Every rainy season, cholera springs up and brings devastation to communities across Africa," said Matshidiso Moeti, WHO's regional director for Africa. "With this historic cholera vaccination drive, countries in the region are demonstrating their commitment to stopping cholera from claiming more lives." (AFP 07-05-2018)

SENEGAL'S INTERNET ACCESS HITS 9M PEOPLE

Over 9 million people have access to the internet in Senegal, accounting for 62.9 percent of the 15,726,037 population, Abdou Karim Sall, Director General of the Telecommunications Regulatory Agency and Posts (ARTP) said Monday.

"Today, 9.6 million Senegalese use the internet, of which 88.6 percent via their cell phone. This represents an internet penetration rate of 62.9 percent," Sall said.

He was speaking at the official opening of the 5th African Internet Summit (AIS), which is being held in Dakar from April 29 to May 11, 2018.

Continuing, the ARTP Director reported 2.7 percent growth in the internet fleet, noting that the structure he heads, has done tremendous work to expand internet access.

For his part, the Prime Minister, Mahammad Boun Abdallah Dionne said that "the Senegalese government considers the digital as a catalyst of growth."

"In our country, ICTs contributes 2 percent to GDP. But with the 2016-2025 Senegal Digital Strategy, we want to bring this share in GDP to 10 percent," Dionne said.

Recalling the state's desire to achieve "digital inclusion and digitization of the economy", the Premiers invited the three Internet Access Providers (ISPs) who recently received their licenses, to lower the cost of internet access. (APA 07-05-2018)

SENEGAL'S TRADE DEFICIT NARROWS

Senegal's trade deficit at the end of March 2018 has decreased by 5.8 billion CFA francs (about US\$8.7 million), the country's national statistical office (ANSD) announced Monday.

This deficit amounted to less than 157.9 billion CFA in the period under review against less than 163.7 billion CFA in February 2018.

The cumulative trade balance, at the end of March 2018, however, deteriorated by 188.9 billion CFA, amounting to 558.4 billion CFA against 369.5 billion CFA for the corresponding period in 2017. (APA 07-05-2018)

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