MEMORANDUM

N° 159/2014 | 25/08/2014

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NIGERIA'S INFLATION RATE INCREASES TO 8.3%

For the fifth consecutive month, Nigeria's inflation has recorded a major increase, from 0.1% in March this year to 8.3%, particularly on the food prices component at the end of July, according to latest figure released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The Private BusinessDay newspaper, quoting the NBS, reported on Tuesday that the jack up in inflation rate was the fifth consecutive month of the year-on-year increases in the headline index.

According to the NBS, "The faster pace of price increases recorded in the headline index were as a result of an increase in multiple divisions that contribute to the headline index".

It observed that between February and July, movements in food prices as observed by the food sub-index have mirrored the headline index.

The food index edged higher to 9.9% in July from 9.8 % in June. This is the highest price increases observed in a year, and advancement in the pace of price increases for the fifth consecutive month.

Increases in fruit, vegetables and potatoes, yam and other tubers' groups contributed to the price increases during the month.

However, core inflation, which the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) continues to monitor closely with its tight monetary policy, slowed for the third time in July.

In the consumer price index (CPI) report, the NBS noted that, "all items less farm produce" or core index, which excludes the prices of volatile agricultural products slowed in July after increasing for three consecutive months".

Prices declined to 7.1% in July, down from 8.1% in June. This was the slowest price increase recorded since January this year.

The increase in the core sub-index (month-on-month) was as a result of price increases across various group items in particular actual and imputed rentals for housing; non-durable household goods; clothing materials, other articles of clothing and clothing accessories; garments, and solid fuels groups.

The apex bank last month retained key rates on concerns that inflationary pressure, which was marginally subdued since last year, had re-emerged since February.

The heightening concerns for monetary policy, the CBN said was about huge liquidity levels in the system and the trending uptick in inflation linked to poor harvest especially in the North Eastern and North Central states of the country.

CBN also noted then that core inflation continued to send conflicting signals since January 2014, warning that it could be a major factor in the upward trend in prices if the upward trend continues as observed in April 2014.

"Internally, the key risk factors include the high systemic banking system liquidity, elevated security concerns and anticipated high election-related spending in the run-up to the 2015 general elections," the apex bank Governor Godwin Emefiele was quoted as saying by the newspaper.

He said the situation raises fears that, "domestic liquidity could exert sustained pressure on both the exchange rate and consumer prices, as well as accentuate the already high demand for foreign exchange, further depleting the country's external reserves".

The CBN Governor had signalled a gradual reduction in interest rates on resumption of duty, but analysts predict this is unlikely anytime soon, due to persisting inflationary pressure at the moment and especially as politicians gear towards commencing huge spending for 2015 general elections.

ANGOLA FINANCES CONSTRUCTION OF POWER TRANSMISSION LINE IN SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE

Construction of a power transmission line costing an estimated U$5.3 million began Wednesday in Sao Tome and Principe, the Sao Tome minister of Public Works and Natural Resources, Fernando Manquego said.

Funded by a credit line from Angola, the work is intended to carry power from the Santo Amaro power plant in Lobata district to the central district of Água-Grande, in the capital of Sao Tome and Principe.

The contract also includes construction of two substations for power distribution in suburban areas and improvements to the network of state water and electricity company Empresa Nacional de Agua e Electricidade, the minister added.

Construction of the transmission line, which has been awarded to a Portuguese company, is intended to improve the electricity supply to the capital of Sao Tome and Principe and other locations, where power cuts are frequent due to overload of the distribution grid.

As well as the Santo Amaro and Água-Grande power plants, the island of Sao Tome also has the Bobo-forro private power plant, which is under Italian management and produces a total of 13 megawatts, which is not considered enough to supply the archipelago’s main island. (21-08-2014)

CAMEROON, CONGO TO JOINTLY EXPLOIT IRON ORE IN THEIR BORDER

Cameroon and Congo are considering a join exploitation of the iron deposits discovered at the border between the two countries, the Cameroonian minister of Mines, Louis-Paul Motaze, said here Monday at the end of an audience with the Congolese president, Denis Sassou-Nguesso.

“My country pays particular attention to the common project on the exploitation of iron at the Cameroonian-Congolese border. The zone is called Mbala in Cameroon and Nabemba in Congo,' Mr. Motaze said, adding that he joint project would enable the two countries to boost the development of their sectors.

According to the minister, the talks with Sassou-Nguesso also focused on the hydro-electric dam a Cholet, which has a production capacity of 600 Megawatts. (Pana 20/08/2014)

SOUTH SUDAN CLOSES RADIO STATION, ARRESTS EDITOR

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has condemned South Sudanese authorities for shutting down the popular Catholic-run Bakhita Radio station in Juba, the capital, on Saturday and the continued detention of the station's news editor.

Security agents raided the outlet in the morning and arrested four staff members, according to the station's managing director and news reports.

Security forces arrested Ocen David, news editor, Albino Tokwaro, the managing director, and two radio presenters. Tokwaro told CPJ, that three of them were released the same day, but David was transferred on Sunday to the national security headquarters in Jub.

He has not been charged and the station remains off the air.

Ateny Wek, spokesman for the president, told CPJ the station had undermined national security by falsely reporting that rebels claimed government forces had instigated conflict in the Unity State, breaching a ceasefire agreement.

Violent fighting broke out in December between forces loyal to former Vice-President Riek Machar and those loyal to President Salva Kiir. Each party has repeatedly accused the other of violating a stalled ceasefire agreement signed in January and re-pledged in May, according to news reports.

Local journalists told CPJ that Bakhita Radio had aired views of both warring parties.

'The South Sudanese government has repeatedly taken a heavy hand to the media, even as political instability underlines the public's need for independent sources of information,' said CPJ East Africa Representative Tom Rhodes. 'We urge authorities to release Ocen David immediately and to allow Bakhita Radio to resume broadcasting.'

Security forces have harassed Bakhita Radio in recent years, according to CPJ research. The station was raided in 2009 for allegedly insulting police, news reports said.

Information Minister Michael Makuei issued a warning to the press in Juba not to report on the rebels' activities earlier this year. Security forces have routinely harassed the press in South Sudan since the conflict erupted in December, according to CPJ research. (Pana 20/08/2014)

PORT OF LOBITO, ANGOLA, RECEIVES INVESTMENT OF US$1.247 BILLION

The dry dock, container terminal and ore terminal at the port of Lobito, in Angola's Benguela province, costing and estimated US$1.247 billion, were Thursday inaugurated by the President of Angola, Angolan news agency Angop reported.

The container terminal is 414 metres long, the ore terminal has a 310-metre jetty and the dry dock is directly connected by road and rail to the port of Lobito and the Benguela Railroad, providing an area of 90,000 square meters.

The container terminal cost US$673 million, the ore terminal US$522 million and the dry dock US$32 million, and the total investment also included acquisition of a multipurpose tugboat (US$16 million) and a speedboat (US$4 million).

The inauguration was included in the meeting of the Economic Commission of the Council of Ministers, chaired Thursday in Lobito by the Angolan President, José Eduardo dos Santos.

The connection between sea transport in the port city of Lobito and the Benguela Railroad that runs to the border (Moxico province), is part of Angola's strategy to attract exports from the Angolan interior as well as from other countries in the sub-region, such as Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. (22-08-2014)

SEVERE FAMINE LOOMS IN COUNTRIES AFFECTED BY EBOLA IN WEST AFRICA

At least some 113 new cases of the deadly Ebola disease have been reported over the last two days in the four West African countries mostly affected by the epidemic (Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Nigeria), as the isolated communities begin facing severe famine, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Tuesday in a statement obtained by PANA in Kigali.

The interventions of the WHO and other partners against the epidemic are continuing in those four West African countries to reduce the risks of contamination between individuals infected outside their respective communities.

Governments have established isolation zones where there is huge transmission, including in the cities severely affected like Guéckédou, in Guinea, Kenema and Kailahun in Sierra Leone, and Foya, in Liberia, says the statement.

As recommended by partners, it is particularly about preventing the persons living in those zones designated as epicenters for the Ebola virus to move to other regions of the country in a bid to limit the spread of the disease.

However, those isolated populations are beginning to suffer the consequences linked to the shortage of food, water, good hygiene and other basic needs, says WHO which deployed a humanitarian team in the affected zones in view of ensuring the distribution of food for about a million people living in isolation zones in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

The WHO says that to date, no food aid has been supplied to patients and the isolated persons who are not able to leave their houses to purchase food. (Pana 20/08/2014)

CONSTRUCTION OF HOTEL SCHOOL IN LUANDA, ANGOLA, BEGINS

The first stone of the future Luanda Hotel School was laid Thursday by Angola's Minister for Hotels and Tourism, Pedro Mutindi at a ceremony in the Belas municipal area, the Angolan press reported.

The US$20 million project, which is a both a working hotel and a hospitality school, is expected to open within 12 months and will have a capacity for 500 students will have 50 rooms, 12 classrooms and accommodation for 96 students.

Apart from Luanda, the minister said, this project will also gradually benefit the provinces of Benguela, Huila, Uige, Moxico and Huambo.

Mutindi also said that the next step to be taken in this area will be an overhaul of methodologies and curricula, as well as professional certification for in the hotel and tourism sector workers of the area of hospitality and tourism portfolios, thus improving management and the quality of services provided. (22-08-2014)

SOUTH AFRICA'S FUTURE INFLUENCE 'DEPENDS ON ITS ROLE IN REST OF AFRICA'

South Africa's future as an influential power in a fundamentally changed world is increasingly tied to its willingness to lead the rest of the African continent to peace and prosperity.

Its membership of Brics (with Brazil, Russia, India and China) should be able to strengthen its hand in Africa so long as it maintains its leadership position, South African Institute of International Affairs CE Elizabeth Sidiropoulos argues in the Human Sciences Research Council's annual State of the Nation report.

"South Africa will have to play an even greater role in underwriting the stability and prosperity of its own neighbourhood," she writes in her chapter, "South Africa and the Brics in a multilateral, multipolar world".

By far the group's smallest country, in terms of both economic and demographic size, South Africa has had to justify its inclusion in a club whose two leaders, China and Russia, are giants, nuclear powers and permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.

President Jacob Zuma hosted the group's annual summit in Durban last year. The African branch of the planned Brics development bank will be based in Johannesburg, the Brics summit decided this year.

When South Africa joined the group in December 2010, many commentators noted that it was hardly in the same league — it had a smaller economy and population than its fellow members. But its inclusion brought the group representation from all the developing-world continents (Latin America, Asia and Africa).

If SA plays its cards right it could hold its own as a regional "pivot state" in a context where US hegemony is waning and new rising powers are not yet willing or able to replace America in the global driving seat. "The post-US world system may be more anarchic and less rules-based," Ms Sidiropoulos writes.

South Africa could build its influence if it is not muscled out of its own backyard by Brics powers who themselves are eyeing business and other opportunities in Africa.

The South African government could help to prevent that by insisting on a level playing field of "fair labour practices, transparency of contracts, local ownership of projects and sustainability of interventions", Ms Sidiropoulos says.

South Africa's foreign policy is often perceived as vague and implausibly idealistic. But Ms Sidiropoulos says that in Africa it has sought to work in concert with other countries and it advocates a world governed by a set of rules forged by all states and which apply to all of them.

She writes that the issue of industrialisation is relevant to other African economies and is directly linked to South Africa's championing of the continental infrastructure projects. "Since, on average, about $90bn a year is required for infrastructure development in Africa, the opportunity presented by the Brics development bank to leverage additional development finance for this huge undertaking cannot be underestimated."

Ms Sidiropoulos writes that the current global economic imbalances provided three possible options for South Africa: surplus countries could buy government bonds of deficit countries, but this is unlikely to change spending patterns; surplus countries could increase domestic consumption; and surplus countries' spending could be translated into infrastructure spending linked to industrialisation and social infrastructure — "the more appealing option".

She argues that South Africa's ability to continue its role as a leading African state and a significant "middle power" will depend on how its neighbours and other societies interpret its actions.

Its willingness to take on more regional and global responsibilities will be important (BD 21-08-2014)

ONE HUNDRED MOZAMBICAN COMPANIES TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO PORTUGUESE GROUP PORTUCEL SOPORCEL

About one hundred small and medium-sized Mozambican companies will provide services to Portucel Mozambique, a subsidiary of Portuguese group Portucel Soporcel, Mozambican daily newspaper Correio da Manhã reported.

The Portuguese group is involved in an ambitious project to build a paper production industry in Manica and Zambezia, by planting eucalyptus trees on 125,000 hectares of land to feed pulp and paper factories.

With an estimated total investment of US$551.5 million, of which US$353.5 million in the province of Manica, Mozambique Portucel intends to involve the 25,000 families in the area in the project.

"We will not remove anyone, but rather focus on a forest/housing model," in other words, "we will plant eucalyptus trees around dwellings, an initiative that will involve and benefit the communities," said the managing director of Portucel Mozambique.

Pedro Moura also said that each family will receive a minimum of 2.9 hectares for market-focused agriculture, of a total 356,000 hectares of land provided to the Portuguese group by the Mozambican government.

The newspaper said that of the total concession area, about 35 percent would be explored by local communities in order to safeguard the biodiversity of the regions.

In March 2008 Portucel Mozambique put forward an expression of interest to the government of Mozambique in implementing an integrated forestry project, with several components, including plantations, pulp production and renewable energy, as well as paper production in the provinces of Manica and Zambézia. (22-08-2014)

SADC TRIBUNAL BACK WITH MANDATE REDUCED TO INTERSTATE CASES

Regional leaders have adopted a new protocol to reconstitute the tribunal of the Southern African Development Community (Sadc), but with a diminished mandate.

The Sadc summit, held in the Zimbabwean resort of Victoria Falls at the weekend, paved the way for the revival of the tribunal, which was disbanded two years ago. The tribunal gained notoriety for passing a judgment in favour of white farmers led by the late Mike Campbell, who was a victim of Zimbabwe's land seizures in 2000. The ruling led Zimbabwe to protest that the court was undermining its sovereignty.

South African President Jacob Zuma was among the regional leaders who signed the new protocol on the Sadc Tribunal.

Other heads of state to do so included Tanzania's Jakaya Kikwete, Mozambique's Armando Guebuza, Malawi's Peter Mutharika, the Democratic Republic of Congo's Joseph Kabila, Madagascar's Henry Rajaonarimampianina, Namibia's Hifikepunye Pohamba and Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, who took over as the new Sadc chairman for the next 12 months.

Botswana, which became deputy chair of the regional bloc and will take over in August next year, did not sign. Diplomatic sources said this perhaps signalled President Ian Khama's unwillingness to push governance and human rights issues aside for the sake of maintaining a facade of camaraderie between regional leaders. Botswana has cut a lonely figure in criticising Zimbabwe's poor human rights record and has questioned the 15-member organisation's commitment to good governance.

Mr Khama earlier this year indicated that Botswana would no longer participate in Sadc election observer teams.

The Sadc observers gave the green light to Zimbabwe's election last year, calling it "free, peaceful and generally credible", despite the main opposition complaining it had no access to the voters' roll and accusing Mr Mugabe's Zanu (PF) of widespread rigging.

Under the new protocol, it is understood that the Sadc Tribunal will be able to deal only with inter-state disputes and no longer with cases brought by individuals. In its communiqué issued at the end of the two-day meeting, the regional bloc noted that the "summit received a report from the committee of ministers of justice and attorneys-general relating to progress on negotiating a new protocol on the Sadc Tribunal and adopted the new protocol on the Sadc Tribunal".

Before its disbanding by the Sadc summit in Mozambique in 2012, individuals could approach the tribunal if they felt that the justice system in their home countries had failed to address their grievances properly.

The disbanding of the regional court was perceived by rights groups to benefit Mr Mugabe because he was on the receiving end of some negative rulings.

Ben Freeth, the executive director of the Mike Campbell Foundation, told Business Day on Tuesday that the new protocol rendered the court meaningless.

"The majority of cases that have gone to the Sadc Tribunal have been from Zimbabwe. The person that benefits the most is Mr Mugabe … as he does not care about the justice system and is more interested in ensuring that party officials close to him go scot-free," Mr Freeth said. (BD 20-08-2014)

THREE PROVINCES OF MOZAMBIQUE RECEIVE INVESTMENTS OF US$ 5 BILLION

Investments of US$5 billion were approved for the provinces of Cabo Delgado, Niassa and Nampula, in northern Mozambique in the 2009-2013 periods, the Ministry of Planning and Development said in a statement.

In the document sent to Macauhub Thursday, the Ministry noted that the approved investments gave, "the north of Mozambique several projects, particularly in the agriculture, forestry, tourism, infrastructure and hydrocarbon sectors," that "create opportunities for national companies, notably micro, small and medium-sized companies. "

The Ministry estimates that the investments created and will create more than 20,000 jobs, "which represents remarkable growth for the provinces of Cabo Delgado, Niassa and Nampula."

"With the great potential that the north has the government expects accelerated growth that will be spurred by the development and improvement of transport and communication, energy, water and sanitation infrastructure," the Minister for Planning and Development said Thursday at the opening of the Opportunities to Supply the Hydrocarbons, Mining, Infrastructure and Forestry Sectors seminar in Pemba, Cabo Delgado province.

Cuereneia projects the infrastructure under construction will be, “the basis for an increase in production investments in the industrial, agricultural and agro-processing, fisheries, tourism, retail and services sectors.”

The Ministry for Planning and Development is in the final phase of drawing up the Nacala Corridor Development Strategies, “which identify priority and anchor projects and that will, similarly and alongside other programmes, change the economic landscape of central and northern Mozambique.” (22-08-2014)

NAMPAK TO INVEST $10M IN ZIMBABWEAN BUSINESS

Nampak, Africa’s biggest packaging firm, will invest $10m in the next 12 months to expand its Zimbabwean business after consolidating the operations under one company, the local CE said on Thursday.

Nampak consolidated its shares in three Zimbabwean packaging firms, Hunyani Holdings, MegaPak and Carnaud Metalbox under a new company, Nampak Zimbabwe Ltd, in which it will own 51.43%. John van Gend, Nampak Zimbabwe CE, said the government two weeks ago approved the company’s plan to comply with Zimbabwe’s black economic empowerment laws that require foreign firms to sell at least 51% shares to blacks.

Nampak Zimbabwe will list in Hunyani’s place on the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange on September 1.

"We are looking at (investing) $10m in the next 12 months for projects that we want to be involved in," Mr van Gend told Reuters after a shareholders’ meeting. (Reuters 21-08-2014)

CONSTRUCTION OF HIGH VOLTAGE LINE UNDER DISCUSSION IN GUINEA-BISSAU

Construction of a power line to supply Guinea-Bissau with electricity produced on the Gambia River, involving three other countries in the region, is due to be discussed Friday in Bissau, Guinea-Bissau’s Minister for Natural Resources said.

In a statement cited by Portuguese news agency Lusa, Minister Daniel Gomes noted that the meeting is similar to others that have taken place in the other countries involved in the project – Senegal, Gambia and Guinea-Conakry.

“These meetings are being conducted with some urgency, with a view to launching the tender for construction of the line,” as power production should start at “the end of the first half of 2015.”

The Organisation for the Exploration of the Gambia River (“Mise en Valeur Organisation du Fleuve Gambia”) is building the Kaleta dam in Guinea-Conakry and has signed a contract for construction of a second dam in Sambagalou in Senegal, with part of its 185 square-kilometre lagoon in Guinea-Conakry.

Environmental and social impact studies, such as the one due to be analysed Friday in Bissau, “are considered essential by the technical and financial partners for construction of the line and transformer stations, which will make it possible to use the energy,” said Daniel Gomes.

The Organisation for the Exploration of the Gambia River was established in 1978 to meet the energy, food security and communications needs of the four countries involved. (22-08-2014)

ETHIOPIA BECOMES AFRICA’S LARGEST REFUGEE HOST

The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) announced on Tuesday that Ethiopia has surpassed Kenya in hosting the most refugees in Africa, sheltering 629,000 refugees as of the end of July.

Mr. Adrian Edwards, UNHCR spokesperson, who made the announcement, while briefing UN reporters from Geneva via video-conference, said the main factor in the change in the situation was the increased numbers of refugees fleeing the conflict in South Sudan.

He noted that the conflict, which erupted in mid-December, had sent 188,000 refugees into Ethiopia since the beginning of 2014.

He also said that Kenya, however, was still a major country hosting more than 575,000 refugees and asylum-seekers.

According to Edwards, there were 250,000 South Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia, making them the largest refugee population in the country, followed by Somalis and Eritreans and in the last seven months, nearly 15,000 Eritreans and more than 3,000 Somalis had also arrived in Ethiopia.

He said UNHCR, together with the Ethiopian government and other partners, was providing protection and humanitarian aid across 23 refugee camps and five transit sites around literally all sides of the country.

He added that three of the camps and three transit sites were new and were at capacity, and UNCHR was developing two more.

The spokesperson said: 'Despite continuing humanitarian efforts, heavy rain in Ethiopia remains an urgent challenge, which not only deteriorates the water and sanitation situation, but it also threatens some low-lying sites, with Leitchuor Camp being the most seriously flood-hit shelter.'

Mr. Edwards said that some 10,000 refugees, more than one-fifth of its population, had been affected by the underwater tents and shelters and collapsed latrines.

He said that UNHCR and its partners were working to drain the accumulated rainwater into a nearby small stream as quickly as possible, adding UNHCR continued to work with the government and the federal and regional authorities to identify additional sites that were less susceptible to flooding.

Of about 25,000 refugees arriving every month in Ethiopia, most are vulnerable children.

'To that end, UNHCR is girding up its loins to tackle Hepatitis E, which has spread across South Sudan in the last few years and has appeared in camps in Ethiopia,' the spokesperson added.

In mid-December 2013, conflict sprang from a political impasse between President Salva Kiir and former Vice President Riek Machar, leaving an estimated 1.5 million people uprooted and on the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe. (Pana 20/08/2014)

CABINET APPROVES CONGOLESE HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT RATIFICATION

A surge of water signals that President Jacob Zuma has opened the control valves during the opening ceremony of the De Hoop Dam, near Steelpoort in Limpopo in March. Picture: GCIS

THE Cabinet has approved the ratification of the Grand Inga Treaty with the Democratic Republic of Congo, which will allow for the construction of the first phase of the huge hydroelectric project on the Congo River.

The treaty, which was signed previously by President Jacob Zuma and Congolese President Joseph Kabila, will have to be endorsed by Parliament.

Minister in the Presidency Jeff Radebe said on Thursday at a post cabinet media briefing that the first phase of the project would provide South Africa with 500 megawatts of power. Discussions were under way on how the project would be funded. Mr Radebe said a consortium of funders would be needed.

"The treaty provides the framework for the facilitation of power generation from the Grand Inga Project and its delivery to the border between the DRC and Zambia," Mr Radebe said.

On completion of the seven phases, Grand Inga will generate 40,000MW, which will provide power for a number of countries in southern Africa.

Mr Radebe said Grand Inga was one of the most ambitious projects ever to be undertaken on the African continent and held the potential to fast-track the development of the Southern African Development Community, alleviate energy supply constraints, stimulate economic growth and facilitate infrastructure development. (BD 21-08-2014)

REGIONAL ECONOMIES FEEL ILL WINDS AS FEAR SPREADS

SANDI Sesay's boss promised him three months of pay when he told the driver to stop coming to work. The goal was to prevent any possible spread of Ebola at the Sierra Leone mine that employs him.

Two weeks later, Mr Sesay has yet to see any money from Dawnus Construction, a contractor at London Mining's Marampa iron-ore deposit.

"I take care of my mother, my sisters and my wife and three children," he said. "How am I going to cope?"

Mr Sesay's and Sierra Leone's prospects were bright before the worst-ever outbreak of the virus. The country's economy was set to grow 14%, almost three times faster than the average in sub-Saharan Africa. In Liberia and Guinea, investment in iron ore was luring billions of dollars and fuelling growth.

Then the first case of Ebola appeared last December. Initially tagged as a short-term phenomenon with limited effect, the disease now threatens to cripple three economies with a combined gross domestic product of about $13bn — less than that of Afghanistan.

Commodity companies are slowing production and airlines are shutting routes.

In Liberia, the government says the economic effect threatens to derail progress made since the end of the civil war in 2003.

Sierra Leone cancelled the first sale of bonds open to foreigners last week.

Sime Darby, the world's largest palm oil producer, has slowed production in Liberia, while Sifca Group halted rubber output from its plant there.

ArcelorMittal, the world's biggest steel maker, postponed expansion plans at its iron-ore mine in Liberia because contractors moved some of their workers out of the country.

London Mining's shares fell as much as 19% after the company reduced this year's forecast in part because of Ebola.

Swansea, UK-based Dawnus spokesman Richard Evans says that this was the first he had heard of anyone not being paid, adding that a "large number" of nonessential staff had been asked not to come to work while getting a basic pay.

Africa's richest man, Nigerian cement magnate Aliko Dangote, has pulled some employees out of his Liberia cement plant and says one percentage point of growth may be shaved off the region that includes Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea.

"It will be a great impact," he said in an August 5 interview with Bloomberg Television. "But various governments are doing things to tackle the situation."

Liberia has banned public gatherings and told nonessential government workers to stay home. In Sierra Leone, the government sent hundreds of troops to cordon off the hardest-hit areas. Edmond Saidu, the district agriculture officer in Kailahun District, says the disease killed farmers on cocoa and peanut plantations and rice farms, leaving the crops to rot. Liberia also has closed off afflicted regions.

The Liberian government is even planning to close open-air markets, a measure that will probably push up prices in the capital. At the Duala market in central Monrovia, food seller Mary Kolubah says business had slowed. The wholesale shop where she obtains bags of rice in order to resell them in smaller quantities raised prices 10% in just a few days, she said.

Distrust of government in the three countries runs so deep that officials are still struggling to convince citizens that Ebola exists and is not a hoax. The virus exposed limitations of the healthcare systems that include a scarcity of doctors and thermometers, a shortage of body bags that prevents burials and medical workers neglecting basic hygiene such as hand washing.

The official tally of deaths may underestimate how much the disease has spread, the United Nation's (UN's) health agency said last week.

More than 1,350 people have died in the three countries and five have succumbed in Nigeria, where the government has managed to avoid a wider outbreak, though doctors are assessing five new cases.

The disease struck just as the three smaller countries were starting to bounce back from a past of violence and instability. Liberia is recovering from a civil war that spilled into its neighbour Sierra Leone during the 1990s, leaving both economies ruined. In 2010, Guinea, the world's biggest bauxite exporter, held its first democratic elections since independence following decades of erratic military rule.

Isolating the affected areas in Sierra Leone has made it almost impossible to get food to the capitals. The UN's food aid agency says it will need to feed 5% of the population of the three countries in the coming months.

The outbreak is isolating the countries, even if the UN health agency says air travel is an unlikely major transmission point. Nigeria's Arik Air suspended flights to Liberia and Sierra Leone after a Liberian man travelled to Lagos and infected at least eight others.

British Airways and Kenya Air Lines also halted routes to Liberia and Sierra Leone, while Gulf carrier Emirates scrapped flights to Guinea. Korean Air Lines canceled flights to Kenya's capital of Nairobi, a hub located thousands of miles away from West Africa. (Bloomberg 22-08-2014)

EBCAM NEWS

Norwegian-African Business Association

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NETHERLANDS AFRICAN BUSINESS COUNCIL
www.nabc.nl

AFRICA WORKS!

October 16 and 17, NABC together with the Africa Studies Center (ASC) will organize the 2nd edition of the conference **Africa Works!** 'Creating New Partnerships', bringing together the private sector, NGO's, knowledge institutes, and government bodies from both the Netherlands and Africa.

Again we expect 650+ individual participants to join, making Africa Works the biggest business oriented conference focusing on Africa in the Benelux.

If you require more information or have any questions do not hesitate to contact via www.africaworks.nl or africaworks@nabc.nl.

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