

MEMORANDUM

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12 YEARS OF PUBLICATION

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TENSIONS EASE AS ETHIOPIA, EGYPT AGREE SCIENTIFIC STUDY FOR NILE DAM

Hailed as a “breakthrough”, Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan have agreed to let scientists study the filling of Africa’s largest hydroelectric dam on the Nile River, for now easing Egypt’s fears of a water shortage.

Ministers from the three countries said Wednesday (16 May) that they will set up a scientific study group to advise on diverting part of the Nile to kick Ethiopia’s \$5bn Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam into operation.

The group will study ways the dam can be filled without harming Egypt’s water supply.

Ministers also agreed that leaders from the three nations will meet every six months for consultations, [reports](#) The Associated Press (AP).

The agreement breaks a stalemate that set in November last year when negotiations over the scope of impact studies broke down. Since then, tensions have mounted after repeated rounds of talks failed.

More high-level meetings are set for 3 July in Cairo.

Egypt fears too much of the Nile’s waters could be retained each year, affecting its agriculture, while Ethiopia views the dam as crucial to its national development.

Built by Italian contractor Salini Impregilo, the 6.4GW dam is now more than 60% complete. When operating, it will boost Ethiopia’s generating capacity, which stands now at 4GW, by 160%.

Ethiopia denies that the dam will hurt Egypt’s water supplies. The country says 60 million of its citizens have no access to electricity.

According to a document obtained by AP, the scientific group will develop “various scenarios related to the filling and operation rules in accordance with the principle of equitable and reasonable utilization of shared water resources while taking all appropriate measures to prevent the causing of significant harm.”

“There was a progress in the negotiations with our brothers in Sudan and Ethiopia,” Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said in televised comments late Wednesday. “The matter will consume efforts and time to reach an understanding formula. There was a breakthrough.”(GCR 18-05-2018)

ETHIOPIA RECEIVES NEW ULTRA-MODERN AIRBUS

Ethiopian Airlines on Saturday received its ninth new ultra-modern Airbus A350 XWB, in a ceremony held at the headquarters of the airlines in the capital Addis Ababa.

Financed partially by the Japanese investor JOLCO, the aircraft is among the 24 A350 XWB which the airlines had ordered a year ago.

The \$160 million and technologically advanced aircraft have 343 seats.

Ethiopian is the largest Aviation Group in Africa and a SKYTRAX-certified Four Star Global Airline.

Ethiopian commands the lion’s share of the pan-African passenger and cargo network, and is operating the youngest and most modern fleet to more than 110 international passenger and cargo destinations across five continents. (APA 20-05-2018)

CHINA WINS \$6.7BN LAGOS-KANO RAILWAY CONTRACT



One of the historic gates into Kano, a commercial hub of about 3 million people in northern Nigeria

Nigeria has awarded a \$6.68bn contract to the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) to build a major segment of a railway from Lagos, in the southwest, to Kano in the north. “The signing of the ... segment contract agreement today (15 May) concludes all outstanding segments of the Lagos-Kano rail line,” the Chinese state news agency Xinhua quoted Nigeria’s transport ministry as saying. The work is expected to take two or three years.

CCECC, a subsidiary of Chinese state rail builder China Railway Construction Corporation, has been involved in other parts of the Lagos-Kano rail project, which started in 2006 and was broken into segments for implementation.

In 2016, Nigeria awarded it work on a segment between the northern states of Kano and Kaduna with a contract sum of \$1.685bn.

The railway line is also receiving funding from China. In April, China Exim bank approved a \$1.231bn loan for the network’s modernisation programme, Reuters reports.(GCR 18-05-2018)

SENEGAL: EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRY REBOUNDS IN MARCH

Senegal's extractive industrial output picked up in March 2018, after a slight decline the previous month, the National Agency of Statistics and Population (ANSD) said in a statement to APA on Tuesday.

Production increased by 6.5 percent, compared to a 9.7-percent decrease in February 2018.

“This growth is mainly attributable to the extraction of stone, sand and clay (+ 25.9 percent) and the production of salt and natron (+ 18.8 percent),” ANSD added.

However, the increase is held back by a 2.8-percent decline in phosphate mining activities.

Compared with March 2017, the extractive industry’s output improved by 21.9 percent.

Total production in the first quarter of 2018, increased by 29.0 percent, compared to 2017. (APA 22-05-2018)

AFRICA GAINS MOMENTUM IN GREEN CLIMATE SOLUTIONS



Kenyan farmer Veronica Ngau shows off her young six-week old maize crops inside (left) and outside (right) of planting basins, an adaptation technique that conserves water.

Promoting the widespread use of innovative technologies will be critical to combat the hostile effects of climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and many African countries are already leading the way with science-based solutions.

The Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN) and World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) provide support for countries in making sound policy, technology, and investment choices that lead to better approaches for mitigation, adaptation and resilience.

A satellite program in Kenya measures the progressive impact of drought on loss of forage, triggering timely insurance payouts to help vulnerable pastoralists.

From biogas to solar installations and improved water conservation, success stories abound on the continent. The challenge now, experts say, is to scale them up. According to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), Africa's renewable power installed capacity could increase by 290 percent between 2015 and 2030 — compared to 161 percent for Asia and 43 percent for Latin America. The global Paris Accord is underpinned by its commitment to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, securing funding for alternative sources of energy and adaptation of technology in everyday activities that are geared towards shrinking humanity's carbon footprint on the planet.

African countries have internalised and made considerable efforts towards these goals despite budgetary constraints, with the United Nations lauding the continent for embracing technology and innovation in its journey to fight climate change.

Jukka Uosukainen, CTCN's director, spoke with IPS during the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN) Africa Regional Forum held in Nairobi, Kenya April 9–10, stressing that technology is already changing the fortunes of people in the continent.

For instance, Mali has successfully applied field contouring technology in rural areas such as Koutiala, reducing the volume of water runoff from 20 percent to 50 percent depending on the soil type.

"This has improved the yield of crops in an area that experienced severe drought and bettered the quality of livelihoods owing to a rise in income," he noted.

Uosukainen said that Senegal has launched massive biogas digester projects through the National Biogas Program by implementing biomethanisation technologies that facilitate faster access to cleaner energy within the republic. The country also utilises tri-generation and co-generation technologies that use waste as raw materials for energy production.

Furthermore, Mauritius has aptly integrated the use of boiler economizers, which capture the waste heat from boiler stack gases (called flue gas) and transfer it to the boiler feedwater.

This has reduced the country's dependence on imported fossil fuels, cutting energy costs and boosting socioeconomic growth amongst its citizens.

Morocco has adopted photovoltaic technology that harnesses solar power for greater energy production. The Noor Ouarzazate IV power station spans 137 square kilometres and generates 582 megawatts of renewable energy for over 1 million people. This has helped increase the nation's uptake of renewable

energy sources to an impressive 42 percent, lessening the rate of air pollution and enhancing quality of life.

In Kenya, a 630 MW geothermal plant has come on line, providing electricity for 500,000 households and 300,000 small and medium-sized enterprises. Kenya alone has the potential to generate 10,000 megawatts from its geothermal resources, says an analysis by Bridges Africa.

Tony Simons, director general of the World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF), said that most African countries have chosen clean energy technologies as a part of their environmental solutions and ICRAF supports these efforts through its work in developing cleaner options for woody biomass-based energy, a key technology used across the continent.

According to ICRAF, Kenya is using water conservation technologies like sunken-bed kitchen gardens and terracing to successfully increase yield production and improve food security.

ICRAF has partnered with several eastern Africa countries such as Uganda, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Burundi in a project dubbed *Trees for Food Security Project* which conducts extensive research and development into special tree species for each nation.

This involves detecting the seedlings suitable for specific areas and ensuring modern agricultural techniques are employed during planting. The forest cover helps prevent desertification, reduces carbon dioxide emissions through photosynthesis and enhances of the aesthetic beauty of the lands.

And the Green Cooling Africa Initiative implemented in Ghana and Namibia encompasses modern air conditioning and refrigeration appliances that use minimal electricity and generate lower volumes of toxins into the atmosphere.

Simons called for gender equality in any strategies to address climate change because in all communities, knowledge of agricultural and natural resource management differs by gender, making it is essential to include women's perspectives in addressing climate change at the farm and local level.

Rehabilitation of water projects is another field that's getting attention, as African countries seek to reduce the overexploitation of such resources for the benefit of all stakeholders.

For instance, in Kenya, a policy of "green water" technology has been operationalized with the support of various local and international partners with the aim of curbing water shortages and channeling it to better uses.

This technology has enabled arid and semi-arid areas to have regular instances of water supply which is used for irrigation, animal husbandry and subsistence in homesteads. Therefore, it has limited the struggles that rural people undergo in search of water and pasture.

Also the government of Kenya, in partnership with the World Bank Group, the International Livestock Research Institute, and Financial Sector Deepening Kenya, implemented the Kenya Livestock Insurance program (KLIP) in the northern part of the county. KLIP, which is Africa's large scale public-private partnership livestock insurance program, uses satellite imagery technology to provide early warning of drought.

The satellite measures the progressive impact of drought on loss of forage in the vulnerable pastoral regions of Kenya. It then triggers timely insurance payouts to help vulnerable pastoralists to purchase fodder and animal feed supplements to keep their core breeding alive until the drought has passed.

Acceptance of climate change technologies and innovations has resulted in better farming methods, higher crop yields, lower energy consumption and a reduction in carbon emissions throughout Africa. (IPS 17-05-2018)

LIBERIA SETS SIGHT ON 'SINGLE WINDOW' TRADING SYSTEM

Liberia is expected to join 19 other African nations in the establishment of a one-stop-shop "single window" policy at the Freeport of Monrovia to ease the challenges traders encounter.

To this end, Liberia on Tuesday convened a two-day awareness symposium in collaboration with partners to help develop a roadmap central to trade facilitation and doing business in the country.

Addressing the opening of the symposium in Monrovia on Tuesday, Liberia's Commerce & Industry Minister Wilson Tarpeh hailed partners from the African Alliance for Electronics Commerce (AAEC), the

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and African Trade Policy Center (ATPC) for selecting his country as a beneficiary in 2018.

Minister Tarpeh said the conference has been convened at a time when the Liberian government is evolving policies and programs that will reduce poverty under its Pro-Poor Agenda.

“I cannot underestimate the importance of the implementation of Single Window in Liberia,” he said.

The WTO’s Trade Facilitation Agreement Article 12, sub-section 4.1, encourages members to establish or maintain a single window, enable traders to submit documentation and, or data requirements for importation, exportation, or transit of goods through a single entry point to the participating authorities or agencies.

The benefits, according to WTO, cover all spheres of the economy, with importers and exporters benefitting from the reduction in the number of days required to clear goods through a more transparent and predictable process.

Minister Tarpeh claimed that the single window mechanism increases customs revenue through controlled working environment, while commercial banks benefit through the increase in customers, and rise in the amount of funds passing through bank operations.

The commerce minister added: “We have begun this process with other ministries and agencies, and it is no doubt that implementing the National Single Window will entail addressing a lot of issues, including the legal regulatory environment, hard and soft infrastructure, institutional framework, etcetera.”

Mr. Mor Talla Diop, the Vice President for Business Development and Promotion at the AACE, said the significance of the seminar is to draw together stakeholders for the purpose of improving foreign trade in Liberia.

“The Single Window is one of the tools used to make international trading more efficient, cost-effective and reduce the cost traders pay for long-stayed goods, AACE vice president for Administration Matthew Soputamit told reporters in an interview on the sidelines of the seminar.

Liberia’s post-WTO Accession Plan seeks to develop through its single window a cross-government website that will open a new era for trade facilitation by providing a single portal for both Liberian and international trade actors to access a full range of resources and standardized services, according to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The system allows parties involved in trade and logistics to lodge documents with a single entry point to fulfill import, export and transit-related regulatory requirements as suggested in the United Nations Center for the Facilitation of Trade (UNCEFACT’s) Recommendation 33. (APA 18-05-2018)

EU MOBILISES INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE GAMBIA

A total of €1.45 billion were mobilised by the International Conference for The Gambia, co-chaired by The Gambia and the European Union.

The reinforced political and financial support by the international community will assist The Gambia in continuing its democratic transition, building on strong democratic institutions, the respect of human rights and the rule of law, and sustainable and shared economic growth.

High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini**, who co-chaired the conference together with the President of The Gambia, Adama **Barrow**, in Brussels today, said: *“The Gambia is showing to the world that freedom and democracy are about real people and real lives. After the presidential election in 2016, neighbours and the international community stood with the Gambian people. We stood on the side*

of freedom and democracy. Two years on, we continue to stand by your side. Today the EU is proud to announce €140 million to invest in opportunities for the Gambian people and further strengthen democracy”.

Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven **Mimica**, added: *“When people of a country decide to overturn a two-decades long dictatorship, this is a choice to commend. This is what happened in The Gambia one year and a half ago. When new authorities commit to profoundly reform the country and put it on the path of democracy and development, the international community has to answer their call. This is what happened today in Brussels. Out of the €1.45 billion that were pledged today, the EU has committed additional funding of €140 million until 2020, which adds to the €225 million mobilised since the beginning of the transition in 2017. Because nothing is more important today than showing to the people of The Gambia that democracy brings quick and tangible dividends.”*

Key outcomes of the conference are:

- **Reinforced political support to The Gambia:** A [joint communiqué by the co-chairs](#) was issued, reaffirming support and solidarity in assisting the transition from a dictatorship to a fully-fledged democracy.
 - **Increased financial assistance for development:** The €1.45 billion pledged will help cover needs identified for donor support to The Gambia's National Development Plan.
- The International Conference for The Gambia will be followed by a **Business Forum** tomorrow, which 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.

Background

Following the end of 22 years of authoritarian rule by former President Yahya Jammeh with the change of government in January 2017, the EU and The Gambia have opened a new chapter in their relations. An intense political dialogue is ongoing at all levels, and the EU is actively supporting the democratic transition in co-ordination with other international partners of The Gambia. Areas of co-operation include e.g. security, development for sustainable growth, transitional justice, economic partnership, trade, fisheries and migration. (EC 22-05-2018)

MOZAMBIQUE INTRODUCES SINGLE CIVIL ID NUMBER

The Mozambican parliament Tuesday approved the first reading of the creation of the Unique Civil Identification Number (NUIC) as a basic element in the registration of all data subsequent to the birth of citizens.

The creation of the NUIC includes electronic support for the different acts and documents to be produced and managed electronically.

The measure will have a budget of \$1 million that will be disbursed by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The new civil registry and vital statistics system allows for the sharing of information available and held by the Civil Registry, Statistical Office, National Directorate of Civil Identification, National Social Security Institute, National Land Transport Institute and other competent entities.

The modernization of the system will facilitate the obtaining of documents, such as the birth and death certificate in any country conservatory or consular representation.

Currently, in order to obtain a birth certificate, a citizen is obliged to go to the place where he has registered manually.

The Minister for Justice, Constitutional Affairs and Religious Affairs, Isac Chande, said that the establishment of an electronic system that implements the NUIC in an individualized way "will avoid duplication and falsities" .

According to the minister, the civil code, now approved, will provide the country with a civil registry "solid and secure and reliable statistical information."

"It's a major reform in our civil registry system," he said.

He acknowledged the complexity of the process of modernizing the civil registry, stressing that "it will require great commitment because it also aims to digitize the existing history of manual registries."

All books, documents or forms of documentation and physical records must be duly retained by the respective conservatoire in order to allow citizens, willing, to consult to verify their conformity with the electronic register. (APA 22-05-2018)

TENSIONS EASE AS ETHIOPIA, EGYPT AGREE SCIENTIFIC STUDY FOR NILE DAM



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

Hailed as a "breakthrough", Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan have agreed to let scientists study the filling of Africa's largest hydroelectric dam on the Nile River, for now easing Egypt's fears of a water shortage. Ministers from the three countries said Wednesday (16 May) that they will set up a scientific study group to advise on diverting part of the Nile to kick Ethiopia's \$5bn Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam into operation.

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"There was a progress in the negotiations with our brothers in Sudan and Ethiopia," Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said in televised comments late Wednesday. "The matter will consume efforts and time to reach an understanding formula. There was a breakthrough."(GCR 18-05-2018)

SOUTH SUDAN: IGAD PROPOSES NEW POWER-SHARING DEAL

The East African bloc IGAD has released a new proposal on how it thinks power should be shared in South Sudan once peace is restored.

The document released on Tuesday proposes giving President Salva Kiir's government 55 percent, SPLM-IO 25 percent and other political parties 20 percent.

Under the proposal former detainees will be represented by 5 percent, political parties under the unity government 5 percent and South Sudan opposition alliance 10 percent.

The proposal giving the position of the country's president to the incumbent government, first vice president to the SPLM-IO group led by opposition leader Riek Machar, second vice president to the incumbent government.

The third vice president is to be nominated by the political alliance, former detainees and other political parties.

The compromise peace plan by the regional bloc proposes also giving the current unity government 65 percent, SPLM-IO 25 percent and opposition political parties including SPLM-FDs 10 percent.

The first vice president, according to the proposed document, will be in charge of the governance cluster, vice president will run the economic cluster while third vice president will be supervising the service cluster.

The regional bloc proposes 42 ministries and 15 deputy ministers divided into three clusters.

The IGAD proposal also provides for a transitional parliament composed of 440 seats and a parliamentary speaker from the Equatoria region will be selected by the incumbent government once the house is expanded.

The document says the deputy speaker will be nominated by the SPLM-IO group led by opposition leader Machar during the transitional period.

IGAD also proposes a mechanism for a permanent ceasefire and transitional security arrangements.

The parties have been asked to study the document and return with their reactions on Wednesday.

The lead negotiators for the warring sides could not immediately be reached for comment on the proposed peace plan. (APA 22-05-2018)

EUROPEAN FUNDS SUPPORT THE NATIONAL LIQUID SANITATION PROGRAM IN MOROCCO

On Friday May 18th 2018 a grant agreement of more than 22 million dirhams (2 million euros) was signed in Morocco to support the National Liquid Sanitation Program. The funds come from a grant from the European Union.

This grant is intended to improve the legislative framework on certain aspects of sanitation such as the reuse of treated wastewater, the management of sewage sludge and the financial sustainability of the sanitation sector. It will also help to support Morocco in its commitments to preserve the environment, adapt to climate change and improve the quality of life and hygiene of the Moroccan population.

The European Union has been supporting Morocco's sanitation program for more than ten years in order to improve the living conditions of Moroccans. The overall amount of this support reaches more than 100 million euros. (EEAS 22-05-2018)

MINISTER UNDER FIRE OVER \$417M TO KEEP TROUBLED S/AFRICAN AIRWAYS FLYING

South Africa's opposition has questioned Finance Minister Nhlanhla Nene over the legality of a "commitment letter" provided to cash-strapped South African Airways (SAA) to enable it to raise US\$417 million from banks to keep the beleaguered airliner in the air.

The minister allegedly came up with the solution following the banks' refusal to inject further funds into the loss-making state-owned airline despite past government guarantees.

Opposition Democratic Alliance deputy finance spokesman Alf Lees put the questions to Nene during a budget vote debate on National Treasury taking place in Cape Town on Tuesday

SAA needs US\$1.8 billion over the next three years to ensure its long-term sustainability, according to recent press reports.

Lees said the commitment letter seemed to be a "guarantee of the guarantees already given to SAA" by the state, which the banks apparently no longer regarded as sufficient.

The banks, weary of these so-called commitment letters, have apparently refused to lend any more money to SAA, even on the back of government guarantees.

"The contents of this 'commitment letter' remain a mystery except that the SAA CEO (Vuyani Janara) informed the media that the letter included a National Treasury commitment to inject capital into SAA," Lees said.

He noted that over the last six years SAA has lost a "staggering" US\$1.76 billion in its operations. (APA 22-05-2018)

GENDER EQUALITY AT THE HEART OF THE EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT DAYS 2018

Organised by the European Commission since 2006, the European Development Days (EDD) bring several international actors together each year to share ideas and experiences in ways that inspire new partnerships and innovative solutions to the world's most pressing challenges. This year, the theme of women and equality is in the spotlight of this 12th edition that is taking place on 5-6 June in Brussels.

Gender equality and women empowerment are at the core of European values and enshrined within the EU's legal and political framework. This is why the event will focus on the vital role of women and the need for their full and equal participation and leadership in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Under the main thread of 'Women and Girls at the Forefront of Sustainable Development: protect, empower, invest', the EDD 2018 agenda will be framed by three major themes emerging as key priorities in today's current context:

- 'Ensuring the physical and psychological integrity of Girls and Women',
- 'Promoting economic and social rights and empowerment of Girls and Women',
- 'Strengthening Girls' and Women's voice and participation'.

Among the many activities and workshops that are held, here is the Euro-Mediterranean Women's Foundation's selection of those that deal with themes that may interest its members or with a particularly useful approach for the Euro-Mediterranean region:

- Young Mediterranean Voices: Women, dialogue and digitally-enabled peacebuilding - Leveraging the work of young women peacebuilders - **Wednesday June 6, 2018**

- Empowerment of Women: the case of the National Commission for Lebanese Women - Exchange of best practices on effective women coordination and networking mechanisms in the MENA region -

Wednesday June 6, 2018

- Who defines our identity? Advocating for women leaders in the culture sector - Exploring best practices to empower women through culture and arts and promote an inclusive society in the Neighbourhood South - **Tuesday June 5, 2018**

- Women Empowerment Through Green Business Development - The SWITCH Programme empowers Women in private sector development to promote sustainable lifestyles and an inclusive green economy

- **Wednesday June 6, 2018**

- Women in tech salon - Connecting women entrepreneurs from Mediterranean countries - **Wednesday June 6, 2018** (EC 22-05-2018)

[EU Development Days – Themes and Topics](#)

[EU Development Days website](#)

BOTSWANA WITNESSES FURTHER DROP IN FOREIGN RESERVES

Botswana's foreign reserve dropped by 2.2 percent to US\$7 billion in March 2018, their lowest level in four years.

According to data released by the Bank of Botswana on Tuesday, the reserves fell from US\$7.2 billion in February largely due to movements in transaction balances, a subcategory of the reserves catering for short term foreign currency needs in the local market.

The data showed that the level of the transaction balances tranche fell by 33% in March, one of its steepest declines in recent times.

The last time Botswana's foreign reserves dipped below US\$7.1 billion was in March 2014 when they were also pegged at US\$7 billion.

At current levels and using an average monthly import bill of US\$5 million, Botswana's foreign reserves is equivalent to approximately 14 months of import cover.

According to the reserve guidelines, the central bank is required to maintain at least six months of import cover in foreign reserves.

Botswana's foreign reserves were pegged at US\$ 8.2 billion in October 2017, dropping to US\$7.3 billion in December and then rising again to US\$7.6 billion in January, before the latest record drop. (APA 22-05-2018)

ZIMBABWE, CHINA SEAL US \$1BN POWER DEAL

Zimbabwe has signed a US \$1bn deal with [Sinosteel Corp](#) in a development that will see the Chinese firm building a 400MW coal bed methane-fired power plant in Matabeleland North Province and setting up new ferrochrome smelters at Zimasco.

During the signing ceremony, President Emmerson Mnangagwa revealed that the first phase of the implementation will involve drilling of two Coal Bed Methane (CBM) wells at the Shangani grants to fire a 12MW pilot power station, and the second phase, more productive wells will be drilled to set up a 400 MW plant.

Sinosteel, a major shareholder in Zimasco, will build two ferrochrome smelters. One in Zvishavane and another one in Kwekwe, where it already operates the country's largest ferrochrome plant.

Mr. Winston Chitando, minister for mines and mining development, signed the deal on behalf of the Government, while the Chinese firm was represented by its president Andong Liu. The signing ceremony was also witnessed by Vice Presidents Constantino Chiwenga and Kembo Mohadi as well as other senior Government officials.

Mr. Chitando said that the project has a potential to create more than 25000 jobs and the electricity will be used by Zimasco's chrome smelting operations with excess supplied to the national grid.

According to Mr. Andong, the Chinese firm considers setting up three more furnaces to increase annual ferrochrome production.

President Mnangagwa added that the signing of the agreement with Sinosteel, was testimony of his administration's willingness to open up the economy to investment as well as engage the global community to do business with Zimbabwe.

"Zimbabwe is rich in minerals, most of which are still to be exploited including coal bed methane. The untapped sector presents unique and competitive investment opportunities," said the president.

Foreign investments

Over the past six months, President Mnangagwa's administration attracted foreign direct investment commitments worth US \$11bn in various economic sectors.

He however said his Government would continue putting in place measures to facilitate the ease and cost of doing business. The power plant is expected to commence operation in 2025. (CRO 18-05-2018)

ZIMBABWE BEGINS PROCESS TO RE-JOIN C/WEALTH

Zimbabwe has applied to re-join the Commonwealth, in a letter dated to Secretary-General Patricia Scotland from Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Mnangagwa.

A press release from the Commonwealth Secretariat in London seen by APA Tuesday announced that the Secretary-General was delighted to receive the letter.

"I whole-heartedly echo the sentiments of Heads of Government who have said twice, in 2009 and subsequently in 2011, that they very much look forward to Zimbabwe's return when the conditions are right. Zimbabwe's eventual return to the Commonwealth, following a successful membership application, would be a momentous occasion, given our shared rich history," she declared.

Zimbabwe joined the Commonwealth on its independence in 1980 and withdrew from the organisation in 2003.

To re-join, Zimbabwe must demonstrate that it complies with the fundamental values set out in the Commonwealth Charter, including democracy and rule of law plus protection of human rights such as freedom of expression.

The membership process requires an informal assessment to be undertaken by representatives of the Secretary-General, followed by consultations with other Commonwealth countries.

Zimbabwe has also invited the Commonwealth to observe its forthcoming elections in July. The Secretariat is now mobilising a team of observers to do so – and their observations will form part of the

Secretary-General's informal assessment.

"I urge the government, opposition parties, the election management body, civil society, and all stakeholders, to play their part in ensuring a credible, peaceful and inclusive process that restores citizens' confidence, trust and hope in the development and democratic trajectory of their country," said Scotland. (APA 22-05-2018)

RWANDA SET TO CONSTRUCT US \$66.6M BASE-BUTARO-KIDAHO TARMAC ROAD

Rwanda signs a US \$66.6m loan agreement with India for the construction of Base-Butaro-Kidaho tarmac road in Rwanda's Northern Province.

The loan agreement was signed between Dr Uzziel Ndagijimana, the Minister for Finance and Economic Planning on behalf Rwandan government and Mr. Tarun Sharma, General Manager and Regional Head of India [Export Import Bank](#) (EXIM).

Located in the Northern Province, the 63 km road will connect Rulindo and Burera districts as well as facilitating tourism and increased economic activity. The road will also connect the rest of the country to the touristic hub of Burera, and Ruhondo lakes, the University of Global Health Equity (UGHE), a Cancer Reference Hospital in Butaro, all through to Uganda via Cyanika border crossing.

According to Dr. Ndagijimana, Rwanda has put emphasis on the development of transport infrastructure and services to encourage economic growth in a bid to achieve the objectives set by Vision 2020.

"Transport plays an important role in stimulating economic growth by increasing internal production and facilitating access to domestic and international markets while ensuring favorable conditions for provision and distribution of imported products within the country," he said.

Developing projects

The Base-Butaro-Kidaho road development project is in line with the 10-year Rwanda Transport Master Plan adopted in 2012. The road is a single carriage with a construction period of two and a half years.

However, the road construction is due to kick start in 2019. Rwanda Transport Development Agency will implemented the project.

Other funded projects

Rwanda's cooperation with India Exim Bank started in 2011 with the signing of an US \$80m line of credit for the Nyabarongo hydro power project currently on the grid and expected to generate about 27MW. The project was completed and handed over to Government in early 2015.

Moreover, bilateral cooperation between India and Rwanda has been warm, mainly based on agreements in trading, agriculture, ICT, and energy.

In 2013, a US \$120.05m loan was extended for the Export Targeted Modern Irrigated Agricultural Project in Eastern Province's Kirehe District and the project is on-going.

The bank has also funded projects in education, with the Government and India's EXIM Bank signing in May 2017 an agreement worth US \$81m to be used for the construction in Rwanda of modern training and production workshops, including equipment for 10 new vocational training centres and four business incubation centres.(CRO 18-05-2018)

MAURITANIA: NO CUSTOMS DUTY ON LIVESTOCK FEED

Mauritania's minister of Economy and Finance, Moctar Ould Diay, announced Monday a decision to exempt livestock feed from customs duty.

Ould Diay told MPs in Nouakchott the decision comes into effect on 1st June, and that it was part of the government's efforts to alleviate the effects of drought in the country, and support state interventions for the availability of animal feed.

It would be recalled that the National Federation of Farmers and the National Group for Pastoral Cooperation in Mauritania called on the government on 12 May to take concrete measures to counter speculation in the price of livestock feed.

They also asked the state to increase the quantity and quality of animal feed in the country.

Mauritania is experiencing a severe drought this year due to an acute rainfall shortage that has affected livestock and crops.

In Mauritania, livestock contributes 10% to gross domestic product and is the main source of income for three quarters of the population. (APA 22-05-2018)

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