MEMORANDUM

N° 71/2015 | 04/05/2015

The Memorandum is issued daily, with the sole purpose to provide updated basic business and economic information on Africa, to more than 4,000 European Companies, as well as their business parties in Africa.

More than 1335 Memoranda issued from 2006 to 2014. More than 16,000 pages of Business Clips issued covering all African, European Institutions and African Union, as well as the Breton Woods Institutions. The subscription is free of charge, and sponsored by various Development Organisations and Corporations.
Should a reader require a copy of the Memoranda, please address the request to fernando.matos.rosa@sapo or fernando.matos.rosa@skynet.be.

2006 – 2015, 9 Years devoted to reinforce Europe – Africa Business and Development

SUMMARY

NIGERIA'S TRADE WITH CHINA PEAKS AT $16BN

Nigeria's Ambassador to China Olushola Patrick Onadipe has said that the trade volume between Nigeria and China has risen to $16 billion.

Nigeria's Daily Independent newspaper report on Friday said that Onadipe stated this at the Bilateral seminar on economy, diplomacy and management of Nigeria in 2015 held at the Academy for International Business Officials (AIBO), Beijing, China.

Represented by the Embassy's Senior Counsellor (Economy), Onadipe commended the bilateral relations between the two countries.

It added that Nigeria's Minister and Deputy Chairman, National Planning Commission (NPC), Dr. Abubakar Sulaiman, noted that Nigeria has a lot to learn from China's rich infrastructural history.

Sulaiman also counselled the incoming administration not to jettison the National Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan (NIIMP) put in place by the present administration.

According to the report, the minister, who was represented by his Special Assistant on Media, Abdulrahman Abdulrauf, underscored the need for Nigeria to learn from great nations like China in the area of infrastructural development.

Speaking on the concept of Nigeria infrastructural master plan, he said: "It might also interest this gathering to note that as part of the sustainable efforts aimed at fixing our country's infrastructure, a workable document otherwise called the National Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan (NIIMP) has been developed.

"The 30-year developmental plan, which is holistic in nature, is expected to gulp N485 trillion or (about $3.05 trillion). The five-year operational plan of this NIIMP has since taken off and is expected to lapse by 2018," he said.

He called on Chinese investors to "come and be part of this laudable vision as it will further go a long way in strengthening the bilateral/economic ties between the two countries. Our country's natural resources can only be effectively harnessed when and if the right infrastructure is in place".(APA 24-04-2015)

KENYA AND RWANDA ARE COMPETING TO BECOME EAST AFRICA'S MEDICAL TOURISM HUB, SAYS FROST & SULLIVAN

A diverse set of forces, including favourable economic factors, a supportive regulatory environment, and a high disease burden will make Kenya and Rwanda among the most attractive countries in **East Africa**. The consolidation of the rising middle class and heightened healthcare awareness will drive up per capita healthcare expenditure and provide lucrative opportunities within these markets.

New analysis from Frost & Sullivan, **Health care System Development in Kenya and Rwanda** (http://www.frost.com/mac1), finds that healthcare is regarded as the fourth-most attractive investment sector in Africa. As the East African economy continues to grow and the population has more disposable income to afford better healthcare, the demand for specialised healthcare services is expected to increase. However, the lack of skilled resources – as reflected by the low health worker density of 0.84 per 1000 people in Rwanda and 1.3 per 1000 people in Kenya – as well as inadequate infrastructure, need for capital investment, and high construction costs hamper the availability of specialist care and high-end technologies in both countries.

For complimentary access to more information on this research, please visit: http://ow.ly/LDcgc.

"A greater level of investment into infrastructure and the latest technologies, along with the ability to attract skilled healthcare personnel, will be vital for market success," said Frost & Sullivan Healthcare Research Analyst **Saravanan Thangaraj**. "Kenya and Rwanda are therefore focusing tremendously on the development of these areas. Both countries, however, are relying on external funding to boost the development of the healthcare sector."

As they compete to become East Africa's medical tourism hub, these countries will see enhanced interest from private sector participants to construct hospitals. Overall, higher domestic and external investment is expected in these markets due to macroeconomic stability, market-friendly reforms, and the successful debut Eurobond issuance in Kenya.

To expedite the development of the healthcare industry, providers must digitalise their services and adopt technologies such as e-health, m-health and telemedicine by leveraging the improved ICT infrastructure and mobile penetration rates, which stood at 74 percent in Kenya and 73 percent in Rwanda in 2013. Empowered with ICT technologies, healthcare providers in these countries will be able to attract more medical tourists and enable better prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases.

"Furthermore, healthcare players looking to invest in Kenya and Rwanda need to implement carefully-designed strategies to fend off the competition from poor-quality, counterfeit products," pointed out Thangaraj. "As the uptake of capital equipment is limited in these price-sensitive markets, medical device manufacturers and distributors should consider a business model that incorporates contracts for the purchase of consumables and technical or maintenance services."

Health care System Development in Kenya and Rwanda is part of the **Advanced Medical Technologies** Growth Partnership Service program. Frost & Sullivan's related studies include: Global Orthopaedic Implant Market, Global Wound Care Market Outlook, Global Endoscopy Devices Market, and Pharmaceutical Industry in Ghana and Nigeria. All studies included in subscriptions provide detailed market opportunities and industry trends evaluated following extensive interviews with market participants.(PR Newswire 24-04-2015)

NIGERIA SET TO PRIVATISE BANK OF AGRICULTURE, TWO OTHERS

Nigeria’s Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) has unfolded plans to commence the privatisation of the Bank of Agriculture (BOA), Bank of Industry (BOI) and the Nigeria Commodity Exchange (NCX).

According to a statement made available to newsmen on Friday in Abuja by the bureau’s Head, Public Communications, Mr. Chigbo Anichebe, the National Council on Privatisation (NCP) had in 2014, approved the privatisation of three Development Finance Institutions in the country.

The statement explained that the NCP had approved the Financial Bid Opening for BOA, BOI as well as the Nigeria Commodity Exchange (NCX).

``The Council has directed BPE to immediately invite the pre-qualified bidders that met the benchmark scores of 75 percent in the initial evaluation to proceed to the Financial Bid Opening Stage.

``For the BOA, the BPE was directed to invite Banca Leonardo Consortium (Germany); Barclays Consortium (Nigeria), CPCS Consortium (Barbados) and PWC Consortium (Nigeria).

``After the Financial Bid Opening, the contract should be awarded to any of the consortia adjudged to have made the best offer based on quality and cost selection guidelines of the World Bank,” the statement said.

It also stated that the BPE was directed to invite CPCS Consortium (Barbados), BDO Consortium (UK) and Barclays (South Africa) that emerged pre-qualified bidders for the BOI.

For the NCX, Banca Leonardo Consortium (Germany), United Capital Consortium (Nigeria), CPCS Transcom Consortium (Barbados) and BGL Consortium (Nigeria) have been shortlisted to participate in its Financial Bid Opening. (APA 24-04-2015)

KUITO KUANAVALE IN ANGOLA, TO HAVE MORE DRINKING WATER FROM AUGUST

Chinese company Sinohydro in the third quarter of this year is due to finish construction of the new system for supply, treatment and distribution of drinking water in the municipal seat of Kuito Kuanavale, 189 kilometres from Menongue, the capital of Kuando Kubango, the National Director of Águas de Angola (Angola Water), Lucrécio Costa said.

The work, which have been underway since July 2014, will provide water to 2,655 new households.

At this time, according to Costa, 60 percent of the work is complete including more than 80 percent of residential connections and 60 percent of 32 new public fountains.

The National Director of waters also said the new water supply system would have a capacity of 6,000 cubic metres. (29-04-2015)

EUROPEAN COMMISSION LINKS SECURITY TO DEVELOPMENT

The EU could not support its partners in fighting poverty without security. [European Parliament}
The Juncker Commission presented Tuesday (28 April) new proposals to strengthen the link between security and development in the external actions of the European Union, two fields of action which were largely kept separate in the previous commission.

EU foreign affairs chief Federica Mogherini and Development Commissioner Neven Mimica presented proposals on how to help partner countries and regional organisations to prevent and manage all types of security crises using the EU and the member states' instruments.

The effort reflects the effort of the new Commission, led by Jean-Claude Juncker, for a more coherent and more coordinated European action, as well as his political priority of making Europe a stronger global actor.

In his political guidelines as candidate for President of the Commission, back in July 2014, Juncker wrote:

"I believe we cannot be satisfied with how our common foreign policy is working at the moment. We need better mechanisms in place to anticipate events early and to swiftly identify common responses. We need to be more effective in bringing together the tools of Europe's external action. Trade policy, development aid, our participation in international financial institutions and our neighbourhood policy must be combined and activated according to one and the same logic."

But the effort also comes against the background of a growing number of conflicts in the EU's neighbourhood that erode the development efforts and increase the immigration pressure on Europe. As an EU diplomat recently said, further arrivals of migrants are unsustainable economically and politically, and risk destroying the EU.

The Communication recognizes that the EU should provide partner countries with efficient support so that they can build the capacity to take care of their own security and development. It also suggests how to adapt current instruments to new threats and challenges such as terrorism and organised crime.

Mogherini said that with these new proposals, the Commission wants to help its partners tackling challenges related to terrorism, conflicts, trafficking and extremism. "Empowering partners to take security and stabilisation into their own hands is in the interest of their development, but also in the interest of international stability, including peace and security in Europe," she stated.

Mimica said the EU could not support its partners in fighting poverty without security. "We need to mutually reinforce our interventions in the field of security and development", he argued.

The strategy document envisages supporting more effectively partners' security capacity-building by making more of the current instruments, inside and outside the EU budget, and by improving coordination and coherence in the EU' and member countries' approach to security and development. It also proposes to consider the practical feasibility of:

- Adapting the African Peace Facility to address its limitations
- Establishing a new facility linking peace, security and development in the framework of one or more of the existing instruments
- Setting up a new instrument dedicated to security capacity-building in partner countries

This could cover, for example, the provision of ambulances, force protection equipment or communication means to military forces in countries where Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions are already giving training and advice, but where their effectiveness is hampered by a lack of basic means. The Communication does not cover lethal weapons, which is not the type of equipment that the EU provides.

This also builds on the lessons learnt from existing EU operations and missions active in third countries as part of the EU Common Security and Defence policy, such as the EU Training Mission in Mali or the EU training Mission in Somalia.

Challenges identified include:

- Shortage of funding
- Limitations of various instruments and mechanisms to fund the needs for security capacity-building, especially in the military sector
- Limitations of the African Peace Facility to finance activities at national level
- Practical challenges related to the use of a "patchwork" of different instruments in the same context

For example, in some circumstances, units trained by the EU lacked food, water and medical equipment which rendered them reliant on the local population. Their soldiers were missing protective equipment against mines and explosive devices. Lack of communication equipment, which hindered their command and control, was also identified. No alternative funding could be identified to fill those gaps, making the EU's support less effective.

This Communication will be discussed by EU foreign ministers at their Council meeting on 18 May, in view of preparing the European Council in June, which will put European Defence policy high on the political agenda.(EurActiv 29-04-2015)

NEW MINING PROJECTS BEGIN IN ANGOLA IN 2016

Angola's minister of Geology and Mining, Francisco Queiroz, said in Luanda that the sector will 16 new mining projects coming into execution in 2016. Queiroz said during the opening of the fourth Consultative Council of Geology and Mines that by the end of 2015 the geophysical aerial survey of Angola's entire territory would be concluded.

The minister also revealed that in 2016 16 new mining projects would be launched that will create more than 3,500 new jobs.
Francisco Queiroz said that there are five projects for diamonds, four for gold, two for phosphates, one in Cabinda and another in Zaire, two copper projects and two iron projects, on in Cassinga and one in Andulo. (29-04-2015)

KENYA: CA APPROVES MOBILE OPERATORS TO TEST 4G TECHNOLOGY

Airtel Kenya and Orange Kenya have received regulatory approval to begin testing 4G technology on their networks. The authorisation by the Communications Authority of Kenya (CA) means they can begin to launch the service commercially.

Safaricom has commercially launched of LTE services in some parts of Nairobi and Mombasa Island. The company is awaiting extra frequency capacity to increase its wireless broadband service to other parts of the country. This is according to a report by Business Daily.

“So far, all the NFP Tier 1 licensees have been authorised to carry out tests on the spectrum they are already using,” CA director-general Francis Wangusi said in the report. Wangusi added that mobile operators were being encouraged to re-farm their existing frequencies and roll out national 4G networks that would allow them to share capacity with those that lack similar networks.

According to the report, the CA authorisation given to Airtel and Orange comes against the background of the switch-off of analogue broadcasting, to release spectrum for 4G.

Vincent Lobry, Orange Kenya CEO, said the company is yet to begin testing LTE on its network as its main focus currently is to ensure there is optimal use of its allocated 3G frequencies. Orange Kenya has so far deployed its 3G network in 41 new urban and peri-urban areas.

Lobry added that although Orange has a technology-neutral licence that allows it to launch any telecommunication services including 4G, it does not have the required frequency for 4G. Wangusi said the CA has freed up spectrum in the 168 MHz band and is currently working on a new frequency pricing model. This is according to the report.(IT Africa News 24-04-2015)

OFFICIALS CONSIDER BUILDING NEW AIRPORT IN MBANZA CONGO, ANGOLA

The director of infrastructure of Angolan airport management company Enana announced that preliminary studies were underway for construction of a new airport in Mbanza Congo, in Angola’s northern Zaire province.

Nataniel Domingos, did not say when the work may begin, but noted the airport would be located in the town of Nkiende II, 35 kilometres west of the city of Mbanza Congo.

Once it opens the new airport in the capital of Zaire province will be equipped to receive Boeing-737 aircraft as well as Angolan Air Force IL-76 aircraft.

The Enana official said the new airport terminal would be capable of dealing with 600 passengers at any one time and the apron will be able to receive two Boeing 737 and two other aircraft.

The current airport in the centre of the city of Mbanza Congo stopped receiving medium-sized commercial aircraft because of safety issues and the fact that it is smaller than civil aviation rules require. (29-04-2015)

SOUTH AFRICA: GOVERNMENT SAYS IT'S COMMITTED TO GOOD RELATIONS WITH NIGERIA AFTER RECALL OF DIPLOMATS

Government remains committed to maintaining friendly relations with Nigeria after Abuja recalled its ambassador to Pretoria in the wake of attacks on immigrants, the Department of International Relations and Co-operation said on Sunday.

Acting High Commissioner Martin Cobham and Deputy High Commissioner Uche Ajulu-Okeke were asked to return to Nigeria for consultations in the latest sign of African countries’ discontent over South Africa’s handling of attacks on foreigners.

At least seven people have been killed over the last month in a wave of xenophobic violence centred on areas of Durban and Johannesburg.

South Africa has been criticised by several governments, including China, Nigeria and Zimbabwe, for failing to protect foreigners from armed mobs. Nigeria is the only country to have recalled its ambassador, the Department of International Relations said in a statement.

"If this action is based on the incidents of attacks on foreign nationals in some parts of our country, it would be curious for a sisterly country to want to exploit such a painful episode for whatever agenda," the department said.

"South Africa remains committed to a strong bond of friendship and bilateral relations with Nigeria," it added.

The department also said Pretoria would raise its concerns with Nigeria's new administration when it assumes office next month.

South Africa deployed troops last week to hotspots in the two cities to try to quell the violence. (Reuters 26-04-2015)

US WILL SUPPORT GUINEA-BISSAU IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE TAX SYSTEM

The Treasury Department of the United States of America, in the second half of this year, will support Guinea-Bissau in improving its national tax system, announced the Guinean Minister of Economy and Finance, Geraldo Martins.

“We talked to the US Treasury, which from the second half of this year will start giving support to Guinea-Bissau in improving its tax system, especially through the Directorate General of Taxation,” said Martins.

Martins did not name the number of US financial experts that would be made available to Bissau by the Obama administration, but said the support was very important to the national economy.

He also said a min round table meeting may be organised in the next few months in Bissau involving many Middle Eastern countries and financial institutions from the region such as the Islamic Development Bank, the Arab Bank for Development in Africa (BADEA), the Saudi Arabia Fund, the Kuwait Fund and the Abu Dhabi Fund.

The minister said that this mini-conference would provide great opportunities to discuss specific development plans and other additional needs of the country.

For now, Guinea-Bissau has received guarantees of a cash amount of US$6 million from the Saudi Arabia Fund for the water sector. With this funding, the national authorities can build wells and water tanks, allowing Guineans better access to drinking water, said Martins.

The Guinean finance minister also said that the country would receive US$60 million from the so-called “fragile countries fund” recently set up by the World Bank, from which Guinea-Bissau will be the first “fragile” state to benefit. (29-04-2015)

KENYA SACKS HEADS OF GRAFT PROBE

Kenya's two top anticorruption officials were suspended on Thursday following a bitter standoff with parliament and after they alleged widespread graft.

President Uhuru Kenyatta removed the chairman and deputy chairwoman of the Ethics and Anticorruption Commission after MPs voted to sanction the pair, accusing them of incompetence and abuse of office.

The crisis comes less than a month after dozens of politicians and public servants were named in a commission report that gave a damning indictment of the scale of corruption.

A total of 175 people were named, including five cabinet ministers, 13 governors and a host of public servants, MPs and judiciary members.

Mr Kenyatta had also ordered those named to step aside while they were being investigated.

Presidential spokesman Manoah Esipisu said the suspension of the commission's bosses "in no way hinders" the body's work.

Earlier this month the commission's deputy chairwoman, Irene Keino, claimed a "clique" was trying to oust her and break up the body.

The commission's latest report, released last month, described the ministry of lands as "bedevilled with rampant corruption" and run by a "cartel" linked to minister Charity Ngilu.

James Orengo, her predecessor, is under investigation for alleged involvement in irregular land deals.

Michael Kamau, transport and infrastructure minister, is accused of irregularly awarding contracts and inflating the cost of a new railway. Other ministers who have stepped aside pending investigation are Felix Koskei, agriculture minister, labour minister Samuel Kazungu Kambi and energy minister Davis Chirchir. *(*AFP 24-04-2015)

CABO VERDE GOVERNMENT ORDERS FERRY FROM SPAIN

The government of Cabo Verde (Cape Verde) will purchase, directly or in partnership with a private entity, another ferry in Spain, which will be used for regular service between the islands of the archipelago, Minister Sara Lopes said.

The Minister for Infrastructure and the Maritime Economy, speaking to Cape Verde Radio, gave assurances that operation of the vessel, which will join another two, – the Kriola and the Liberdadi – was already guaranteed.

"We will perhaps launch a public tender for private companies also to bring ships to operate maritime routes, according to the routes that will be concessioned," she said, acknowledging that since 2008 the deficit in terms of maritime connections was increasing and whilst no definitive solution was found the government would continue to look for solutions for the sector.

Sara Lopes also said that the maritime transport situation between islands is complex, cannot be resolved in the short or medium term and a solution is only likely when the government has the resources needed to implement the reforms it has already drawn up.

"The legislation for concessions is ready and, over time, we will restructure the Fund for Development of Inter-Island Transport," added the Minister of Infrastructure and the Maritime Economy. (29-04-2015)

WORLD BANK GIVES NIGERIA N99.5B TO IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH

The World Bank said it has released N99.5 billion ($500 million) for the Nigerian government to improve on maternal and child health and nutrition.

In a statement, the World Bank said the fund was approved by the World Bank Group's Board of Executive Directors through the International Development Association. The fund is expected to "significantly" improve maternal, child, and nutrition health services for women and children in Nigeria.

Through this funding, an improvement in the access of higher quality health service in order to achieve Nigeria's "Saving One Million Lives, SOML, Initiative," a project is paramount.

The SOML initiative was launched by Nigeria's Ministry of Health in October 2012 to save the lives of the more than 900,000 women and children who die every year in Nigeria from largely preventable causes.

Nigeria accounts for 14 per cent of all annual maternal deaths worldwide, second only to India at 17 per cent. Similarly, Nigeria accounts for 13 per cent of all global deaths of children under the age of five years, again second only to India at 21 per cent.

The World Bank's funding support for the initiative will utilize the Program-for-Results, PforR, instrument to encourage a greater focus on results, increase accountability, improve measurements, strengthen management, and foster innovation.

This program will help strengthen Nigeria's health system and development says, Marie Francoise Marie-Nelly, Nigeria's Country Director.

Ms. Marie-Nelly said the program will also provide an important tool for bringing both government and development partners together around a commitment to achieve specific, tangible results.

These funds, World Bank said will only be disbursed to the Federal and State governments for independently verified improvements in key services such as vaccination coverage among young children, rates of contraceptive use, Vitamin A supplementation and skilled birth attendance.

Others include: HIV counselling and testing among women attending antenatal care, and preventing new malaria infections among children by using insecticide- treated bed nets when they sleep.

Also, Federal and State governments receive incentive payments for better tackling governance and management issues in the health sector and for improving the quality of basic health services.

SOML will be implemented under the Federal Ministry of Health, in close cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Finance which will provide the financial oversight role while new health operation is expected to start implementation on August 1, 2015. The operation will end after four years, in December 2019.

ETHIOPIA EXPECTS 2015 INVESTMENTS TO RISE TO $1.5B

Investors will earmark more money for Ethiopia this year than ever before, thanks to policies that have transformed the country into a manufacturing hub offering cheap power generation, low wages and reliable transportation. The professional-services firm Ernst & Young forecasts foreign direct investment in Ethiopia will hit a high of $1.5 billion in 2015 and maintain that level the next three years, a significant increase over $1.2 billion last year and just $108.5 million seven years ago, the financial Times reported.

That growth has been fueled in part by the lure of tax breaks for exporters. But the government has also leveraged loans provided by the World Bank to shore up the nation's infrastructure. Designed to be Africa's largest hydroelectric dam, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is under construction as a means to produce cheap power, while a new airport is planned for the state-owned Ethiopian Airlines, which is now the continent's biggest carrier.

These projects have bolstered investors' faith in Ethiopia's long recovery from a devastating famine in the mid-1980s and the turmoil of a decades-long civil war. The country's economy has grown by an annual average of 11 percent during the past decade, which is double the rate of its neighbors, according to the Associated Press.

Fitsum Arega, director of the Ethiopian Investment Commission, told the Financial Times that much of the nation's newest investment is coming from China, India and Turkey and that it is landing new factories that will produce clothes and other textiles or goods such as leather. The entry of major brands and clothing manufacturers such as H&M Hennes & Mauritz AB and Wal-Mart Stores Inc. has fueled 61 percent growth in the apparel industry over the past six years, the Ethiopian Investment Commission reported.

Ernst & Young also predicted Ethiopia will become one of Africa's top four manufacturing hubs by 2025. Huajian, a Chinese shoemaker, relocated to the country in 2012 and plans to expand its workforce there to 30,000, the Financial Times said. (ibtimes 27-04-2015)

ELEMENTS FOR A STRATEGIC ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF TUNISIA IN THE MEDIUM-TERM

This work is sought to deepen the knowledge on the constraints to growth, macroeconomic and social balance in Tunisia and suggests a detailed strategy for the coming years. After the events of January 2011, it became necessary to gather and deepen the various works that had been conducted in order to see whether there is a consensus that allows guiding a medium term development policy, targeting key critical points and defining policy priorities.

It is clear that there is an agreement on the limits and difficulties of the current growth model, on the urgent need to prepare the conditions for a revival of the Tunisian economy and on getting in the next 10 years a boost that allows Tunisia to access a first class rank in emerging countries (with a growth rate of around 7% per year versus almost 4% obtained in the period 2000-2010 and 2% since then). However, operational policies are not sufficiently implemented because the urgency of the situation brought short-term solutions to maintain social peace. But many challenges lie in the details and every truly progressive measure involves heavy political choices that are difficult to implement.

It is this concern that motivates the detailed analysis in this work which, in a way, gathers the current economic and social thinking on Tunisia.

This work was carried out under the direction of Professor Chedly Ayari (Professor Emeritus of the University of Tunis El Manar) and Professor Jean Louis Reiffers (President of the Scientific Committee of the Institute of the Mediterranean – Marseille and of the Scientific Committee of Femise and Professor Emeritus of the University of Toulon). The scientific coordination of this work was carried out by Professor Sami Mouley (University of Tunis), in collaboration with a team of contributors that includes Tunisian and French university professors as well as FEMISE experts. Download the whole report (only in French, pdf, 467p, 9.7MB) (26-03-2015)

GHANA TO BEGIN CHARGING ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES EXTERNAL TARIFF IN JULY

Ghana will begin full implementation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Common External Tariff (CET) on July 1, 2015.

Albert Akurugu, Senior Revenue Officer (Valuation) at the Customs Division of the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA), who disclosed this, said the implementation of the CET will eliminate the smuggling of goods into the country.

Ghana missed the January 2015 deadline for implementing CET adopted by member states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The development has been attributed to Government's inability to seek parliamentary approval for the new customs regime.

Speaking to Business Guide at a sensitization workshop for the media on the ECOWAS Common External Tariff, Mr. Akurugu said the CET regime will ensure that the same tariffs will be imposed on an eligible item imported into the ECOWAS region, irrespective of the ECOWAS- member country it first lands in.

"It is a vehicle to create a customs union as a complementary condition for the creation of a common market for West Africa," he said.

Mr Akurugu said there will be no incentive for people to smuggle goods into the country and the subject region when the CET is implemented.

"Smuggling thrives on differentials in import duty rates. So if we have common external tariff under which you can freely circulate the goods, then there will be no incentive for smuggling," he said.

He revealed that there is going to be a mechanism for sharing revenue among the member states, stating "it does not matter where you enter the sub-region through; whether through Ghana, Nigeria or Togo, once the revenue has been collected, there is going to be a common account in which these monies will be deposited and shared."

However, he said the sharing ratio is yet to be determined by the heads of member states, explaining that "once that is determined, we envisage that there will be increase in revenue to the sub-region and also a unified voice when we are dealing with a third country." (Joyonline 21-04-2015)

EU PROVIDES €10 MILLION TO COUNTER RADICALISATION IN THE SAHEL-MAGHREB AND STEM THE FLOW OF FOREIGN FIGHTERS FROM NORTH AFRICA, THE MIDDLE EAST AND WESTERN BALKANS

Foreign terrorist fighters joining the ranks of IS and other militias in the Middle East are a growing threat to many countries, inside and outside the EU. The Commission is launching a new programme to help partner countries to counter radicalisation in the Maghreb countries and stem the flow of foreign fighters from North Africa, the Middle East and Western Balkans.

The High Representative and Vice-president Federica Mogherini: "Foreign fighters are a threat not only to the region but to the whole world. We need to increase our cooperation and support to partner countries, because terrorism is a common threat and we must fight it together. These programmes are a further step implementing the EU commitment to work closer with countries from North Africa, the Middle East and Western Balkans."

'Countries in the Middle East, North Africa and the Western Balkans are particularly concerned by the threat of foreign fighters and the radicalisation of their young population. However, such phenomena do not respect borders and the international community therefore needs to support these countries in their efforts to stem the flow of foreign fighters and counter radicalisation. The EU has allocated €10 million for a new programme providing such support ' stressed Johannes Hahn, EU Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations.

Under the new programme "Countering radicalisation and Foreign Terrorist Fighters", the EU will allocate a first tranche of €5 million to fund technical assistance to enhance the capacities of criminal justice officials to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate cases of foreign fighters or would-be foreign fighters.

The second tranche of 5 million euro will finance countering radicalisation programmes in the Sahel and Maghreb region. It will offer the possibility to non-state actors to implement activities in the field of media, education, religion, culture. Projects focussing on messaging, internet, social media, disengagement, and awareness-raising with social workers will also be considered as well as measures preventing the radicalisation and recruitment of foreign fighters.

Today, the European Commission is also presenting its European Agenda on Security, where one of the priorities is preventing terrorism and countering radicalisation. The Agenda will enable a better use of existing and new tools in this area by improving exchange of information and increasing cooperation between EU institutions and agencies, Member States and relevant stakeholders.

The new programme "Countering radicalisation and Foreign Terrorist Fighters" has been defined in line with the Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions on counter-terrorism on 9 February 2015 in Brussels. These conclusions call for launching further projects of cooperation with key partners on counter-terrorism, including helping address the foreign fighter threat and address radicalisation, through our external aid instruments.

The programme builds upon the ongoing project "Supporting rule-of-law-compliant investigations and prosecutions in the Maghreb region" implemented by UNODC which started in 2014. The overall objective of this ongoing project is to increase the capacity of criminal justice and law enforcement officials to effectively investigate, prosecute and adjudicate terrorism cases in the Maghreb.

The new programme component on Foreign Terrorist Fighters is part of a global UNODC-initiative on "Strengthening the Legal Regime against Foreign Terrorist Fighters ", which was launched in Malta on 23-25 March 2015 and co-financed by the US and Japan.

The programme component on countering radicalisation in Sahel-Maghreb is part of the Sahel Regional Action Plan implementing the EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel adopted in March 2014. It complements other actions in the field of countering radicalisation such as "STRIVE Global" (Strengthening Resilience to Violence and Extremism) which will contribute to supporting the International Centre of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism (the Hedayah Centre) and the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF). (EC 28-04-2015)

Fernando Matos Rosa

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